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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 11, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GLENN THOMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

HONORING RAY ROGERS

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

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, Representative Ray Rogers of Pearl, Mississippi.

On November 17, 2018, Ray completed his 55th and final season of service as the Pearl High School Voice of the Pirates. For 55 years, Ray volunteered his time and energy as the public address announcer for the Pearl Pirate football games and was so committed that, in 55 years, he missed just one-half of one game in 55 seasons.

Now, the reason Ray missed the first half of that game was so that he could attend his daughter's wedding rehearsal dinner. After listening to the game on the radio during much of the dinner, Ray left as soon as the dinner was ended so he could announce the second half of the game.

Ray's commitment to the Pearl community was recognized several years ago when leaders of the Pearl Public School District decided to name the football stadium Ray Rogers Stadium.

Ray was one of the first students to attend Pearl High School when it opened in 1948 and was the first quarterback for the first football team in 1949.

Ray has been a public servant and leader for Pearl and Rankin County in many other ways. In 1983, he was elected to serve District 61 in the Mississippi House of Representatives and has been reelected every 4 years since, most recently in 2015.

Ray has spent 35 years in the State legislature working to improve our schools and infrastructure. As chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, he has been a tireless supporter of our National Guard and veterans and was instrumental in the effort to build three veterans homes in Mississippi with the help of then-Congressman Sonny Montgomery, who served the Third District of Mississippi.

Ray has been a long-time member of the Management and PEER Committees—a testament to the respect and trust that his fellow legislators have for him. He has served as a mentor and role model for many incoming representatives over the years, and Ray's example has been invaluable to me. He has taught me by the way he lives, by what he does, and by how he treats everyone with respect.

Ray Rogers has lived a life of service to others, and I know that he believes his most important service has been to God and his family. An active member of McLaurin Heights United Methodist Church in Pearl, Mississippi, Ray is the father of three daughters, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. While he is proud to be known as the representative and the Voice of the Pearl Pirates, he is proudest to be known as Daddy and Pop.

Ray's wife, Shirley, has shared his passion for serving others. Shirley served for two decades as the first city clerk for the city of Pearl and after that was a director of personnel for the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Like Ray, Shirley is an active member of their church, and she is a loving and supportive wife, mother, and grandmother.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity today to honor Ray Rogers—my State representative, the Voice of the Pirates, proud father and grandfather—and to congratulate him on his impressive record of public service.

Thank you, Ray, for your friendship and for setting an incredible example for all to follow.

FORGING A BETTER NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the last time as a Member of Congress. For the past 6 years, it has been an extraordinary honor to serve the residents of central and northwest Connecticut as their Representative in the House.

The title for this job is a humble one: Representative—not emperor, not knower of all things, but Representative.

Congress was not my dream, but making a difference was. In 2005, my then 15-year-old daughter challenged me to either run for the local town council or stop complaining. I ran. I

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found that I could get things done, first on the town council and then as a State representative.

I came to Congress with a desire to make a difference for people, to help solve their problems, fight for affordable quality healthcare, ensure education that addresses the needs of every child, work across the aisle for better jobs and better pay for Americans, and keep us all safe and free.

Yet I arrived in Congress in the aftermath of the terrible shootings of 20 6- and 7-year-old children and six educators in the town of Newtown in my district, 6 years ago this coming Friday. My task immediately became how to truly care for and represent those families and be an effective voice for taking action to prevent gun violence. At the time, I did not even know how to find the elevator to get to my attic office in the Cannon House Office Building.

John Dingell, the longest serving Member of Congress, took me under his wing and helped me navigate these Halls. He gave me invaluable advice. He said:

Elizabeth, always remember this: What you do is very important. But you are not important.

He also told me:

It is your job to know your district and vote your district.

How right he was. I learned my district. My team and I worked with others to get lots of legislation passed to help veterans and their families, to support STEM education for women, girls, and children of color; to modernize and upgrade our infrastructure; and to fight the scourge of opioid addiction. We helped thousands of individuals at home cut through red tape and get much-needed support. By working with people, we were able to help government work for people.

Here are some things that I have learned:

The American people are good, great, and eager to see our democracy work better;

Sharing credit is not only the right thing to do, but it works;

If you listen to others, if you look for and build on common ground, you can get things done even with people with whom you disagree on many issues.

The first step is often the hardest. In politics, Mr. Speaker, you need to earn support. You are not entitled to it. You will fail sometimes. You will not meet your own high expectations. You will disappoint people. You will lose an election, but you get up the next day and you try harder.

If there is nothing you would be willing to lose an election over, you shouldn't run for office. Democracy needs people who are prepared to lose their job to make a difference.

Democracy is not about perfection. Democracy is about doing your best every day and bringing out the best in others; and when we fail—which we will—we should not give up. We should get right back to work.

Mr. Speaker, you shouldn't run because you know you will win; you should run because there are things worth fighting for.

If we remember our common values rather than call into question each other's integrity, there is much we can do together. Democracy is something we do; it is not something we tweet about.

Democracy is hard. It is not a spectator sport. You don't need permission in this great country. Democracy gives us—each and every one of us—the opportunity and the right to run, to serve, and to make a difference.

American democracy is a great thing, but it requires us to pitch in and to do our part. We have the opportunity—and in these challenging times for our Nation and the world, I believe we have an obligation—to get involved.

I want to thank my amazing family for their love, their support, and their sacrifices over more than a dozen years of elected office. I thank the voters who entrusted me to work on their behalf. I thank my excellent staff who have worked so hard and ably. I thank the many colleagues who generously guided me and worked with me on issues of common concern for the American people.

In closing, John Dingell's words return to me:

If you ever look up at the Capitol Dome at night and it doesn't send shivers down your spine, you don't deserve to be here because you aren't sufficiently in awe of American democracy.

I can say without hesitation that the white of the Capitol Dome gleaming in the night still sends shivers down my spine. It always will, for we are fortunate enough to live in this amazing country where we have the right to choose our leaders, to raise our voices, and, together, to forge a better nation and a better future for all our children.

FARM BILL CONFERENCE REPORT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I proudly signed the farm bill conference committee report because, after years of hard work, we are set to deliver a win for rural America. Quite frankly, it is a win for all Americans who count daily on access to affordable, high-quality, safe food.

We know that farm country is hurting. USDA recently announced that net farm income for this year is dropping by 12 percent to levels we have not seen since 2002. There is hope though. By passing the farm bill conference report, we can give producers and their lenders certainty. They will know what farm policy will be in place for the next 5 years.

We also made modest adjustments to the Marketing Assistance Loan program to help with cash flow after harvest and to providing marketing for U.S. commodities.

There are also important enhancements to dairy policy included in the conference report. Building upon investments made to the dairy safety net as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, we are offering new coverage levels for the first 5 million pounds of production, which drastically reduces premiums on certain levels for larger producers.

These are just some of the many updates in the 2018 farm bill that will set our American farmers on a better path for the next 5 years.

The 2018 farm bill strengthens the farm safety net, protects crop insurance, maintains and preserves conservation funding, improves SNAP program integrity and incentivizes work, and, importantly, provides certainty to rural America.

This agreement reached between the House and the Senate strengthens and maintains important programs like the Price Loss Coverage, the Agriculture Risk Coverage, marketing loans, dairy margin coverage, livestock disaster programs, and crop insurance.

As vice chairman of the committee, I know that a lot of work went into building and negotiating a great bill for our farm families. I would like to thank Chairman MIKE CONAWAY and Ranking Member COLLIN PETERSON for their commitment to passing this bill in 2018.

This Congress, I proudly chaired the Nutrition Subcommittee. The House bill included provisions to give many Americans the skills needed to obtain a family-sustaining job.

While this conference report is a compromise, it does include significant incremental victories that will improve the integrity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, so it will be more effective for those who truly need it. The Nutrition Subcommittee hosted 21 hearings on SNAP and heard from more than 80 witnesses on how to improve the program and work toward the ultimate goal of ending hunger in America.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. The 2018 farm bill makes real improvements to our Nation's largest antihunger program. These provisions will only further enhance the program so it will be there for the most vulnerable among us, the truly needy.

Now, I am hopeful that we can continue this conversation and soon revisit numerous provisions from the House farm bill's nutrition title. Specifically, there is so much more that can be done through SNAP to help more Americans find good-paying, family-sustaining jobs—an ultimate food security. That is the American way.

The farm bill conference report also helps improve our response to natural disasters, including catastrophic wildfires that have ravaged parts of the Nation. To help encourage new markets for domestic forest products, the conference report invests in research

and development specifically for these new wood-based materials.

□ 1015

We put emphasis on connecting rural America through significant improvements to broadband delivery. We are dedicating funding to rural health projects to help Americans struggling with opioid addictions and other substance abuse disorders.

This is just some of what is included in the conference report. There is much more policy included that provides key wins for producers, rural communities, and American consumers.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this conference report and deliver much-needed certainty to rural America and all Americans who are in need of affordable, high-quality, and safe food.

ABOLISHING BIGOTRY

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise to stand in the well of the House of Representatives. As a proud American, it is always an honor to stand in the well of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak truth to power as well as speak truth about power. The power that I desire to speak truth to is the Speaker of the House, and I want to say something about the Speaker of the House.

Today, I acknowledge the Speaker's righteousness when he made a decision—I am not sure that it is one that he contemplated with any degree of time—but at some point, there was a decision made to allow Articles of Impeachment that I filed to move forward, such that there could at least be a vote to table it or not. He did not interfere with the process. He did not try to change the rules so that there would be no opportunity for a Member to move impeachment forward, to the extent that we did.

I am proud of Speaker RYAN for doing this because, as a result, I hold in my hand what I call the historic 58. Fifty-eight Members of Congress, some of whom were ranking members of full committees, voted to allow this process to move forward. On a second occasion, 66 Members, the historic 66, voted to allow the process to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. RYAN did not try to circumvent the process. For this, I say that I am grateful. I respect him for not trying to circumvent the process. Mr. Speaker, had he tried to circumvent it, I probably would be standing here saying some words that would not be similar in any way to what I am saying currently.

I am mentioning this because there is a question that has been put to me by many members of the press as to whether or not we will move forward again with impeachment. I am here to say without question, reservation, or hesitation that we should not allow ourselves to get back to bigotry as usual. There seems to be a desire to avoid the question of bigotry emanating from the Presidency. There seems to be a desire to move on to something else; let's find another way to deal with the problem.

But that is not what the people who suffer from the bigotry have to endure, just the conversations. They have to deal with the actual bigotry, the actual ugliness that is being fostered across the length and breadth of this country as a result of the bigotry. There are people who are suffering.

The culture is changing. Bigotry is real, and people have to deal with it. Because they do, I don't think we should allow bigotry to go unnoticed as it emanates from the Presidency. Because I don't think so, I will make an announcement sometime next week, more than likely, as to whether or not we will have additional Articles of Impeachment brought before the House.

I have never interfered with the Mueller investigation; I don't intend to interfere with it. But I just believe that we ought not allow bigotry to go unnoticed. We ought not try to get to a point in this country where we will allow bigotry to be nothing more than a talking point. It ought to be an action item.

The greatest place to ascertain whether it is an action item is how we as Members of Congress not only talk about it, but how we vote when the issue is given an opportunity to be voted upon.

Mr. Speaker, I assure you that I will make an announcement sometime in the near future as to whether or not there will be another vote on bigotry emanating from the Presidency. I also, again, thank you for not circumventing the process. Republicans had a majority, and you could have done it without a single Democratic vote. You respected the right of individual Members. It is the right of the individual that you have protected under your leadership. I pray that protection will continue.

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

HONORING CORY FRITZ

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a dedicated public servant and member of my senior staff, Cory Fritz. The Foreign Affairs Committee has benefited greatly from his sound judgment, skill, and passion for the values, including a free press, that have made America strong.

Cory got his start on the Hill writing speeches, advocating stronger U.S. relations with the former captive nations in Europe, for the late Senator Voinovich of Ohio. He later joined the congressional office of then-Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio. Working for John throughout his speakership, Cory played an important role on a number of foreign policy issues, including efforts to force the administration to step up the fight against ISIS.

Upon John's retirement, it was only fitting that Cory move to the Foreign Affairs Committee. As deputy staff director, Cory has elevated the committee's communications operations and played a key role in shaping strategy and policy.

Cory is one of my most trusted advisers. His counsel helped pave the way for a number of important accomplishments, including the landmark Russia, Iran, and North Korea sanctions enacted in 2017.

Also, I am proud to have inspired him to take special interest in conservation policy, which has long been a priority of mine. With Cory's assistance, I have advanced legislation to combat wildlife trafficking and poaching. We have also advanced legislation to preserve southern Africa's vital Okavango River Basin.

As I leave the House, I thank Cory for his 11 years of service to his home State of Ohio, to this Republic, and also to the Congress. I wish him and his wife, Sarah, all the best as they prepare to welcome their first child in the spring.

PROTECT GOOD FRIDAY PEACE ACCORDS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, one of the dominant news stories on both sides of the Atlantic was the announcement by British Prime Minister Theresa May that she was postponing a much-anticipated vote on accepting a preliminary Brexit package that had been negotiated with the European Union. Her decision, unfortunately, continues the turmoil in her own party and Parliament at large about how to implement a referendum that was narrowly passed instructing her government to leave the European Union that the United Kingdom joined 45 years ago, in 1973.

As a Member of the U.S. Congress that is also divided and struggling with its own ability to execute basic functions, I have a great deal of empathy, as I am sure many of my colleagues do, with the frustration that members of Parliament and the British public are feeling today.

Fundamentally, of course, this is a domestic question for Parliament, and it would be presumptuous for elected officials from the outside to weigh in on the agreement's proposals regarding residency, immigration, visa requirements, and how healthcare coverage will be coordinated if and when the U.K. exits the European Union. However, there is one issue, in which myself and many of my colleagues from

the U.S. have a very keen interest, and I raise it today in a friendly but firm voice. That is, namely, the status of Northern Ireland under the Good Friday peace accords.

Unfortunately, Mrs. May, in her announcement yesterday, indicated that that was the one issue, that her efforts to protect the Good Friday peace accords were going to be renegotiated and possibly dismantled.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind the House that the Good Friday peace accords, which were signed 20 years ago last April 10, have the active and supportive involvement of the U.S. Government and the U.S. Congress.

The Clinton administration in the 1990s, at the invitation of the Irish and British Governments, named former U.S. Senator George Mitchell as Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, and he chaired the all-party peace negotiation over a number of years, which led to the Good Friday peace accords. His work, along with his successor, Richard Haass, was crucial to the success of the talks and the execution of the agreement.

In the U.S. Congress, members of a bipartisan group of lawmakers, including our colleague RICHARD NEAL of Springfield, Massachusetts, were frequent visitors and participants during the negotiations.

To this day, Mr. NEAL and bipartisan members of the Friends of Ireland Caucus, of which I am a member, continue to monitor the progress and success of the Good Friday peace accords and are deeply, deeply concerned that Brexit, if it reinstates a hard border on the island of Ireland, will undo one of the great diplomatic successes of our time.

Mr. Speaker, the successful results of the peace agreement cannot be denied. During The Troubles, which preceded the accords, more than 3,600 residents of the six counties of the North lost their lives due to sectarian violence and 763 servicemembers of the British Government and the Northern Irish Government lost their lives. To put that in perspective, 464 U.K. troops have lost their lives in the long war in Afghanistan. The economic results have also been undeniable.

Mr. Speaker, I have a little bit of experience because in 1973 and 1974, I was a student in England and spent the Christmas break in Northern Ireland visiting a fellow student in the town of Enniskillen. I took the train from Dublin to Belfast. In the border town of Dundalk, where I was asleep, I was awoken by a British soldier heavily armed, poking me to look at my backpack.

While we visited in Enniskillen, there was a bombing in the village. Looking around, it was clearly a depressed economy because of the hard borders and because of the isolation of Northern Ireland.

Fast forward, I took a trade mission from the State of Connecticut to Belfast 2 years ago, and it is a transformed city. It is thriving. It is healthy. Clearly, allowing the Northern Irish economy to participate both in the full island as well as Europe has had beneficial effects. That is why the people of Northern Ireland actually voted ''no'' on Brexit.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a point today where the British Government clearly has to make a decision about whether to preserve one of the great diplomatic successes, which provides a roadmap for sectarian violence all across the world. Diplomacy succeeded in Northern Ireland. It is imperative that those in charge there protect the hard-fought work and remember that there are stakeholders outside of England and Great Britain, including the United States Government and the United States Congress, which have skin in the game and have investment in terms of the great success over the last 20 years.

Protect the Good Friday peace accords. Protect the peace that has flowed from it. Protect the prosperity that has improved the lives of the people of Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic, and the world at large.

DEMOCRACY REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Speaker-designate PELOSI, Whip HOYER, and Representative SARBANES for honoring the will of the American people and pledging to make democracy reform a top priority for the 116th Congress.

One of the greatest promises of our democracy is that our government is of, by, and for the people. Our democracy has always been a messy experiment. It is not perfect. It is not a spectator sport. But it is our greatest hope. At this point in time, unfortunately, many of our democratic structures are under attack.

In my home, Pennsylvania, over the past decade, we have seen the impact of antidemocratic policies. The cards have been stacked against the voices of Pennsylvanians through unconstitutional gerrymandering, repressive voter ID laws, and restrictive absentee ballot deadlines. These tactics have been used to muzzle the voices of our constituents, as well as voters in North Carolina, Wisconsin, Georgia, and other citizens across the country.

□ 1030

The H.R. 1 package being advanced by Representative SARBANES and the Democracy Reform Task Force is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore the American people's faith in our institutions. History has shown us that our American experiment is at its best when we face complex challenges head-on and we are better for taking them up.

H.R. 1 is our path forward to a more perfect democracy. Our elections are the bedrock of this Nation, and the sanctity of those elections must be protected from threats, both foreign and domestic.

We can make it easier, not harder, for eligible Americans to vote. We can end the dominance of Big Money in our politics. We can ensure that public officials, from the White House to Members of Congress, put the interests of the American people first. We can do all of those things, and we must.

Public opinion polls show that the American people's distrust of our governmental institutions is at staggering levels. We must work together, Democrats and Republicans, to change course and restore the people's faith. We have real work to do, and Members of the incoming class are ready to roll up our sleeves. The voters have charged us to restore the balance of our political institutions and make sure that everyday Americans have a seat at the table.

When we listen to people instead of special interests, we can raise the minimum wage and create good-paying jobs; we can lower prescription drug prices and give people better access to healthcare; we can make real investments in our infrastructure; we can reduce gun violence; and we can increase funding for job training programs and public education.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the generations before us who worked to establish this democracy and we owe it to the generations that follow to ensure that we have a Government that is truly by and for the people. We can work on this together. It is up to us to get it done, and this work starts now.

THANKING FIRST RESPONDERS TO THE CRANSTON FIRE

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the communities affected by the Cranston fire, one of the largest wildfires my congressional district and eastern Riverside County has ever seen.

While the Cranston fire was contained in August, many of my constituents are continuing to piece their lives back together, and anytime severe rain is forecasted, they once again go into high alert for mudslides from the burn scar.

The Cranston fire started on July 25, 2018, and within a matter of a few hours residents of Idyllwild and the mountain communities were immediately forced to evacuate from their homes. Without hesitation, first responders from the Idyllwild Fire Department, the Idyllwild Volunteer Fire Company, CAL FIRE, the California Highway Patrol, the U.S. Forest Service, and countless others from all over the Nation sprang into action.

Thanks to their efforts, no lives were lost and the fire was fully contained by August 10, having burned more than

13,000 acres. Months later, I am left with the image of police officers walking through smoldering neighborhoods with megaphones, making sure no one was left behind.

Today, Idyllwild continues to embody that spirit of community and togetherness. They are rebuilding homes, clearing debris, and preparing for the next wildfire that threatens our communities. Friends and neighbors continue to support one another, and I continue to be inspired by their compassion and determination.

Throughout this rebuilding, our communities have expressed something profound: gratitude. Rarely have I seen such an outpouring of support for our first responders.

I have seen fences papered with handwritten signs thanking the firefighters and countless tributes to their courage and sacrifice at local festivals and benefits.

The affected communities could not have made it this far without the support of religious groups, nonprofits, local businesses, and generous neighbors. During the fire, volunteers with the American Red Cross and the FIND Food Bank delivered food to evacuation centers. So did local restaurants, including Idyllwild Bake Shop & Brew, Cafe Aroma, Coyote Red's, the Mile High Cafe, and many others.

The Ace Hotel, V Palm Springs Hotel, and Grand Idyllwild Lodge were just a few of the businesses that generously opened their doors to displaced residents.

That generosity extended to our four-legged friends, too. I visited the San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus, where staff provided shelter for more than 160 local pets.

Their legacy of compassion lives on through community organizations like Young Idyllwild, who hosted a music festival and benefit to raise money for neighbors still struggling to piece their lives together.

I was particularly moved by the generosity of local musician Ernesto Ale and his family, who lost their home in the fire. In the midst of this hardship, Ernesto found the strength to perform, bringing music to his community and raising money for neighbors who, like him, lost so much in the fire.

Ernesto is proof of the kindness and strength exhibited by every neighbor, firefighter, police officer, and business owner who pitched in after the Cranston fire.

Government should follow the example of communities it serves, pulling together in times of crisis and lending a hand to those in need.

ADDRESSING THE HOUSE FOR THE FINAL TIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise for what will likely be the last time I address the House.

First, I thank the people of New Mexico for entrusting me to represent you in Washington, holding me accountable, and giving me direction. From my first day in Congress to my last, every constituent or stakeholder who stopped me on the street or walked into my office, your office, to tell me about their issues and priorities was my boss. It has been the honor of a lifetime to work with you.

Thank you to our team of brilliant, passionate staff who worked early mornings, late nights, and weekends because they knew just how important our work was to the people we served. Our team secured hundreds of millions of dollars in Federal investments in our State's economy and returned almost $5 million in earned benefits to New Mexico veterans, seniors, and taxpayers.

Your dedication to New Mexico changed lives. Lastly, thank you to all the Members with whom I had the pleasure of serving who helped ensure that my time here was a success.

Whether it was Congressman MEADOWS helping me launch an investigation into SNAP mismanagement in New Mexico, Congressman COLE for helping pass Care Corps grants to assist caregivers, or Congressman O'HALLERAN for working with me to pass the first-ever economic development broadband grant program in the farm bill, I have worked with and learned from Members on every part of the political spectrum. And regardless of our differences, I have found a universal passion for solving problems and public service.

Every Member here understands the privilege and responsibility of working in the most powerful institution in the world and the immeasurable potential of this body to address the problems that we were elected to solve. Our shared values and commitment to each other is always and has been this institution's greatest strength.

To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson: Let us never forget that the differences of opinion are not differences of the fundamental principles that unite us as Americans. We are all Democrats. We are all Republicans.

I believe that we can embrace our differences of opinion in a shared effort to form a more perfect union while never allowing polarization, politics, and short-term political expediency to undermine our obligation to make a difference in the lives of those who sent us here.

Always remember that power is short lived, politics is cyclical, and one day someone else will fill our shoes.

As Congressman CUMMINGS used to say when I served with him on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee: We only hold these positions of power, leadership, and trust for a short period of time. What better way to honor the great leaders who came before us and the people who entrusted us to serve in their footsteps than by seizing every opportunity we have to work together and to pass the reins of our Nation to future leaders better than we found it.

To all the new Members: Stand tall, no matter how tall you are; be courageous; don't take ''no'' for an answer; and never stop working to tear down the roadblocks that stand in the way of advocating for your constituents who count on you every day.

And to the people of New Mexico, thank you for the honor of representing the First Congressional District, and thank you for entrusting me to revolutionize our education system, lead the Nation in clean energy development, and create an economy that prioritizes hardworking families as your next Governor. I look forward to continuing to work for you in your Roundhouse next year.

Mr. Speaker, although I yield back for the final time, I have never been more hopeful about our future and the next generation of Members who will stand here, address this Chamber, and commit to the shared values that form the foundation of progress after I am gone.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a troubling development, which is called voter suppression, and its use as a tool in political combat today. President Trump wrote the playbook on sham claims of voter fraud, and now, sadly, my friends on the other side of the aisle are putting that playbook to use.

During the 2016 Presidential election, then candidate Trump warned that the election would be rigged. Once in office, the President then made unsubstantiated assertions that there were more than 3 million illegal votes cast in the United States, just coincidentally the margin of popular advantage his opponent, Hillary Clinton, had over him.

The President then established a so-called election integrity commission that alleged substantial evidence of voter fraud, found none, and had to be disbanded. That purportedly independent commission was headed, by the way, by Kansas Secretary of State at the time Kris Kobach, a known proponent of voter fraud conspiracy theories that then justified voter suppression on a large scale.

The President used his bully pulpit to claim that midterm ballots were massively infected and called for a halt to vote counts in legally mandated recounts in Georgia and Florida.

Here is what is really going on. When an election is too close to call, rather than encourage the democratic process to play out by counting every vote, Republicans are flipping through Trump's voter fraud playbook to sow distrust in democratic processes.

In Florida, for example, Republican Governor Rick Scott, now Senator-elect, undermined confidence in the State's own recount process by making his own unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud and filed lawsuits against and called for investigations into certain Democratic-leaning counties.

In Georgia, Secretary of State Brian Kemp refused to step down from his role overseeing his own election to be Governor of the State. Under his management, more than a half a million people were purged from voting rolls in July of 2017. That election was decided by just tens of thousands of votes. It makes a difference.

In North Carolina's Ninth Congressional District today, the State Elections Board is investigating whether a local GOP operative illegally collected absentee ballots and altered votes or never submitted them. It may yet lead to, frankly, the decertification of that election and a new special election to be called.

In Wisconsin and Michigan, the GOP-controlled, lame duck State legislatures have pushed through a series of measures that would strip the incoming Democratic Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State of key authorities and restrict access to early voting.

We have seen this before. It is part of a pattern, unfortunately, of voter suppression: purging voter rolls; difficult voter I.D. restrictions; eliminating early voting; outdated and insufficient voting machines; and long lines, especially in minority precincts.

In 2016, North Carolina closed early voting stations and, just coincidentally, reduced African American voting by 8.5 percent, clearly a dispositive difference.

Republican governors like Governor Scott of Florida have exercised their discretion to restore felon voting rights in as restrictive a manner as possible. His predecessor, Governor CHARLIE CRIST, now our colleague, restored voting rights to 155,000 individuals in Florida in 4 years. Governor Scott averaged just 400 per year.

In Wisconsin, a strict voter I.D. law has been credited with suppressing the vote of more than 200,000 Wisconsin voters who were otherwise eligible to cast a ballot in 2016.

Could that have made a difference in the electoral vote of the State of Wisconsin?

□ 1045

These tactics undermine democracy. They are not worthy of the party of Lincoln, and they further erode America's trust in government.

I implore my friends on the other side of the aisle: Let's win fair or square. Let's make sure every American's vote is counted and is treated as sacred. America will be the stronger for it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President of the United States.

HONORING DONEGAL INDIANS FIELD HOCKEY TEAM

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

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and to honor the young women of the Donegal Indians field hockey team, who won the PIAA State championship this year, their second in 3 years.

The Donegal Indians held an impressive 28–1 season record, with 235 points scored and only 19 points scored against them. They can be described in one word: dominating.

They finally met their match in the State championship game, where they were scoreless through regulation. When the team needed to score, they turned to one player, Captain Mackenzie Allessie, who holds the national record for scoring in girls high school field hockey.

Mackenzie racked up an impressive 351 goals during her tenure at Donegal. The last goal that Mackenzie scored lifted the Indians to their second championship.

The team members' drive is a trait that will serve them well in the future. I congratulate them, their coaches, and the community for their victory. I wish them all continued success.

RECOGNIZING CASEY KAUFHOLD

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the amazing accomplishments of Ms. Casey Kaufhold, a 14-year-old freshman at Conestoga Valley High School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Casey is a winner and a world record holder. Last month, she competed with Olympic-class archers from around the world at the World Archery Indoor Series GT Open in Luxembourg. She earned 589 out of 600 possible points to win the gold medal for this event and set a world record for the highest score earned by an archer under the age of 17 during competition.

We are all incredibly proud of Casey's achievements, and we are looking forward to all that is in store for her in the future, which I believe will be as a future Olympian. And if she does so, she will represent our Nation well. We wish her continued success in all of her endeavors.

RECOGNIZING LINN MOEDINGER

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a man synonymous with railroading in Lancaster County: Mr. Linn Moedinger.

After 51 years—51 years—working for the Strasburg Rail Road, Linn is retiring as president of the Strasburg Rail Road Company.

Strasburg Rail Road was founded in 1832. It is the oldest continuously operating railroad in the Western Hemisphere. After 125 years of declining revenue, 24 individuals, including Linn's parents, decided to buy the railroad.

Today, it is a top tourist destination in the district that I represent. They brought new life to Strasburg Rail Road, turning it into a tourist railroad and helping educate and entertain thousands of visitors in our community each year.

Linn took his first paying job at the Strasburg Rail Road when he was 17. He cleaned the restrooms. Year after year, his responsibilities increased and so did his love for the railroad.

Linn was named president in 2000 and has overseen great expansion of the Strasburg Rail Road, and it is a historical marker in the State of Pennsylvania.

Thank you to Linn for his many years of service, and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask today that You bless the Members of the people's House to be the best and most faithful servants of the people they serve.

May they be filled with gratitude at the opportunity they have to serve in this place. We thank You for the abilities they have been given to do their work to contribute to the common good.

As this second session of the 115th Congress draws near its end and legislative business once again weighs heavily on this Hill, withhold not Your spirit of wisdom and truth from this assembly. Give each Member clarity of thought and purity of motive so that they may render their service as their best selves.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

CONGRATULATING JUDGE CARYN CANNER SCHWARTZ

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to rise today in honor of Judge Caryn Canner Schwartz upon her retirement from the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida where she has proudly served since 1993.

Throughout her long and distinguished career as a judge, she has worked in the Civil and Criminal Divisions of the Miami-Dade County Court and as an Acting Circuit Court Judge in the Civil, Criminal, Domestic Violence and Family Divisions of the Circuit Court.

When Caryn is not sitting on the bench, she volunteers her time and experience through many different charitable and educational organizations, including mentoring law students and young attorneys. In fact, for the first 10 years of her career, Caryn taught high school students science and math and worked tirelessly to educate our Nation's youth.

Our south Florida community has benefited substantially from Judge Schwartz's leadership and her public service; and for this I truly thank her.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to join Caryn's family, her friends, and her peers as they honor the many accomplishments of her outstanding career. I wish her and the entire Schwartz family all the best in this new exciting chapter of her life.

PRIORITIZE ISSUES THAT MATTER

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I recently asked my constituents about their priorities, and we received more than 2,400 responses. Their top issues? Healthcare, gun safety, and the environment.

It is worth noting that on each of these issues this Congress has not only not made progress, we have moved backwards. On healthcare, this Congress spent months fighting a failed fight to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and now the administration continues to cynically sabotage the law to weaken protections for pre-existing conditions and increase premiums.

On gun safety, this Congress sits idly by as senseless gun violence and mass shootings claim lives across the country. In fact, the only gun legislation we passed this year, concealed carry reciprocity, actually weakened our gun laws.

On climate, this Congress has not only not listened to the science that tells us to reduce emissions, and instead the administration, President Trump, recklessly withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Accord.

It is time Congress put the interests of the American people first. In the coming new Congress, we have a new opportunity for progress. Let's listen and prioritize the issues that matter most to our constituents and our country: affordable healthcare, the safety of their children, and a sustainable planet.

ADK FORTY-SIXERS CELEBRATE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

(Ms. STEFANIK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Adirondack Forty-Sixers, an organization in my district whose 10,000-plus members have climbed all 46 peaks of the Adirondack Mountains.

Since their founding by brothers Bob and George Marshall, the Forty-Sixers have been central to promoting environmental stewardship, protecting our natural resources, and encouraging younger generations to enjoy the great outdoors.

The Adirondacks are an essential component of our tourism economy. The Forty-Sixers have done important work giving back to the mountains they love and making the peaks more accessible. They have also prioritized community outreach and volunteerism. Their all-volunteer trail maintenance program is critical to keeping trails available to hikers from across the world and, in turn, protecting our environment.

For the past century, young hikers have been mentored and trained by this dedicated group of environmental stewards, and I know that over the next 100 years, many more will be inspired to experience the Adirondack Mountains.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Adirondack Forty-Sixers on this incredible milestone.

MEANINGFUL GUN SAFETY LAWS NOW

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, this Friday marks the sixth anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut.

On December 14, 2012, from 9:30 to 9:40 a.m., a lone gunman armed with an assault weapon killed 27 people, including 20 kids between the ages of 6 and 7 years old. Five minutes, one shooter, 27 people dead. Many of the kids had several bullet wounds in their bodies when they were recovered.

In the years since that tragedy, we have seen high-powered assault weapon attacks on schools, synagogues, nightclubs, churches, concerts, and in our neighborhoods. With each horrific attack, Congress responds with a moment of silence. We have had 50 moments of silence since Sandy Hook.

Silence is not a response. We need rational voices, congressional hearings, and meaningful gun safety laws now.

TRIBUTE FOR PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, an extraordinary tribute for President George H.W. Bush was published by Krishnadev Calamur in The Atlantic: ''Had George Herbert Walker Bush never become the 41st President of the United States, he would still be remembered as one of the great Americans of the 20th century. . . .

''But it was his one-term presidency, from 1989 to 1993, that had a monumental impact on the world. Ronald Reagan, his predecessor, uttered the famous words: 'Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall,' yet it was Bush who presided over its orderly dismantling.

''Bush oversaw the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, the birth of the post-Soviet republics, and the West's outreach to former members of the Warsaw Pact.''

In my service in Congress, I have seen firsthand the expansion of freedom and democracy. Today the largest number of nations in world history are free and democratic, from Bulgaria to Lithuania, inspired by President George H.W. Bush.

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

OPEN ENROLLMENT

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

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, with only 4 days until open enrollment closes for next year, I want to call on people in my community, across Pennsylvania, and in every part of our country to sign up for coverage on healthcare.gov.

Because Pennsylvania chose to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, low-income individuals and

families in every corner of our district and State can obtain coverage, and nearly 700,000 Pennsylvanians are now covered.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Americans of every background can choose from a range of plans to find one that works for them and their family free from discrimination over gender, sexual orientation, race, or preexisting conditions. However, there is still work to be done.

Healthcare is a right, not a privilege. While the Affordable Care Act has brought us closer to universal coverage, we must build on this progress. In the coming months I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to make clear that we need to move away from our profit-driven healthcare system toward a society where affordable, high quality care is the birthright of every single child, woman, and man in this country.

CONGRATULATING THE McCOMB HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the McComb High School football team for winning the Ohio State Division VII Championship. The Panthers won their second title in school history with a 28–3 victory over Glouster Trimble.

McComb showed great fortitude in reeling off eight straight wins on their way to the title. Including freshmen, the Panthers dressed 27 players, about half the number of most of their opponents.

The Panthers' success can be tied to their stout defense which didn't surrender a single touchdown in the championship game. These student athletes gave it their all and had the backing of the entire school district. They exemplified the best of Ohio small-town football.

I know what the title means to McComb, as my dad played for McComb in the late 1930s. It is great to see the fans rally around these players.

Once again, congratulations to Coach Kris Alge and the rest of the McComb High School football team on a job well done.

RECOGNIZING SPECIAL OLYMPICS HAWAII

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, today I am rising to recognize Special Olympics Hawaii celebrating 50 years of service to our community. Since its founding in 1968, Special Olympics has changed lives and served as an indispensable source of strength and empowerment for so many people.

Across our State today, it is serving 4,700 participants with the support of nearly 12,000 coaches and volunteers delivering 10 Olympic-type sports and more than 50 competitions throughout the year.

They have taken on issues like inactivity, injustice, intolerance, and social isolation by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities. They have had an impact on our entire community and our State. They are combating negative stereotypes, bringing joy and a sense of achievement and creating a culture of respect and inclusion.

Mahalo to Special Olympics Hawaii and congratulations on reaching this 50th anniversary year.

A TRIBUTE TO SCOTTY BYRNE

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of longtime Brewton, Alabama, resident and my cousin, G.S. ''Scotty'' Byrne Jr., who passed away on November 18 at the age of 92.

Scotty was a veteran of World War II having served in the 351st Infantry Division under General Mark Clark and later went on to serve as sheriff of Escambia County for 24 years.

In college at the University of Southern Mississippi, Scotty was a premier two-sport athlete excelling in both baseball and golf. He was the first athlete to be inducted into the USM Sports Hall of Fame for two sports. Throughout his life, he was one of the most able golfers in our part of the State.

During his tenure as sheriff, he was a vocal supporter of the Alabama Sheriff's Boys Ranch, providing resources for children in need throughout our State. Without a doubt, Scotty was one of the most memorable citizens in Escambia County's long history.

So on behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District, I want to share our condolences with Scotty's family. He will be sorely missed.

2018 FARM BILL

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, after months of negotiation and conference, I am proud to come to the floor today to say the 2018 farm bill is now a strong, bipartisan bill which works for families, farmers, and communities.

The bill now avoids disastrous cuts to SNAP, a program which helps put food on the table for 44,000 people in Mecklenburg County alone. It also provides $10 million in funding for urban agriculture research and mandatory funding for programs that support local food systems.

As co-founder and co-chair of the bipartisan HBCU Caucus, I am particularly proud to have helped secure key resources for 1890 land-grant universities in the bill. It authorizes $50 million to create three centers of excellence at 1890s and ensures equity between land-grants by removing provisions that strip away unspent extension funds for 1890s, and it mandates a report that outlines research and extension funds for all land-grant schools.

I thank my colleagues on the conference committee, and I urge all of my colleagues to support the bill when it comes to the floor.

□ 1215

HONORING THE LIFE OF JACK MACKENZIE

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the life of Quincy University soccer coach Jack Mackenzie of Quincy, Illinois.

Hired in 1969, Jack built Quincy University into a college soccer dynasty, guiding his program at all levels of college soccer, from the NAIA division through the NCAA's division II status, and even excelling at the NCAA's division I level.

For 43 years, Jack was at the helm of the Quincy soccer program. He was a pioneer and a legend, leading the team to nine national championships between 1970 and 1982, and amassing 516 victories, putting him 10th on the all-time wins list across all NCAA division levels.

Upon retirement in 2012, Jack remained involved in the Quincy University community and could still be found in the stands at every home game the Hawks played.

As the Quincy University community continues to mourn the loss of Coach Jack Mackenzie, may we never forget the positive impact he had on so many lives, the sport of soccer, and his tireless spirit in pursuit of excellence.

MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING THE LIFE OF DON KRZYSIAK

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the life of Don Krzysiak.

Don and his family are longtime members of the Bay City community. Sadly, he passed away on Friday, after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife, Lois, and their children, Tom, Donnie, and Melanie.

Don founded Krzysiak's House Restaurant in 1979, with just a handful of employees, and grew it into the successful Bay City business that it is today. In fact, the very first event after I announced I was running for Congress was at Krzysiak's. He welcomed me with open arms and made me feel welcome in the neighborhood.

I remember always buying paczkis from Don on Fat Tuesday. Every year,

all the money he made from those sales was donated to the Salvation Army.

Don was not just a small-business owner, but also an important part of our community. He helped people struggling to find employment and supported people coming out of jail trying to start a new life.

Everyone who knew him at the family restaurant described him as more than a boss, but everybody's friend. He loved to spend time with his family and in his neighborhood, and he loved to listen to polka music.

Before opening the restaurant, he served in the U.S. Army. His commitment to our country will always be remembered.

Mid-Michigan lost a great friend and a bright spirit this week. The entire State of Michigan, the Bay City community, and I, personally, will miss him.

Thank you, Don, for everything you have done.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House join me in a brief moment of silence in Don's memory.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

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

JOHNSON-O'MALLEY SUPPLEMENTAL INDIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 943) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an accurate comprehensive student count for the purposes of calculating formula allocations for programs under the Johnson-O'Malley Act, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 943

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program Modernization Act''.

SEC. 2. INDIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENT COUNT UPDATE.

The Act of April 16, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 5342 et seq.) (commonly referred to as the Johnson-O'Malley Act) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 7. COMPUTATION OF STUDENT COUNT.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions apply:

''(1) CONTRACTING PARTY.—The term 'contracting party' means an entity that has a contract through a program authorized under this Act.

''(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term 'eligible entity' means an entity that is eligible to apply for a contract for a supplemental or operational support program under this Act, as outlined in section 1.

''(3) EXISTING CONTRACTING PARTY.—The term 'existing contracting party' means a contracting party that has a contract under this Act that is in effect on the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(4) JOM MODERNIZATION ACT.—The term 'JOM Modernization Act' means the Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program Modernization Act.

''(5) NEW CONTRACTING PARTY.—The term 'new contracting party' means an entity that enters into a contract under this Act after the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(6) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of the Interior.

''(b) DETERMINATION OF THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIAN STUDENTS.—

''(1) INITIAL DETERMINATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make an initial determination of the number of eligible Indian students served or potentially served by each eligible entity in accordance with subparagraph (B).

''(B) PROCESS FOR MAKING THE INITIAL DETERMINATION.—

''(i) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act, the Secretary shall publish a preliminary report describing the number of eligible Indian students served or potentially served by each eligible entity, using the most applicable and accurate data (as determined by the Secretary in consultation with eligible entities) from the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the initial determination is to be made from—

''(I) the Bureau of the Census;

''(II) the National Center for Education Statistics; or

''(III) the Office of Indian Education of the Department of Education.

''(ii) DATA RECONCILIATION.—To improve the accuracy of the preliminary report described in clause (i) prior to publishing, the Secretary shall reconcile the data described in the preliminary report with—

''(I) each existing contracting party's data regarding the number of eligible Indian students served by the existing contracting party for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the initial determination is made; and

''(II) identifiable tribal enrollment information.

''(iii) COMMENT PERIOD.—After publishing the preliminary report under clause (i) in accordance with clause (ii), the Secretary shall establish a 60-day comment period to gain feedback about the preliminary report from eligible entities, which the Secretary shall take into consideration in preparing the final report described in clause (iv).

''(iv) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after concluding the consultation described in clause (iii), the Secretary shall publish a final report on the initial determination of the number of eligible Indian students served or potentially served by each eligible entity, including justification for not including any feedback gained during such consultation, if applicable.

''(2) SUBSEQUENT ACADEMIC YEARS.—For each academic year following the fiscal year for which an initial determination is made under paragraph (1) to determine the number of eligible Indian students served or potentially served by a contracting party, the Secretary shall determine the number of eligible Indian students served by the contracting party based on the reported eligible Indian student count numbers identified through the reporting process described in subsection (c).

''(c) CONTRACTING PARTY STUDENT COUNT REPORTING COMPLIANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For each academic year following the fiscal year for which an initial determination is made under subsection (b) to determine the number of eligible Indian students served or potentially served by a contracting party, the contracting party shall submit to the Secretary a report describing the number of eligible Indian students who were served using amounts allocated to such party under this Act during the previous fiscal year. The report shall also include an accounting of the amounts and purposes for which the contract funds were expended.

''(2) FAILURE TO COMPLY.—A contracting party that fails to submit a report under paragraph (1) shall receive no amounts under this Act for the fiscal year following the academic year for which the report should have been submitted.

''(3) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide contracting parties with timely information relating to—

''(A) initial and final reporting deadlines; and

''(B) the consequences of failure to comply outlined in paragraph (2).

''(4) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Indian Education, shall provide technical assistance and training on compliance with the reporting requirements of this subsection to contracting parties.

''(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall prepare an annual report, including the most recent determination of the number of eligible Indian students served by each contracting party, recommendations on appropriate funding levels for the program based on such determination, and an assessment of the contracts under this Act that the Secretary—

''(A) may include in the budget request of the Department of the Interior for each fiscal year;

''(B) shall submit to—

''(i) the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate;

''(ii) the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

''(iii) the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives; and

''(iv) the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

''(C) shall make publicly available.

''(2) MANNER OF PREPARATION.—The Secretary shall prepare the report under paragraph (1) in a manner so as to prevent or minimize new administrative burdens on contracting parties receiving funds under this Act.

''(e) HOLD HARMLESS.—

''(1) INITIAL HOLD HARMLESS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under subparagraph (B) and subject to subparagraphs (C) and (D), for a fiscal year, an existing contracting party shall not receive an amount under this Act that is less than the amount that such existing contracting party received under this Act for the fiscal year preceding the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(B) EXCEPTIONS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—An existing contracting party shall receive an amount under this Act for a fiscal year that is less than the amount that the existing contracting party received under this Act for the fiscal year preceding

the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act, if 1 or more of the following conditions is met:

''(I) FAILURE TO REPORT.—The existing contracting party failed to submit a complete report described in subsection (c) that was most recently due from the date of the determination.

''(II) VIOLATIONS OF CONTRACT OR LAW.—The Secretary has found that the existing contracting party has violated the terms of a contract entered into under this Act or has otherwise violated Federal law.

''(III) STUDENT COUNT DECREASE.—The number of eligible Indian students reported by such existing contracting party under subsection (c) has decreased below the number of eligible Indian students served by the existing contracting party in the fiscal year preceding the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(ii) AMOUNT OF FUNDING REDUCTION FOR EXISTING CONTRACTING PARTIES REPORTING DECREASED STUDENT COUNTS.—A reduction in an amount pursuant to clause (i)(III) shall not be done in such a manner that the existing contracting party receives an amount of funding per eligible Indian student that is less than the amount of funding per eligible Indian student such party received for the fiscal year preceding the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(C) RATABLE REDUCTIONS IN APPROPRIATIONS.—If the funds available under this Act for a fiscal year are insufficient to pay the full amounts that all existing contracting parties are eligible to receive under subparagraph (A) for the fiscal year, the Secretary shall ratably reduce those amounts for the fiscal year.

''(D) SUNSET.—This paragraph shall cease to be effective 4 years after the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(2) MAXIMUM DECREASE AFTER 4 YEARS.—Beginning 4 years after the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act, no contracting party shall receive for a fiscal year more than a 10 percent decrease in funding per eligible Indian student from the previous fiscal year.

''(f) FUNDING ALLOCATION AND REFORM.—

''(1) FUNDING REFORM.—The Secretary may make recommendations for legislation to increase the amount of funds available per eligible Indian student through contracts under this Act to equal to or greater than the amount of funds that were available per eligible Indian student through contracts under this Act for fiscal year 1995, and attempt to identify additional sources of funding that do not reallocate existing funds otherwise utilized by Indian students served—

''(A) by the Bureau of Indian Education; or

''(B) under title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.).

''(2) INCREASES IN PROGRAM FUNDING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (e) and subparagraph (B), for any fiscal year for which the amount appropriated to carry out this Act exceeds the amount appropriated to carry out this Act for the preceding fiscal year, the excess amounts shall—

''(i) be allocated only to those contracting parties that did not receive their full per student funding allocation for the previous fiscal year; and

''(ii) be allocated first to new contracting parties that did not receive their full per student funding allocation for the previous fiscal year.

''(B) PARITY IN FUNDING.—Subparagraph (A) shall have no effect after the first fiscal year for which each contracting party receives their full per student funding allocation.

''(g) INCREASED GEOGRAPHICAL AND TRIBAL PARTICIPATION IN THE JOHNSON-O'MALLEY SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall consult with Indian tribes and contact State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and Alaska Native organizations that have not previously entered into a contract under this Act—

''(1) to determine the interest of the Indian tribes, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and Alaska Native organizations, in entering into such contracts; and

''(2) to share information relating to the process for entering into a contract under this Act.

''(h) RULEMAKING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act, the Secretary, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Indian Education, shall undertake and complete a rulemaking process, following the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, to—

''(A) determine how the regulatory definition of 'eligible Indian student' may be revised to clarify eligibility requirements for contracting parties under this Act;

''(B) determine, as necessary, how the funding formula described in section 273.31 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act) may be clarified and revised to ensure full participation of contracting parties and provide clarity on the funding process under this Act; and

''(C) otherwise reconcile and modernize the rules to comport with the activities of the contracting parties under this Act as of the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act.

''(2) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date the rulemaking under paragraph (1) is complete, the Secretary shall submit a report to Congress describing the results of such rulemaking and necessary recommendations to ensure the full implementation of such rulemaking.

''(i) STUDENT PRIVACY.—The Secretary shall ensure that data is collected and each report is prepared under this section in a manner that protects the rights of eligible Indian students in accordance with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (commonly referred to as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

''(j) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the final report described in subsection (b)(1)(B)(iv) is published, the Comptroller General shall—

''(1) conduct a review of the implementation of this section during the preceding two-year period, including any factors impacting—

''(A) the accuracy of the determinations of the number of eligible Indian students under this section;

''(B) the communication between the Bureau of Indian Education and contracting parties; and

''(C) the efforts by the Bureau of Indian Education to ensure accurate and sufficient distribution of funding for Indian students;

''(2) submit a report describing the results of the review under paragraph (1) to—

''(A) the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate;

''(B) the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

''(C) the Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs of the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

''(D) the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

''(3) make such report publicly available.

''(k) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section—

''(1) creates a new program or duplicates program activities under this Act; or

''(2) replaces or diminishes the effect of regulations to carry out this Act existing on the day before the date of enactment of the JOM Modernization Act, unless expressly provided in this section.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 943.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 943, the Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program Modernization Act.

The Johnson-O'Malley Program was first established in 1934 to support the unique educational needs of American Indian students. Through the program, Native students have access to tutoring, Native language classes, cultural activities, afterschool programming, books and supplies, and other programs and items to support their educational pursuits.

For American Indian students, this program could be a lifeline. The Johnson-O'Malley Program has the ability to make the difference in a student's life, and it is essential that we take strides to make this program as efficient and effective as possible. As it turns out, there is much work to be done.

The Bureau of Indian Education contracts with Tribes, Tribal organizations, and sometimes States and public school districts to distribute program funds. The Johnson-O'Malley Act stipulates that funds be distributed to contractors based on the count of American Indian students and average per-pupil operating costs. The formula makes sense, except for the fact that the most recent student counts are from 1995.

After the 1995 freeze, the BIE ceased collecting student data and all information regarding Johnson-O'Malley projects and program outcomes. This has allowed contractors to collect funds based on data from over 20 years old. This kind of program mismanagement deprives students of educational opportunity in schools where student populations have grown and wastes taxpayer dollars in schools where student counts have declined.

Since fiscal year 2012, Congress has directed the BIE to count the actual

number of students who are eligible for and participating in the Johnson-O'Malley Program and recommend a methodology to distribute funds in the future. Yet, to date, the BIE has not conducted an accurate student count.

S. 943 amends the Johnson-O'Malley Act to require the Department of the Interior to update its count of students who are served by the Johnson-O'Malley Program each year. The legislation strengthens program accountability and oversight by requiring program contractors to report the amounts and purposes for which funds are spent. This will provide sufficient information to conduct the necessary oversight of the program.

The bill also directs program facilitators to submit an annual program assessment report to Congress, and establishes a consultation process between the Secretary of the Interior and Tribal schools so that students may be better served.

We owe it to Native students to make this well-intentioned program as effective as it can be, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of S. 943, the Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program Modernization Act.

The abysmal conditions and status of education attainment and achievement of American Indian children and students continues. This educational gap for American Indian students continues to lag behind all other students in this country.

This bill would require the Department of the Interior to annually update the count of American Indian and Alaska Native students so the Department can more accurately distribute Johnson-O'Malley funds which supplement Indian education. The bill would also require grantees to report how funds are being used, helping to ensure Federal dollars support Native students' education.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to provide parity in resources to Native education. Currently, the Department is prevented from updating the count because of an effort, from over 20 years ago, to cut spending through the use of block grants.

Congress, at the time, determined one way to reduce funding for Indian education was to freeze efforts to count the number of Native students. As a result, the Department of the Interior continues to use the 1994 number of 272,000 Native students, even though it is estimated, based on Census reports, that there are now more than 750,000 Native students. This policy is just another in a long list of the second-class treatment of American Indians by our government.

I want to thank my colleague, BETTY MCCOLLUM, for introducing this version of the legislation and my Republican colleagues, TOM COLE and DON YOUNG, for providing bipartisan support. My hope is that the passage of this bill is a first step, however small it may be, to righting a wrong to American Indian students.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 943, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the last official count of eligible students was conducted in 1995, which determined that there were nearly 272,000 American Indian students who were qualified for the Johnson-O'Malley Program. However, in 2017, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that there were an additional 80,000 students who would qualify. Clearly, this bill is needed and overdue.

Currently, the program receives $14.9 million, annually, in funding. Modernization of this act will cost an estimated $13 million over the next 4 years. This is an important investment in the future of our country, and those students deserve our support.

This legislation improves and strengthens the Johnson-O'Malley Program, and I urge my colleagues to support S. 943.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 943, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADVANCED NUCLEAR FUEL AVAILABILITY ACT

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6140) to require the Secretary of Energy to establish and carry out a program to support the availability of HA-LEU for domestic commercial use, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6140

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act''.

SEC. 2. PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish and carry out, through the Office of Nuclear Energy, a program to support the availability of HA–LEU for domestic commercial use.

(b) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a), the Secretary—

(1) may provide financial assistance to assist commercial entities to design and license transportation packages for HA–LEU, including canisters for metal, gas, and other HA–LEU compositions;

(2) shall, to the extent practicable—

(A) by January 1, 2021, have commercial entities submit such transportation package designs to the Commission for certification by the Commission under part 71 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations; and

(B) encourage the Commission to have such transportation package designs so certified by the Commission by January 1, 2023;

(3) not later than January 1, 2020, shall submit to Congress a report on the Department's uranium inventory that may be available to be processed to HA–LEU for purposes of such program, which may not include any uranium allocated by the Secretary for use in support of the atomic energy defense activities of the National Nuclear Security Administration;

(4) not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, and biennially thereafter through September 30, 2025, shall conduct a survey of stakeholders to estimate the quantity of HA–LEU necessary for domestic commercial use for each of the five subsequent years;

(5) shall assess options available for the Secretary to acquire HA–LEU for such program, including an assessment, for each such option, of the cost and amount of time required;

(6) shall establish a consortium, which may include entities involved in any stage of the nuclear fuel cycle, to partner with the Department to support the availability of HA–LEU for domestic commercial use, including by—

(A) providing information to the Secretary for purposes of surveys conducted under paragraph (4); and

(B) purchasing HA–LEU made available to members of the consortium by the Secretary under the program;

(7) shall, prior to acquiring HA–LEU under paragraph (8), in coordination with the consortium established pursuant to paragraph (6), develop a schedule for cost recovery of HA–LEU made available to members of the consortium pursuant to paragraph (8);

(8) may, beginning not later than 3 years after the establishment of a consortium under paragraph (6), acquire HA–LEU, in order, to the extent practicable, to make such HA–LEU available to members of the consortium beginning not later than January 1, 2025, in amounts that are consistent, to the extent practicable, with the quantities estimated under the surveys conducted under paragraph (4); and

(9) shall develop, in consultation with the Commission, criticality benchmark data to assist the Commission in—

(A) the licensing and regulation of category II spent nuclear material fuel fabrication and enrichment facilities under part 70 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations; and

(B) certification of transportation packages under part 71 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations.

(c) APPLICABILITY OF USEC PRIVATIZATION ACT.—The requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (C) of section 3112(d)(2) of the USEC Privatization Act (42 U.S.C. 2297h–10(d)(2)) shall apply to a sale or transfer of HA–LEU by the Secretary to a member of the consortium under this section.

(d) FUNDING.—

(1) TRANSPORTATION PACKAGE DESIGN.—

(A) COST SHARE.—The Secretary shall ensure that not less than 20 percent of the costs of design and license activities carried out pursuant to subsection (b)(1) are paid by a non-Federal entity.

(B) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (b)(1)—

(i) $1,500,000 for fiscal year 2019;

(ii) $1,500,000 for fiscal year 2020; and
(iii) $1,500,000 for fiscal year 2021.

(2) DOE ACQUISITION OF HA-LEU.—The Secretary may not make commitments under this section (including cooperative agreements (used in accordance with section 6305 of title 31, United States Code), purchase agreements, guarantees, leases, service contracts, or any other type of commitment) for the purchase or other acquisition of HA-LEU unless funds are specifically provided for such purposes in advance in subsequent appropriations Acts, and only to the extent that the full extent of anticipated costs stemming from such commitments is recorded as an obligation up front and in full at the time it is made.

(3) OTHER COSTS.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, in carrying out this section, the Secretary shall use amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary.

(e) SUNSET.—The authority of the Secretary to carry out the program under this section shall expire on September 30, 2033.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) identification of updates to regulations, certifications, and other regulatory policies that the Commission determines are necessary in order for HA–LEU to be commercially available, including—

(A) guidance for material control and accountability of category II special nuclear material;

(B) certifications relating to transportation packaging for HA–LEU; and

(C) licensing of enrichment, conversion, and fuel fabrication facilities for HA–LEU, and associated physical security plans for such facilities;

(2) a description of such updates; and

(3) a timeline to complete such updates.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(2) DEPARTMENT.—The term ''Department'' means Department of Energy.

(3) HA–LEU.—The term ''HA–LEU'' means high-assay low-enriched uranium.

(4) HIGH-ASSAY LOW-ENRICHED URANIUM.—The term ''high-assay low-enriched uranium'' means uranium having an assay greater than 5.0 percent and less than 20.0 percent enrichment of the uranium-235 isotope.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Energy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, nuclear power is a clean and efficient source of zero-emissions energy. Today, it generates approximately 20 percent of our country's ''always-on, baseload'' electricity for our homes and businesses.

Most nuclear reactors currently in use are very similar in nature and operate on a fuel that is generally enriched below 5 percent. The next generation of advanced reactors under development, however, vary in size and operation, and they will require flexibility and efficiencies from an advanced fuel. This fuel, known as high-assay, low-enriched uranium, or HA–LEU, is enriched at higher levels than what is available in the current commercial market.

The bipartisan Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act, which I introduced with my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY), establishes a public-private partnership through the Energy Department's Office of Nuclear Energy to support the availability of HA–LEU for domestic commercial use.

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A March 2017 survey of 18 advanced reactor developers based in the United States found that the lack of availability of advanced fuels is the foremost factor that would impede the development and deployment of advanced reactor technologies.

Simply put, this bill would ensure that there is a supply of advanced fuel available for domestic commercial industry purchase for the advanced reactors of tomorrow.

Global energy demand will continue to increase, and emissions-free nuclear power is the ultimate source to meet those needs for the next generation of electricity. It is important to pass this bill to give American innovators a competitive edge in designing and deploying the reactors of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I thank, again, Mr. MCNERNEY for working with me on this issue, as well as committee leadership and staff for their assistance in bringing this legislation forward.

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6140. This bill is an effort to accelerate the availability of high-assay low-enriched uranium, the fuel needed for most advanced nuclear designs.

There is no existing commercial market for this fuel, so in order to ensure that the fuel is available for advanced reactors once they are licensed and ready to begin producing electricity, the Federal Government will need to coordinate efforts among agencies, and with the commercial nuclear sector, to ensure that high-assay low-enriched uranium can be licensed and safely transported.

You wouldn't buy a lawnmower if you couldn't buy gas to run it. Similarly, we need to develop a domestic market for fuel needed to power these advanced nuclear reactor projects that are coming onto the market in the next decade.

I thank my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, both Representative FLORES and Representative MCNERNEY, for developing this thoughtful proposal.

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

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time until my other colleagues arrive.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY), one of the cosponsors of the bill.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. GREEN. I have had the pleasure of serving with Mr. GREEN for about 12 years now, and he has been an incredible colleague. One thing I can say about Mr. GREEN: He is good for his word. When he says he is going to provide something and produce something, he does. So I appreciate the gentleman's friendship and collegiality.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 6140, the Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act. Every day, we are seeing the devastating effects of climate change, like the deadly wildfires we just had in California; severe flooding around the world; and our Nation's persistent asthma rates, which continue to threaten public health.

The Federal Government has the responsibility to address climate change by investing in proactive measures to combat this prevailing threat. We need a diverse—and I repeat, diverse—energy mix, including nuclear power, which already generates 60 percent of our Nation's zero-emissions electricity.

H.R. 6140 is the future of nuclear technology. It creates a pathway for tomorrow's nuclear reactors so that we will be able to confront the realities of climate change.

This bill directs the Department of Energy to conduct studies, authorizes the Department of Energy to acquire materials, and requires the DOE to develop a schedule to recover these costs.

The availability of high-assay low-enriched uranium is critical to these efforts. Federal investments and protocols regarding the transportation, fuel fabrication, and enrichment to effectively bring this fuel to market are encouraging.

This bill updates the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's policies and addresses the development of a robust regulatory regime, the options for requiring this type of uranium, and the preparation of the infrastructure required for this fuel.

As we look to the future, small modular reactors, or SMRs, as they are referred to, will be useful in a variety of settings, from microgrids to rural areas. And this type of fuel needs to be available by the time SMRs come to the market.

The consortium that is formed here is the type of partnership that will be useful in kick-starting this technology and then turning it over to let industry take the reins.

I thank my partners on this bill—Mr. FLORES, Mr. UPTON, Mr. WALDEN, and Mr. Pallone—for their leadership on this issue, and I thank our staffs for their work on this critical legislation.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I thank my friend and colleague Mr. GREEN, again, who is retiring this year. He has been a champion for bipartisanship and compromise, and an advocate for sound policy in this Chamber. He will be missed. I will also miss the Speaker who is sitting in the Chair right now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6140.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is simple. H.R. 6140 will set the stage for powering electricity in the future in a green manner by allowing for the development of those new-generation reactors, but we have to have the fuel to do it. This bill, by working with my good friend Mr. MCNERNEY from California, does that.

This bill passed the subcommittee in the Committee on Energy and Commerce by a unanimous voice vote. It also passed the full committee by a voice vote. It is a bipartisan solution to address a real need to generate electricity, always-on, baseload electricity, in a zero-emissions manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this important piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6140, the ''Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act,'' is a bipartisan bill sponsored by my Energy and Commerce colleagues, BILL FLORES of Texas, along with JERRY MCNERNEY of California.

We considered this bill through regular order in Committee and the Full Committee reported the bill favorably, as amended, by a voice vote.

Imagine designing a new car that is safer, less expensive, and gets triple the mileage than anything we see on the road today. But when the vehicle is ready to hit the road, there is no gas to fill up the tank.

Nuclear innovators face a similar—and very critical—challenge as they work to bring several promising advanced nuclear technologies to the market. These new designs require fuels that have different attributes than what is used in today's fleet of nuclear reactors, but the fuels are not commercially available.

H.R. 6140 addresses this challenge by ensuring nuclear innovators will have the advanced fuels needed to develop and demonstrate their products commercially.

The bill provides a direct path to align advanced nuclear fuel supply with initial demand for the deployment of next generation nuclear technologies. It provides for the development of the technical information necessary to assist the creation of the regulatory and licensing framework for these fuels.

The bill directs the Secretary of Energy to establish a temporary program, operating to support a public-private partnership, that will make what is known as high-assay low-enriched uranium available for use in the first-of-a-kind advanced nuclear reactor designs. It provides for the surveys and information necessary to inform the new market development and cost recovery for initial federal investments.

In short, the Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act takes practical, targeted steps to ensure the infrastructure will be in place in time to enable the development and deployment of a new generation of nuclear technologies in the United States.

This is an important bill for ensuring the nation's international leadership on nuclear technology, for ensuring our energy security, and achieving our clean energy goals.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 6140.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6140, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IMPROVING MEDICAID PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES ACT

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7217) to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing coordinated care for children with complex medical conditions through a health home, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7217

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Improving Medicaid Programs and Opportunities for Eligible Beneficiaries Act'' or the ''IMPROVE Act''.

TITLE I—ACE KIDS

SEC. 101. STATE OPTION TO PROVIDE COORDINATED CARE THROUGH A HEALTH HOME FOR CHILDREN WITH MEDICALLY COMPLEX CONDITIONS.

Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 1945 the following new section:

''SEC. 1945A. STATE OPTION TO PROVIDE COORDINATED CARE THROUGH A HEALTH HOME FOR CHILDREN WITH MEDICALLY COMPLEX CONDITIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 1902(a)(1) (relating to statewideness) and section 1902(a)(10)(B) (relating to comparability), beginning October 1, 2022, a State, at its option as a State plan amendment, may provide for medical assistance under this title to children with medically complex conditions who choose to enroll in a health home under this section by selecting a designated provider, a team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or a health team as the child's health home for purposes of providing the child with health home services.

''(b) HEALTH HOME QUALIFICATION STANDARDS.—The Secretary shall establish standards for qualification as a health home for purposes of this section. Such standards shall include requiring designated providers, teams of health care professionals operating with such providers, and health teams to demonstrate to the State the ability to do the following:

''(1) Coordinate prompt care for children with medically complex conditions, including access to pediatric emergency services at all times.

''(2) Develop an individualized comprehensive pediatric family-centered care plan for children with medically complex conditions that accommodates patient preferences.

''(3) Work in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner with the family of a child with medically complex conditions to develop and incorporate into such child's care plan, in a manner consistent with the needs of the child and the choices of the child's family, ongoing home care, community-based pediatric primary care, pediatric inpatient care, social support services, and local hospital pediatric emergency care.

''(4) Coordinate access to—

''(A) subspecialized pediatric services and programs for children with medically complex conditions, including the most intensive diagnostic, treatment, and critical care levels as medically necessary; and

''(B) palliative services if the State provides such services under the State plan (or a waiver of such plan).

''(5) Coordinate care for children with medically complex conditions with out-of-State providers furnishing care to such children to the maximum extent practicable for the families of such children and where medically necessary, in accordance with guidance issued under subsection (e)(1) and section 431.52 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations.

''(6) Collect and report information under subsection (g)(1).

''(c) PAYMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A State shall provide a designated provider, a team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or a health team with payments for the provision of health home services to each child with medically complex conditions that selects such provider, team of health care professionals, or health team as the child's health home. Payments made to a designated provider, a team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or a health team for such services shall be treated as medical assistance for purposes of section 1903(a), except that, during the first 2 fiscal year quarters that the State plan amendment is in effect, the Federal medical assistance percentage applicable to such payments shall be increased by 15 percentage points, but in no case may exceed 90 percent.

''(2) METHODOLOGY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The State shall specify in the State plan amendment the methodology the State will use for determining payment for the provision of health home services. Such methodology for determining payment—

''(i) may be tiered to reflect, with respect to each child with medically complex conditions provided such services by a designated provider, a team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or a health team, the severity or number of each such child's chronic conditions, life-threatening illnesses, disabilities, or rare diseases, or the specific capabilities of the provider, team of health care professionals, or health team; and

''(ii) shall be established consistent with section 1902(a)(30)(A).

''(B) ALTERNATE MODELS OF PAYMENT.—The methodology for determining payment for provision of health home services under this section shall not be limited to a per-member per-month basis and may provide (as proposed by the State and subject to approval by the Secretary) for alternate models of payment.

''(3) PLANNING GRANTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning October 1, 2022, the Secretary may award planning grants to States for purposes of developing a State plan amendment under this section. A planning grant awarded to a State under this paragraph shall remain available until expended.

''(B) STATE CONTRIBUTION.—A State awarded a planning grant shall contribute an amount equal to the State percentage determined under section 1905(b) (without regard to section 5001 of Public Law 111–5) for each fiscal year for which the grant is awarded.

''(C) LIMITATION.—The total amount of payments made to States under this paragraph shall not exceed $5,000,000.

''(d) COORDINATING CARE.—

''(1) HOSPITAL NOTIFICATION.—A State with a State plan amendment approved under this section shall require each hospital that is a participating provider under the State plan (or a waiver of such plan) to establish procedures for, in the case of a child with medically complex conditions who is enrolled in a health home pursuant to this section and seeks treatment in the emergency department of such hospital, notifying the health home of such child of such treatment.

''(2) EDUCATION WITH RESPECT TO AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH HOME SERVICES.—In order for a State plan amendment to be approved under this section, a State shall include in the State plan amendment a description of the State's process for educating providers participating in the State plan (or a waiver of such plan) on the availability of health home services for children with medically complex conditions, including the process by which such providers can refer such children to a designated provider, team of health care professionals operating such a provider, or health team for the purpose of establishing a health home through which such children may receive such services.

''(3) FAMILY EDUCATION.—In order for a State plan amendment to be approved under this section, a State shall include in the State plan amendment a description of the State's process for educating families with children eligible to receive health home services pursuant to this section of the availability of such services. Such process shall include the participation of family-to-family entities or other public or private organizations or entities who provide outreach and information on the availability of health care items and services to families of individuals eligible to receive medical assistance under the State plan (or a waiver of such plan).

''(4) MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATION.—A State with a State plan amendment approved under this section shall consult and coordinate, as appropriate, with the Secretary in addressing issues regarding the prevention and treatment of mental illness and substance use among children with medically complex conditions receiving health home services under this section.

''(e) GUIDANCE ON COORDINATING CARE FROM OUT-OF-STATE PROVIDERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 1, 2020, the Secretary shall issue (and update as the Secretary determines necessary) guidance to State Medicaid directors on—

''(A) best practices for using out-of-State providers to provide care to children with medically complex conditions;

''(B) coordinating care for such children provided by such out-of-State providers (including when provided in emergency and non-emergency situations);

''(C) reducing barriers for such children receiving care from such providers in a timely fashion; and

''(D) processes for screening and enrolling such providers in the respective State plan (or a waiver of such plan), including efforts to streamline such processes or reduce the burden of such processes on such providers.

''(2) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall issue a request for information to seek input from children with medically complex conditions and their families, States, providers (including children's hospitals, hospitals, pediatricians, and other providers), managed care plans, children's health groups, family and beneficiary advocates, and other stakeholders with respect to coordinating the care for such children provided by out-of-State providers.

''(f) MONITORING.—A State shall include in the State plan amendment—

''(1) a methodology for tracking avoidable hospital readmissions and calculating savings that result from improved care coordination and management under this section;

''(2) a proposal for use of health information technology in providing health home services under this section and improving service delivery and coordination across the care continuum (including the use of wireless patient technology to improve coordination and management of care and patient adherence to recommendations made by their provider); and

''(3) a methodology for tracking prompt and timely access to medically necessary care for children with medically complex conditions from out-of-State providers.

''(g) DATA COLLECTION.—

''(1) PROVIDER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—In order to receive payments from a State under subsection (c), a designated provider, a team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or a health team shall report to the State, at such time and in such form and manner as may be required by the State, the following information:

''(A) With respect to each such provider, team of health care professionals, or health team, the name, National Provider Identification number, address, and specific health care services offered to be provided to children with medically complex conditions who have selected such provider, team of health care professionals, or health team as the health home of such children.

''(B) Information on all applicable measures for determining the quality of health home services provided by such provider, team of health care professionals, or health team, including, to the extent applicable, child health quality measures and measures for centers of excellence for children with complex needs developed under this title, title XXI, and section 1139A.

''(C) Such other information as the Secretary shall specify in guidance.

When appropriate and feasible, such provider, team of health care professionals, or health team, as the case may be, shall use health information technology in providing the State with such information.

''(2) STATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.—A State with a State plan amendment approved under this section shall report to the Secretary (and, upon request, to the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission), at such time and in such form and manner determined by the Secretary to be reasonable and minimally burdensome, the following information:

''(i) Information reported under paragraph (1).

''(ii) The number of children with medically complex conditions who have selected a health home pursuant to this section.

''(iii) The nature, number, and prevalence of chronic conditions, life-threatening illnesses, disabilities, or rare diseases that such children have.

''(iv) The type of delivery systems and payment models used to provide services to such children under this section.

''(v) The number and characteristics of designated providers, teams of health care professionals operating with such providers, and health teams selected as health homes pursuant to this section, including the number and characteristics of out-of-State providers, teams of health care professionals operating with such providers, and health teams who have provided health care items and services to such children.

''(vi) The extent to which such children receive health care items and services under the State plan.

''(vii) Quality measures developed specifically with respect to health care items and services provided to children with medically complex conditions.

''(B) REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES.—Not later than 90 days after a State has a State plan amendment approved under this section, such State shall submit to the Secretary, and make publicly available on the appropriate State website, a report on how the State is implementing guidance issued under subsection (e)(1), including through any best practices adopted by the State.

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

''(1) to require a child with medically complex conditions to enroll in a health home under this section;

''(2) to limit the choice of a child with medically complex conditions in selecting a designated provider, team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or health team that meets the health home qualification standards established under subsection (b) as the child's health home; or

''(3) to reduce or otherwise modify—

''(A) the entitlement of children with medically complex conditions to early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment services (as defined in section 1905(r)); or

''(B) the informing, providing, arranging, and reporting requirements of a State under section 1902(a)(43).

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) CHILD WITH MEDICALLY COMPLEX CONDITIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the term 'child with medically complex conditions' means an individual under 21 years of age who—

''(i) is eligible for medical assistance under the State plan (or under a waiver of such plan); and

''(ii) has at least—

''(I) one or more chronic conditions that cumulatively affect three or more organ systems and severely reduces cognitive or physical functioning (such as the ability to eat, drink, or breathe independently) and that also requires the use of medication, durable medical equipment, therapy, surgery, or other treatments; or

''(II) one life-limiting illness or rare pediatric disease (as defined in section 529(a)(3) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360ff(a)(3))).

''(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall prevent the Secretary from establishing higher levels as to the

number or severity of chronic, life threatening illnesses, disabilities, rare diseases or mental health conditions for purposes of determining eligibility for receipt of health home services under this section.

''(2) CHRONIC CONDITION.—The term 'chronic condition' means a serious, long-term physical, mental, or developmental disability or disease, including the following:

''(A) Cerebral palsy.

''(B) Cystic fibrosis.

''(C) HIV/AIDS.

''(D) Blood diseases, such as anemia or sickle cell disease.

''(E) Muscular dystrophy.

''(F) Spina bifida.

''(G) Epilepsy.

''(H) Severe autism spectrum disorder.

''(I) Serious emotional disturbance or serious mental health illness.

''(3) HEALTH HOME.—The term 'health home' means a designated provider (including a provider that operates in coordination with a team of health care professionals) or a health team selected by a child with medically complex conditions (or the family of such child) to provide health home services.

''(4) HEALTH HOME SERVICES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'health home services' means comprehensive and timely high-quality services described in subparagraph (B) that are provided by a designated provider, a team of health care professionals operating with such a provider, or a health team.

''(B) SERVICES DESCRIBED.—The services described in this subparagraph shall include—

''(i) comprehensive care management;

''(ii) care coordination, health promotion, and providing access to the full range of pediatric specialty and subspecialty medical services, including services from out-of-State providers, as medically necessary;

''(iii) comprehensive transitional care, including appropriate follow-up, from inpatient to other settings;

''(iv) patient and family support (including authorized representatives);

''(v) referrals to community and social support services, if relevant; and

''(vi) use of health information technology to link services, as feasible and appropriate.

''(5) DESIGNATED PROVIDER.—The term 'designated provider' means a physician (including a pediatrician or a pediatric specialty or subspecialty provider), children's hospital, clinical practice or clinical group practice, prepaid inpatient health plan or prepaid ambulatory health plan (as defined by the Secretary), rural clinic, community health center, community mental health center, home health agency, or any other entity or provider that is determined by the State and approved by the Secretary to be qualified to be a health home for children with medically complex conditions on the basis of documentation evidencing that the entity has the systems, expertise, and infrastructure in place to provide health home services. Such term may include providers who are employed by, or affiliated with, a children's hospital.

''(6) TEAM OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.—The term 'team of health care professionals' means a team of health care professionals (as described in the State plan amendment under this section) that may—

''(A) include—

''(i) physicians and other professionals, such as pediatricians or pediatric specialty or subspecialty providers, nurse care coordinators, dietitians, nutritionists, social workers, behavioral health professionals, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, nurses, individuals with experience in medical supportive technologies, or any professionals determined to be appropriate by the State and approved by the Secretary;

''(ii) an entity or individual who is designated to coordinate such a team; and

''(iii) community health workers, translators, and other individuals with culturally-appropriate expertise; and

''(B) be freestanding, virtual, or based at a children's hospital, hospital, community health center, community mental health center, rural clinic, clinical practice or clinical group practice, academic health center, or any entity determined to be appropriate by the State and approved by the Secretary.

''(7) HEALTH TEAM.—The term 'health team' has the meaning given such term for purposes of section 3502 of Public Law 111–148.''.

TITLE II—OTHER MEDICAID

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON REBALANCING DEMONSTRATION.

(a) GENERAL FUNDING.—Section 6071(h) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 1396a note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) subject to paragraph (3), $112,000,000 for fiscal year 2019.'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''Amounts made'' and inserting ''Subject to paragraph (3), amounts made''; and

(B) by striking ''September 30, 2016'' and inserting ''September 30, 2021''; and

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

''(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR FY 2019.—Funds appropriated under paragraph (1)(F) shall be made available for grants to States only if such States have an approved MFP demonstration project under this section as of December 31, 2018.''.

(b) FUNDING FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT; TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; OVERSIGHT.—Section 6071(f) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 1396a note) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) FUNDING.—From the amounts appropriated under subsection (h)(1)(F) for fiscal year 2019, $500,000 shall be available to the Secretary for such fiscal year to carry out this subsection.''.

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 6071(b) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 1396a note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(10) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.''.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF PROTECTION FOR MEDICAID RECIPIENTS OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES AGAINST SPOUSAL IMPOVERISHMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2404 of Public Law 111–148 (42 U.S.C. 1396r–5 note) is amended by striking ''the 5-year period that begins on January 1, 2014,'' and inserting ''the period beginning on January 1, 2014, and ending on March 31, 2019,''.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) PROTECTING STATE SPOUSAL INCOME AND ASSET DISREGARD FLEXIBILITY UNDER WAIVERS AND PLAN AMENDMENTS.—Nothing in section 2404 of Public Law 111–148 (42 U.S.C. 1396r–5 note) or section 1924 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–5) shall be construed as prohibiting a State from disregarding an individual's spousal income and assets under a State waiver or plan amendment described in paragraph (2) for purposes of making determinations of eligibility for home and community-based services or home and community-based attendant services and supports under such waiver or plan amendment.

(2) STATE WAIVER OR PLAN AMENDMENT DESCRIBED.—A State waiver or plan amendment described in this paragraph is any of the following:

(A) A waiver or plan amendment to provide medical assistance for home and community-based services under a waiver or plan amendment under subsection (c), (d), or (i) of section 1915 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396n) or under section 1115 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1315).

(B) A plan amendment to provide medical assistance for home and community-based services for individuals by reason of being determined eligible under section 1902(a)(10)(C) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(C)) or by reason of section 1902(f) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(f)) or otherwise on the basis of a reduction of income based on costs incurred for medical or other remedial care under which the State disregarded the income and assets of the individual's spouse in determining the initial and ongoing financial eligibility of an individual for such services in place of the spousal impoverishment provisions applied under section 1924 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–5).

(C) A plan amendment to provide medical assistance for home and community-based attendant services and supports under section 1915(k) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396n(k)).

SEC. 203. REDUCTION IN FMAP AFTER 2020 FOR STATES WITHOUT ASSET VERIFICATION PROGRAM.

Section 1940 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396w) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(k) REDUCTION IN FMAP AFTER 2020 FOR NON-COMPLIANT STATES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a calendar quarter beginning on or after January 1, 2021, the Federal medical assistance percentage otherwise determined under section 1905(b) for a non-compliant State shall be reduced—

''(A) for calendar quarters in 2021 and 2022, by 0.12 percentage points;

''(B) for calendar quarters in 2023, by 0.25 percentage points;

''(C) for calendar quarters in 2024, by 0.35 percentage points; and

''(D) for calendar quarters in 2025 and each year thereafter, by 0.5 percentage points.

''(2) NON-COMPLIANT STATE DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'non-compliant State' means a State—

''(A) that is one of the 50 States or the District of Columbia;

''(B) with respect to which the Secretary has not approved a State plan amendment submitted under subsection (a)(2); and

''(C) that is not operating, on an ongoing basis, an asset verification program in accordance with this section.''.

SEC. 204. DENIAL OF FFP FOR CERTAIN EXPENDITURES RELATING TO VACUUM ERECTION SYSTEMS AND PENILE PROSTHETIC IMPLANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1903(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396b(i)) is amended by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

''(12) with respect to any amounts expended for—

''(A) a vacuum erection system that is not medically necessary; or

''(B) the insertion, repair, or removal and replacement of a penile prosthetic implant (unless such insertion, repair, or removal and replacement is medically necessary); or''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to items and services furnished on or after January 1, 2019.

SEC. 205. MEDICAID IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Section 1941(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396w–1(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''$31,000,000'' and inserting ''$9,000,000''.

SEC. 206. PREVENTING THE MISCLASSIFICATION OF DRUGS UNDER THE MEDICAID DRUG REBATE PROGRAM.

(a) APPLICATION OF CIVIL MONEY PENALTY FOR MISCLASSIFICATION OF COVERED OUTPATIENT DRUGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1927(b)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8(b)(3)) is amended—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by inserting ''AND DRUG PRODUCT'' after ''PRICE'';

(B) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking ''; and'' at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(ii) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(iii) in clause (iv), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iv) by inserting after clause (iv) the following new clause:

''(v) not later than 30 days after the last day of each month of a rebate period under the agreement, such drug product information as the Secretary shall require for each of the manufacturer's covered outpatient drugs.''; and

(C) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in clause (ii), by inserting '', including information related to drug pricing, drug product information, and data related to drug pricing or drug product information,'' after ''provides false information''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(iii) MISCLASSIFIED OR MISREPORTED INFORMATION.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Any manufacturer with an agreement under this section that knowingly (as defined in section 1003.110 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation)) misclassifies a covered outpatient drug, such as by knowingly submitting incorrect drug category information, is subject to a civil money penalty for each covered outpatient drug that is misclassified in an amount not to exceed 2 times the amount of the difference, as determined by the Secretary, between—

''(aa) the total amount of rebates that the manufacturer paid with respect to the drug to all States for all rebate periods during which the drug was misclassified; and

''(bb) the total amount of rebates that the manufacturer would have been required to pay, as determined by the Secretary, with respect to the drug to all States for all rebate periods during which the drug was misclassified if the drug had been correctly classified.

''(II) OTHER PENALTIES AND RECOVERY OF UNDERPAID REBATES.—The civil money penalties described in subclause (I) are in addition to other penalties as may be prescribed by law and any other recovery of the underlying underpayment for rebates due under this section or the terms of the rebate agreement as determined by the Secretary.

''(iv) INCREASING OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT.—Each year the Secretary shall retain, in addition to any amount retained by the Secretary to recoup investigation and litigation costs related to the enforcement of the civil money penalties under this subparagraph and subsection (c)(4)(B)(ii)(III), an amount equal to 25 percent of the total amount of civil money penalties collected under this subparagraph and subsection (c)(4)(B)(ii)(III) for the year, and such retained amount shall be available to the Secretary, without further appropriation and until expended, for activities related to the oversight and enforcement of this section and agreements under this section, including—

''(I) improving drug data reporting systems;

''(II) evaluating and ensuring manufacturer compliance with rebate obligations; and

''(III) oversight and enforcement related to ensuring that manufacturers accurately and fully report drug information, including data related to drug classification.''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) in clause (iv), by striking '', and'' and inserting a comma;

(II) in clause (v), by striking ''subsection (f).'' and inserting ''subsection (f), and''; and

(III) by inserting after clause (v) the following new clause:

''(vi) in the case of categories of drug product or classification information that were not considered confidential by the Secretary on the day before the date of the enactment of the IMPROVE Act.''.

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 1903(i)(10) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396b(i)(10)) is amended—

(i) in subparagraph (C)—

(I) by adjusting the left margin so as to align with the left margin of subparagraph (B); and

(II) by striking '', and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(ii) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''; or'' and inserting ''; and''; and

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

''(E) with respect to any amount expended for a covered outpatient drug for which a suspension under section 1927(c)(4)(B)(ii)(II) is in effect; or''.

(B) Section 1927(b)(3)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8(b)(3)(C)(ii)) is amended by striking ''subsections (a) and (b)'' and inserting ''subsections (a), (b), (f)(3), and (f)(4)''.

(b) RECOVERY OF UNPAID REBATE AMOUNTS DUE TO MISCLASSIFICATION OF COVERED OUTPATIENT DRUGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1927(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) RECOVERY OF UNPAID REBATE AMOUNTS DUE TO MISCLASSIFICATION OF COVERED OUTPATIENT DRUGS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that a manufacturer with an agreement under this section paid a lower per-unit rebate amount to a State for a rebate period as a result of the misclassification by the manufacturer of a covered outpatient drug (without regard to whether the manufacturer knowingly made the misclassification or should have known that the misclassification would be made) than the per-unit rebate amount that the manufacturer would have paid to the State if the drug had been correctly classified, the manufacturer shall pay to the State an amount equal to the product of—

''(i) the difference between—

''(I) the per-unit rebate amount paid to the State for the period; and

''(II) the per-unit rebate amount that the manufacturer would have paid to the State for the period, as determined by the Secretary, if the drug had been correctly classified; and

''(ii) the total units of the drug paid for under the State plan in the period.

''(B) AUTHORITY TO CORRECT MISCLASSIFICATIONS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that a manufacturer with an agreement under this section has misclassified a covered outpatient drug (without regard to whether the manufacturer knowingly made the misclassification or should have known that the misclassification would be made), the Secretary shall notify the manufacturer of the misclassification and require the manufacturer to correct the misclassification in a timely manner.

''(ii) ENFORCEMENT.—If, after receiving notice of a misclassification from the Secretary under clause (i), a manufacturer fails to correct the misclassification by such time as the Secretary shall require, until the manufacturer makes such correction, the Secretary may—

''(I) correct the misclassification on behalf of the manufacturer;

''(II) suspend the misclassified drug and the drug's status as a covered outpatient drug under the manufacturer's national rebate agreement; or

''(III) impose a civil money penalty (which shall be in addition to any other recovery or penalty which may be available under this section or any other provision of law) for each rebate period during which the drug is misclassified not to exceed an amount equal to the product of—

''(aa) the total number of units of each dosage form and strength of such misclassified drug paid for under any State plan during such a rebate period; and

''(bb) 23.1 percent of the average manufacturer price for the dosage form and strength of such misclassified drug.

''(C) REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall submit a report to Congress on at least an annual basis that includes information on the covered outpatient drugs that have been identified as misclassified, the steps taken to reclassify such drugs, the actions the Secretary has taken to ensure the payment of any rebate amounts which were unpaid as a result of such misclassification, and a disclosure of expenditures from the fund created in subsection (b)(3)(C)(iv), including an accounting of how such funds have been allocated and spent in accordance with such subsection.

''(ii) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The Secretary shall make the information contained in the report required under clause (i) available to the public on a timely basis.

''(D) OTHER PENALTIES AND ACTIONS.—Actions taken and penalties imposed under this paragraph shall be in addition to other remedies available to the Secretary including terminating the manufacturer's rebate agreement for noncompliance with the terms of such agreement and shall not exempt a manufacturer from, or preclude the Secretary from pursuing, any civil money penalty under this title or title XI, or any other penalty or action as may be prescribed by law.''.

(2) OFFSET OF RECOVERED AMOUNTS AGAINST MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 1927(b)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8(b)(1)(B)) is amended by inserting '', including amounts received by a State under subsection (c)(4),'' after ''in any quarter''.

(c) CLARIFYING DEFINITIONS.—Section 1927(k)(7)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8(k)(7)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''an original new drug application'' and inserting ''a new drug application'' each place it appears;

(2) in clause (i), by inserting ''but including a drug product approved for marketing as a non-prescription drug that is regarded as a covered outpatient drug under paragraph (4)'' after ''drug described in paragraph (5)'';

(3) in clause (ii), by striking ''was originally marketed'' and inserting ''is marketed''; and

(4) in clause (iv)—

(A) by inserting '', including a drug product approved for marketing as a non-prescription drug that is regarded as a covered

outpatient drug under paragraph (4),'' after ''covered outpatient drug''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''Such term also includes a covered outpatient drug that is a biological product licensed, produced, or distributed under a biologics license application approved by the Food and Drug Administration.''.

(d) EXCLUSION OF MANUFACTURERS FOR KNOWING MISCLASSIFICATION OF COVERED OUTPATIENT DRUGS.—Section 1128(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(17) KNOWINGLY MISCLASSIFYING COVERED OUTPATIENT DRUGS.—Any manufacturer or officer, director, agent, or managing employee of such manufacturer that knowingly misclassifies a covered outpatient drug under an agreement under section 1927, knowingly fails to correct such misclassification, or knowingly provides false information related to drug pricing, drug product information, or data related to drug pricing or drug product information.''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply to covered outpatient drugs supplied by manufacturers under agreements under section 1927 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8) on or after such date.

TITLE III—MEDICARE

SEC. 301. EXCLUSION OF COMPLEX REHABILITATIVE MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS FROM MEDICARE COMPETITIVE ACQUISITION PROGRAM; NON-APPLICATION OF MEDICARE FEE-SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS FOR CERTAIN WHEELCHAIR ACCESSORIES AND CUSHIONS.

(a) EXCLUSION OF COMPLEX REHABILITATIVE MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS FROM COMPETITIVE ACQUISITION PROGRAM.—Section 1847(a)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3(a)(2)(A)) is amended—

(1) by inserting '', complex rehabilitative manual wheelchairs (as determined by the Secretary), and certain manual wheelchairs (identified, as of October 1, 2018, by HCPCS codes E1235, E1236, E1237, E1238, and K0008 or any successor to such codes)'' after ''group 3 or higher''; and

(2) by striking ''such wheelchairs'' and inserting ''such complex rehabilitative power wheelchairs, complex rehabilitative manual wheelchairs, and certain manual wheelchairs''.

(b) NON-APPLICATION OF MEDICARE FEE SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESSORIES AND SEAT AND BACK CUSHIONS WHEN FURNISHED IN CONNECTION WITH COMPLEX REHABILITATIVE MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall not, during the period beginning on January 1, 2019, and ending on June 30, 2020, use information on the payment determined under the competitive acquisition programs under section 1847 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3) to adjust the payment amount that would otherwise be recognized under section 1834(a)(1)(B)(ii) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(a)(1)(B)(ii)) for wheelchair accessories (including seating systems) and seat and back cushions when furnished in connection with complex rehabilitative manual wheelchairs (as determined by the Secretary), and certain manual wheelchairs (identified, as of October 1, 2018, by HCPCS codes E1235, E1236, E1237, E1238, and K0008 or any successor to such codes).

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may implement this subsection by program instruction or otherwise.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we are here today, the culmination of a 6-year journey. The IMPROVE Act is a combination of three bills. One bill is a bill that allows Medicare to follow the patient; another bill is a bill for spousal impoverishment, to prevent that; and the third bill, and the primary bill in this package, is a bill that we call the ACE Kids Act.

Mr. Speaker, there are, luckily, not a large number, about 2 million children in this country, who have multiple complex medical conditions that are life-threatening. These are the sickest of the sick of our young population. About 500,000 of these children are Medicaid eligible. In other words, their families qualify for low-income health insurance called Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, under current law, the parents of these children have to create the healthcare network on a case-by-case basis for their child. They also cannot seek healthcare across State lines that is covered by Medicaid. So current law makes it very difficult on these sickest-of-the-sick children.

The ACE Kids Act changes that, Mr. Speaker. It allows the creation of a medical home that can cross State lines, that can coordinate care.

It is optional. The States do not have to participate in this program. The parents of the child do not have to participate in this program. But if they do wish to participate, you create a health home for the child wherein everything is coordinated.

In the pilot programs that have been run using this model, you get better quality healthcare at lower cost. We think the pilot programs show that, over time, if we adopt this model and if the States adopt it and the families adopt it, we get a lot better healthcare at a lower cost. So this is a win-win, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, we have worked on this for 6 years. It is a bipartisan bill. In the last Congress, we had a majority of the Congress that sponsored the bill. In this Congress, we have more than 130 cosponsors on a bipartisan basis.

We have had a hearing in the committee of jurisdiction, the Committee on Energy and Commerce. We have had a markup in subcommittee. We have had a markup in full committee. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are bringing it to the floor.

We hope the House, later today, will vote affirmatively to pass this on suspension and send it to the Senate. We have preconferenced it with the Senate, and we have every reason to believe, if the House passes it today, the Senate will take it up expeditiously and pass it, and this is a bill that will become law.

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7217, the IMPROVE Act. This legislation contains several important policies related to Medicaid and Medicare.

First, I am a proud original cosponsor of the ACE Kids Act, and I am happy to see it included in H.R. 7217. The ACE Kids Act aims to improve care coordination for children with complex medical conditions served by Medicaid.

The legislation creates a Medicaid health home, State optional, specifically targeted for this population of children. It also requires the Secretary to issue best practices on coordinating out-of-State care for children with complex medical conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors of the ACE Kids Act, Representative CASTOR and Congressman BARTON, both members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, for championing this issue for so many years.

The IMPROVE Act also provides new funding for the Money Follows the Person, the MFP, program. The MFP program helps individuals transition from institutional care to care in their community, where they can live more independent lives.

MFP also helps support States' home and community-based services infrastructure. Without this extension funding, we would start to see many of these MFP programs end in short order.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the program, which provides thousands of Americans with the choice to receive services in their home or community rather than in an institution.

□ 1245

The committee will continue to work on providing long-term funding to the MFP program in the next Congress.

I also voice my support for the extension of spousal impoverishment protections until April 2019. These protections will help ensure that a person can maintain enough income and assets to meet their basic living expenses while still allowing for their spouse to receive long-term care in their home or community under Medicaid.

The expiration of this policy would lead to people losing their long-term care services and the unnecessary institutionalization of people currently

receiving services in their homes or communities. The committee will continue to work on a long-term solution in the next Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 7217, the IMPROVE Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), who is the current chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BARTON for his great leadership on the ACE Kids Act. I know this has been something he has been dedicated to for many years, and I am glad we could get this worked out and to the floor today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, these bills add to the 129 that the Energy and Commerce Committee has passed across this House floor.

Mr. Speaker, 92 percent of those bills have been bipartisan. I don't think the American people know that, because when we get along and do things, it doesn't get much coverage. But most of our work, 92 percent of our bills have been bipartisan, plus these today. 28 of those measures have become law.

I rise in strong support of this bipartisan H.R. 7217, which includes a number of different policies to improve and bolster the Medicaid and Medicare programs for vulnerable patients across our country, Mr. Speaker.

I recognize JOE BARTON and our colleague, KATHY CASTOR from Florida, who I know is going to speak in a moment. They have just worked relentlessly on the ACE Kids Act. This is an important bill, and it is included in this package and one I am proud the House will advance forward today.

They both should be commended for their work because, you see, Mr. Speaker, the ACE Kids Act is bipartisan. It is cost-effective legislation. It provides children and their families the treatment and coordinated care they so desperately need and deserve.

Representative BARTON, former chairman of the committee, has long been a champion on this issue, and, again, I thank him for his tireless efforts to advocate for improving care for our Nation's sickest children.

This bill also extends two key Medicaid programs: the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Program and the spousal impoverishment rules in Medicaid, both of which were due to expire or be out of money by the end of the year.

I am disappointed we weren't able to secure a longer term extension of these programs. I know many of my colleagues share that disappointment. Both sides negotiated in good faith, though, on how to pay for an extension, and I hope that the bipartisan work on the long-term bill will continue early in the new Congress. Today, we are moving forward with a 3-month extension to prevent these programs from expiring.

Finally, this package includes a small but critically important Medicare fix to ensure disabled seniors have access to necessary mobility devices, and that is fully offset and paid for.

Further boosting our efforts to advance public health, we have four other bills before us today. Collectively, these bills reauthorize several important programs, promote safe motherhood, and improve patient care.

Lastly, we will consider H.R. 6140. That is the Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act. This bill, as you already know, Mr. Speaker, directs the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to make high-assay, low-enriched uranium available for use in the first-of-a-kind advanced nuclear reactor designs. This fuel will enable the development and deployment of a new generation of innovative nuclear technologies.

Nuclear energy is the largest source of emissions-free electricity in the United States, so a strong U.S. nuclear energy policy can ensure a reliable, clean U.S. energy sector for years to come and provide American families and businesses with affordable energy.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member PALLONE, Mr. GREEN, and the other members of the Energy and Commerce Committee. I urge my colleagues to support passage of all of these bills, especially H.R. 7217, on behalf of patients in Oregon and all across our country.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR), a cosponsor of the ACE Kids Act and a great member of our Energy and Commerce Committee.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman GREEN for being an outspoken advocate for his constituents, but especially for affordable healthcare for all Americans, especially children. It has been a privilege serving with him.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the families with children with complex medical needs all across America, I rise to urge approval of the IMPROVE Act, which includes a bill that I have been working on for a number of years with Representative JOE BARTON called the ACE Kids Act.

We drafted the Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids Act a few years ago with the simple but important goal of putting families and children first. The bill authorizes the creation of cost-saving and time-saving health homes where specialized care is coordinated in a high-quality setting.

Mr. Speaker, the children with complex medical conditions and their families are heroic.

Caroline West in Tampa, Florida, has a rare genetic condition, also cerebral palsy and a seizure disorder. She can't walk. It is very difficult for her to speak, but she is able to attend school part-time and enjoys the life of a typical teenager, in many respects.

Lucy Ferlita is the only living person in the United States with early onset myopathy with areflexia, respiratory distress, and dysphagia. Very little is known about this disease, but what we know is that it is very difficult for her to eat. She has to have a feeding tube, a ventilator to breath, and nursing care 24 hours a day, and yet she is a bright and social 6-year-old.

Jaden Velasquez has a congenital heart defect. He was born with it. The left side of his heart is severely underdeveloped. He has undergone numerous surgeries, yet he is a loving and happy 10-year-old, loves swimming, and is enjoying life.

Lakota Lockhart, with congenital central hypoventilation syndrome, a central nervous system disorder, causes him to not be able to breathe every time he tries to sleep.

I met these children in Tampa, Florida, at St. Joseph's Children's Hospital. They have the world-renowned Chronic-Complex Clinic that was started 16 years ago by a passionate pediatric doctor named Dr. Daniel Plasencia. The ACE Kids Act is modeled after the work being done at St. Joe's by the professionals at the Chronic-Complex Clinic and the 700 kids and families they currently serve and other children's hospitals all across the country.

The families have shared with us how difficult it is to get quality healthcare. It is oftentimes so fragmented and uncoordinated that they have to go from one office to another, and maybe the specialist is in another State. That is why we put together the ACE Kids Act, to help coordinate care in a single setting to help give these kids a better quality of life, and the ACE Kids Act will do just that.

The bill provides an incentive to States to establish health homes to better coordinate care for kids with medical complexities. It also directs HHS to provide guidance to States on best practices relating to providing care across State lines.

As so many of these families know all too well, coordinating care across State lines can be burdensome, so that is the aim of the ACE Kids Act: to lift that burden.

In addition to Congressman JOE BARTON, who has worked diligently for so many years to get this over the finish line, I thank all of the families with children with complex medical challenges. They deserve credit for moving this bill forward, coming to Congress, and helping to explain the importance of coordinating care.

I also thank Chairman WALDEN, Ranking Member PALLONE, Chairman BURGESS, and Ranking Member GREEN for their support, and our stalwart partners: Representatives HERRERA BEUTLER, ESHOO, and REICHERT.

Thank you to America's children's hospitals, the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and thanks to the professional staff at the committee for your dedication to these families, especially Rachel Pryor, Samantha Satchell, Tiffany Guarascio, and Josh Trent and Caleb Graff on the Republican side.

Additionally, this bill would not be where it is without the stellar work of Representative BARTON's staffers: Krista Rosenthall, Gable Brady, Sophie Trainor, and Jeannine Bender, and my LD, Elizabeth Brown.

Passage of this bill will be a gift to so many families during this holiday season and beyond, so I urge my colleagues here in the House and then over in the Senate to pass the ACE Kids Act contained within the IMPROVE Act.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to Dr. BURGESS, I echo what Congresswoman CASTOR just said about the staffs that have worked so hard. We couldn't have done this bill without all the individuals she just named.

I also thank her. When she said I have been tireless, she makes me look like a snail, and she is the rabbit working every day to make this possible.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), the distinguished subcommittee chairman of the Health Subcommittee, my good friend.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7217. This is a bipartisan Medicaid package that moves forward House priorities with responsible offsets. The Energy and Commerce Committee has been working to draft and perfect the legislation before us, and it is encouraging to see this reach the House floor.

Not only does this package include a new program to improve access to care, it reauthorizes important and effective programs from which Americans benefit each and every day. Title I of this package is based upon Representative JOE BARTON and Representative KATHY CASTOR's ACE Kids Act.

But I do want to assure families that have children with chronic illnesses that this legislation is intended to help them, if they want help, to obtain care coordination services. However, I also want to clarify that this legislation is not intended to limit families or their physicians from selecting their provider of medical services.

There is nothing in this legislation that restricts the child's family and their physician from deciding who is the best provider amongst those accepting Medicaid and qualified to offer the medical services. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services has provided assurances that current freedom-of-choice rules will apply to new care coordination activity.

As a doctor, I know that many children with chronic illnesses have a strong relationship with their doctors and with other members of their healthcare team. I want to make certain that this new law will help families coordinate their care without affecting the relationship that families have with their current medical care providers or with other providers in their communities from whom they may wish to receive their care.

This package also extends funding for the Money Follows the Person Demonstration, an effort that was led by my Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Vice Chair BRETT GUTHRIE and Representative DEBBIE DINGELL from Michigan.

This Medicaid demonstration was established in 2005 for individuals in States across our Nation, including Texas, to receive long-term care services in their homes or other community settings rather than institutions such as nursing homes. The funding for this program has already expired, and a funding extension is already overdue. While it would have been nice to extend this for longer, it was essential to get this extension across the floor.

A 3-month extension for the protection for Medicaid recipients of home and community-based services against spousal impoverishment was also included. This effort was championed by Representatives FRED UPTON and DEBBIE DINGELL.

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

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, in an effort to be fiscally responsible, this legislation includes several offsets to make this package, on net, a saver.

While it is largely a Medicaid package, there is one small but important Medicare provision. This provision excludes complex medical rehabilitative wheelchairs from Medicare's Competitive Acquisition Program. Currently, these chairs are not included, but because the statute did not provide the same clear exemption that power wheelchairs received, there is fear that this unintended omission can lead to them being included.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the additional time, and I include my full statement in the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7217, a bipartisan Medicaid package that propels forward House priorities with responsible offsets. The Energy and Commerce Committee has been working diligently to draft and perfect the legislation before us, and it is encouraging to see this package reach the House floor. Not only does this package include an exciting new program to improve access to care, it reauthorizes important and effective programs from which Americans benefit each and every day.

Title I of this package is based upon Rep. JOE BARTON and Rep. CATHY CASTOR's ACE Kids Act. I want to ensure families who have children with chronic illnesses that this legislation is intended to help them, if they want help, to obtain care coordination services. However, I want to clarify that this legislation is not intended to limit families and their physicians from selecting the provider of medical services. There is nothing in this legislation that restricts the child's family, and their physician, from deciding who is the best provider among those accepting Medicaid and qualified to offer the medical services. CMS has provided assurances that current ''freedom of choice'' rules will apply to new care coordination activity. As a physician, I know that many children with chronic illnesses have a strong relationship with their physician and with other providers. I want to make sure that this new law will help families coordinate their care without affecting the relationship that families have with their current medical care providers or with other providers in their communities from whom they may want to receive such care from.''

This package also extends funding for the Money Follows the Person demonstration, an effort led by my E&C Subcommittee on Health Vice Chair, BRETT GUTHRIE, and Rep. DEBBIE DINGELL. This Medicaid demonstration, which was established in 2005, has enabled eligible individuals in states across our nation, including Texas, to receive long-term care services in their homes or other community settings, rather than in institutions such as nursing homes. The funding for this program has already expired, and a funding extension is already long overdue. While we would have like to extend the funding for longer, it was essential that we get an extension across the floor, even if a small one.

A 3-month extension for the Protection for Medicaid Recipients of Home and Community-Based Services Against Spousal Impoverishment program is also included. This effort was championed by Representatives FRED UPTON and DEBBIE DINGELL. Our seniors are among our most vulnerable citizens, and it is programs like this one that help to protect them from financial ruin.

In an effort to be fiscally responsible, this legislation includes several offsets that make this package on net a saver, which is something that Energy & Commerce insists upon and is critically important.

While this is largely a Medicaid Package, there is one small but important Medicare provision. This provision excludes manual Complex Rehabilitative wheelchairs from Medicare's Competitive Acquisition Program. Currently, these chairs are not included but because statute did not provide the same clear exemption that power wheelchairs received, there is fear this unintended omission could lead them to being included. This provision also delays the application of competitive bid pricing with CRT accessories used with a CRT manual chair for 18 months. This mirrors a similar protection last provided by Congress for power wheelchairs in the 21st Century Cures Act.

This package contains must-pass provisions that the Energy and Commerce Committee have long fought to pass. The provisions included in this legislation will improve access to care for Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries, which is a laudable and important goal. Not only are these provisions imperative, but they are responsibly offset. I would particularly like to thank Energy and Commerce Committee staffer Caleb Graff, who has spent countless hours negotiating to get this package to the floor. I support this legislation, and I urge my fellow members and our friends in the Senate to do so as well.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL), another member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

□ 1300

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Ranking Member GENE GREEN, for yielding me the time.

I rise in support of H.R. 7217, the IMPROVE Act, and I thank Chairman WALDEN, Ranking Member PALLONE, and Representatives UPTON and GUTHRIE for their leadership in negotiating this important bill and for bringing it to the floor today.

I also thank and acknowledge my dear friend JOE BARTON for all of his leadership on the ACE Kids Act and congratulate him on his retirement. JOE has been a great friend to John and me over the years, and he will be dearly missed in the next Congress. Getting the IMPROVE Act signed into the law by the end of the year will be a fitting tribute to his decades of service in the Congress.

Ranking Member GREEN has also been critical to so many measures. Texas has had two valuable public servants.

Improving long-term care has been one of my top priorities since coming to Congress, and our system is completely broken. We need a broader overhaul of long-term care financing, and we also need to build off existing programs to make sure we are doing everything we can to ensure that we are enhancing the opportunities for independent living and supporting aging with dignity.

I am proud to have authored two important provisions in the IMPROVE Act that extend critical programs that are about to expire.

The first is a 3-month extension of the Money Follows the Person program. This very successful program provides grants to States to cover transitional services for individuals who voluntarily wish to leave a nursing home or other institution and transition to a community care setting. Money Follows the Person is a win for both beneficiaries and taxpayers, because the program has demonstrated significant savings over the years while bringing a real benefit to people's lives.

I am also pleased that legislation I authored with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), my good friend, the Protecting Married Seniors from Impoverishment Act, is also included in this bill. Extending spousal impoverishment protections for seniors in Medicaid is just common sense. Nobody should be forced to spend down all of their resources and have to go bankrupt just to get the care they need.

But these are only partial victories. Both programs are extended for 3 months. This is enough to keep these important programs alive for now, but all of us have a lot of work to do when we come back in the new year.

Let me be clear: I will continue to fight for long-term extensions of both programs in the next Congress, and I am confident that we can get that done with the Democratic majority. These programs clearly have bipartisan support, and they do so much good for so many people.

Once again, congratulations to my two dear friends from Texas for their leadership. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her kind words. I appreciate the nice gift I got yesterday from her and her husband, his new book, ''The Dean.'' I look forward to reading it over Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE).

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my legislation, the EMPOWER Care Act, which is included in H.R. 7217. It will ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries can receive the best long-term care possible in their communities or in their own homes.

The EMPOWER Care Act will extend the Medicaid Money Follows the Person program, which allows certain Medicaid beneficiaries, such as the elderly or individuals with disabilities, to transition from a healthcare facility to receiving care in their own homes. It does not force patients to leave a facility if they don't want to.

My home State of Kentucky is currently working to transition 50 individuals from healthcare facilities back into their own communities, empowering these individuals who have chosen to receive care in their community.

I thank my friend, Congresswoman DEBBIE DINGELL, for working with me on this bipartisan bill. I look forward to working with her to make the Money Follows the Person program permanent in the future.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), another good member of our Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I extend my congratulations as well to Mr. BARTON. It has been a pleasure working with you, sir. Thank you. Also, to Mr. GREEN, thank you very much for all your service. What an incredible career both of you have had.

My colleagues have talked about the underlying bill, and I am in agreement with what everyone has said.

I wanted to focus attention on an aspect of the bill that was sponsored by my colleague KURT SCHRADER and me, and that is a provision that addresses abusive practices of drug manufacturers who intentionally misrepresent their brand drugs as a generic in order to avoid providing a larger discount to the Medicaid program.

My colleagues, whatever our position on the best way to deliver healthcare, one thing we know is the case: It is too expensive. Whether it is taxpayers footing the bill, consumers, or employer-sponsored healthcare plans, it is too expensive. And one of the reasons is rip-off pharma practices.

This is a situation where, oftentimes, brand-name drugs try to keep generics off the market. But this is a case where a brand name tried to pretend they were a generic in order to get a lower price.

I will give an example. In 2016, Mylan misclassified the EpiPen as a generic drug instead of a brand drug, and that allowed them to charge Medicaid a higher price for the drug. Mylan ended up paying $465 million in a settlement to Health and Human Services, but the estimated malfeasance cost Medicaid—which is to say, taxpayers—more than $1 billion.

Simultaneously, Mylan was raising its list price on EpiPen, which parents have to have for their kids who have an allergic reaction, from $103 to $608 over 7 years, a 500 percent increase.

Mylan is not alone. This practice of unrelenting drug price hikes is tried and true for manufacturers.

So I am very pleased that we have included in this bill an end to this abusive practice. We have to make healthcare affordable.

Representative SCHRADER and I, with this provision, are taking a small step. With the help of our Congress and the passage of this very good bill, we will be taking one more step in dealing with the cost crisis in our healthcare system.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), the former full committee chairman and the current subcommittee chairman of the Energy Subcommittee.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of this legislation today.

I thank my colleague DEBBIE DINGELL. The two of us helped cosponsor the spousal impoverishment bill, which is part of this bill. There was no objection to that, and I am delighted that we are getting it done.

But I want to particularly take this time and just thank JOE BARTON for his leadership on the ACE Kids Act.

All of us come here to this House for particular causes that really grab our interest and attention. JOE BARTON has been so good—some would say like a dog to a Frisbee—in getting the ACE Kids Act to the House floor. This bill is going to save lives.

It was bipartisan. Frankly, I wanted to move it as part of the 21st Century Cures Act, but we didn't have a CBO score. We couldn't get it done.

We had plenty of meetings over the last couple of years on this, and here it is. We are going to get it done. Hopefully, the Senate is going to get it done, and we are going to get it to the President's desk.

This is probably the last time that JOE BARTON is actually managing a bill on the House floor, and it is appropriate that this is his bill, that it is his engine that is moving this train that really is going to make a difference for families across the country. So I say thank you, JOE BARTON.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER), a colleague from our committee.

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7217, the IMPROVE Act.

I appreciate all the work that has been done on this bill over the years.

From improving care for kids with complex medical conditions to strengthening community-based, long-term care services for the disabled community, there is a lot to support in this bill.

I want to highlight one portion of the bill that my colleague and good friend PETER WELCH alluded to a few moments ago. A few years ago, families were shocked when the drug company Mylan raised the price on EpiPen, a common generic drug used to treat allergies in emergency situations, by more than 400 percent.

While patients were facing this sticker shock for a drug necessary to keep them alive, investigators in the Department of Health and Human Services and in our own House and Senate committees were doing some digging of our own.

In the course of their investigation, they found that not only was the manufacturer of EpiPen ripping off patients and their families, they were ripping off the American taxpayer, too. By misclassifying their drug as a generic when it was actually a brand drug, Medicaid was being overcharged for years.

Further investigations by HHS found that hundreds of other drugs were also misclassified, and Medicaid was overcharged by more than $1 billion in the 4 years between 2012 and 2016. By passing this bill today, we can put an end to this waste and abuse in our Medicaid system.

Under this bill, if a drug company knowingly misclassifies their brand drug as a generic, CMS will have the power to fine that drug company double the normal rebate they would have had to pay the government. The bill strengthens CMS and congressional oversight of the program to prevent this from ever happening again.

I thank Mr. WELCH, and Senators WYDEN and GRASSLEY, for their active work on this one, as well as Mr. BARTON, Mr. GREEN, Chairman WALDEN, and Mr. PALLONE for including it in this great reform package.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7217, the IMPROVE Act, which includes several important Medicaid provisions, including the ACE Kids Act. I have been a cosponsor of the ACE Kids Act since its first introduction.

Mr. Speaker, in the Tampa area, we have St. Joseph's Children's Hospital. They run a Chronic-Complex Clinic for children. This medical home is a great model that the ACE Kids Act is trying to build on.

This integrated care model, where the care is built around the needs of the patient, has made a huge difference in the lives of so many children. I am excited that, finally, we have reached the finish line on the ACE Kids Act.

I thank former full committee chairman and also, I guess—well, I am not sure, but he is a great guy. Yes, he is vice chairman of the committee. I thank him for all of his hard work on the ACE Kids and the IMPROVE Acts. I also thank my colleague KATHY CASTOR for being relentless. The two of them are relentless on behalf of our children.

I thank all the children that came up and advocated for this bill as well.

So, in any case, we are going to get this done. We couldn't do it without these two, so thank you very much.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is how we need to work together, and this is a good example of not only inter-State but also inter-party, to be able to solve these three problems that this bill corrects. I hope the next Congress will continue that effort of Republicans and Democrats talking to each other, Texans talking to Oklahomans, which is sometimes tough, to work together for the people we represent.

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

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), a strong supporter.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the IMPROVE Act. My colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee and I have been working to address a number of the issues that culminated under this legislation.

For instance, the ACE Kids Act, an effort championed by Representative BARTON, would make strides in addressing the challenges of children with medically complex conditions.

It sets standards for health home qualifications, so as to ensure better coordinated care for children in need.

It updates and streamlines the coordinated care provisions for health homes for children, so that they will have the system and framework in place to properly respond and work with health systems and professionals.

Additionally, it overhauls the data collection requirements for providers and updates the State reporting requirements, so as to maintain a more comprehensive network of care for children with complex medical conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is a culmination of a lot of hard work by my colleagues, particularly Representative BARTON and the staff of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and represents a commonsense step forward in assisting needy children. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

□ 1315

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER), one of the tireless supporters of this bill from day one, who herself has a medically complex special needs child, who went through the nightmare of having to create her own network for her child, and who has been a cosponsor since day one.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BARTON for his leadership on this.

I am so excited that we are here today to celebrate this. I have spent months of my life in a NICU for my own medically complex child, and I have stood bedside-to-bedside with many a family as they have faced the reality of having a sick kid and they have hit hard economic times. I can put too many faces and names to the reality that little kiddos often can't get the care they need, and today we are taking a step to fix it. I am so excited about this.

One in 25 children in the U.S. is medically complex. That means they have diagnoses like cancer or end-stage renal disease or congenital heart disease or other diagnoses that require consistent critical medical care. They need the expertise.

Out of those 3 million medically complex kiddos, 2 million of them rely on Medicaid, which means what we do with Medicaid significantly impacts them.

They are also less expensive than the other folks on Medicaid, so we can go a long way to make sure of getting them care.

So in order to enhance the critical care for these 2 million kiddos, the ACE Kids Act would create networks, anchored by children's hospitals, to help coordinate care, allowing families to seamlessly pursue the best doctors and facilities, even if it takes them out of State, and that is the key.

Right now under Medicaid, you can get stuck in your ZIP Code. So maybe there is a specialist for your child's rare disease in another State. Well, if you are on Medicaid, you are limited.

We are breaking open that limitation today to allow those kiddos to cross State lines and pursue the best doctors regardless of where they are. This just makes sense.

Here is the great thing: the efficiency and the better coordination is going to improve outcomes, number one, that is the best thing. But the next best thing is this is even going to save money, because we are not going to build that expertise in every single community, we are going to get those kids where they need to go.

It is really going to cut down on duplication and it is going to increase efficiency and it is going to be the right thing. So this is a win-win proposition. I am so excited about this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

And, again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and Ms. CASTOR for their leadership here.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN).

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BARTON for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak in support of language that was added to the IMPROVE Act that would protect access to critical equipment for individuals with disabilities.

In November of 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued a rule stating that accessories used on complex rehabilitative wheelchairs would no longer be part of the fixed fee schedule and would be subject to competitive bidding pricing, decreasing access to customized wheelchairs and accessories relied on by adults and children with disabilities.

My language included in this legislation will include a commonsense clarification to ensure those in the Medicare Program do not have to go through the difficulty of adjusting to the new rules and pricing arbitrarily set by CMS. This will ensure that they have reliable and consistent access to the equipment they need.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to protect those with disabilities and their access to the resources they rely on.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 2½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to set the record straight on one thing. There has been a report that this bill, the ACE Kids Act, expands Medicaid. That is factually incorrect.

The children that qualify for the ACE Kids Act are already covered by Medicaid.

There is no expansion. We do not create a new program. We do not expand an existing program. We do not change the definitions.

We simply make it possible, if this bill becomes law, for parents of children that qualify and that are already covered under Medicaid, they can choose a healthcare home for their child, and that healthcare home can cross State lines. But as Dr. BURGESS pointed out, it is not coercive. The States don't have to participate in the program, the families don't have to participate in the program. It is all voluntary. But the pilot programs that have been done on this model, they save money and they give better care. It has been proven.

CBO has scored this over time that it saves money, but we put pay-fors in the bill. If it did cost some extra money, it would be paid for. There is a 2-quarter, 6-month increase in the FMAP, the Federal matching that the Federal Government gives to States that choose to participate. I think it is about 15 percent extra money for 6 months. That is the only cost.

Now, to close, I am going to read a list, and Congresswoman CASTOR read a lot of these, but these are the national groups that support our bill: the Adult Congenital Heart Association, America's Essential Hospitals, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, American Board of Pediatrics, American College of Cardiology, American College of Surgeons, American Heart Association, American Psychological Association, American Society of Echocardiography, American Thoracic Society, Amicus Therapeutics, Association of American Medical Colleges, Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs, Autism Society, Autism Speaks, ChildServe, Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy, Children's Hospital Association, Epilepsy Foundation, Family Voices, Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne, International Pediatric Rehabilitation Collaborative, March of Dimes, Mended Little Hearts, MomsRising, National Association for Children's Behavioral Health. There are about seven or ten more.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the staff, especially Krista Rosenthall, Jeannine Bender, committee staff Caleb Graff, Josh Trent, and Ryan Long. And, again, I thank KATHY CASTOR and GENE GREEN.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a bipartisan effort. I ask for a strong ''yea'' vote.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important to make very clear with this legislation that CMS should not waive any Medicaid state plan requirements that would limit the freedom to choose qualified Medicaid providers who can provide medical services to children with chronic conditions. Nothing in this bill modifies section 1902(a)(23) of the Social Security Act—related to freedom of choice requirements. Children and their families or guardians retain the right to elect care from a provider or supplier who is qualified and eligible to receive Medicaid payment for the services. It is the intent of this legislation to permit and guarantee the family, in consultation with their physician, in all instances, to be permitted to select the best provider/supplier who can meet the patient's needs. While I support this legislation to provide care coordination for these children, the ultimate choice of the who will provide direct medical services must remain with the family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7217.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND OTHER HERITABLE BLOOD DISORDERS RESEARCH, SURVEILLANCE, PREVENTION, AND TREATMENT ACT OF 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2465) to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a sickle cell disease prevention and treatment demonstration program and to provide for sickle cell disease research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2465

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. DATA COLLECTION ON CERTAIN BLOOD DISORDERS.

Part A of title XI of the Public Health Service Act is amended by inserting after section 1105 (42 U.S.C. 300b–4) the following:

''SEC. 1106. SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND OTHER HERITABLE BLOOD DISORDERS RESEARCH, SURVEILLANCE, PREVENTION, AND TREATMENT.

''(a) GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may award grants related to heritable blood disorders, including sickle cell disease, for one or more of the following purposes:

''(A) To collect and maintain data on such diseases and conditions, including subtypes as applicable, and their associated health outcomes and complications, including for the purpose of—

''(i) improving national incidence and prevalence data;

''(ii) identifying health disparities, including the geographic distribution, related to such diseases and conditions;

''(iii) assessing the utilization of therapies and strategies to prevent complications; and

''(iv) evaluating the effects of genetic, environmental, behavioral, and other risk factors that may affect such individuals.

''(B) To conduct public health activities with respect to such conditions, which may include—

''(i) developing strategies to improve health outcomes and access to quality health care for the screening for, and treatment and management of, such diseases and conditions, including through public-private partnerships;

''(ii) providing support to community-based organizations and State and local health departments in conducting education and training activities for patients, communities, and health care providers concerning such diseases and conditions;

''(iii) supporting State health departments and regional laboratories, including through training, in testing to identify such diseases and conditions, including specific forms of sickle cell disease, in individuals of all ages; and

''(iv) the identification and evaluation of best practices for treatment of such diseases and conditions, and prevention and management of their related complications.

''(2) POPULATION INCLUDED.—The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, award grants

under this subsection to eligible entities across the United States to improve data on the incidence and prevalence of heritable blood disorders, including sickle cell disease, and the geographic distribution of such diseases and conditions.

''(3) APPLICATION.—To seek a grant under this subsection, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

''(4) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this subsection, the Secretary may give priority, as appropriate, to eligible entities that have a relationship with a community-based organization that has experience in, or is capable of, providing services to individuals with heritable blood disorders, including sickle cell disease.

''(5) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' includes the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Indian tribes, a State or local health department, an institution of higher education, or a nonprofit entity with appropriate experience to conduct the activities under this subsection.''.

SEC. 3. SICKLE CELL DISEASE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 712(c) of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–357; 42 U.S.C. 300b–1 note) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Sickle Cell Disease'' each place it appears and inserting ''sickle cell disease'';

(2) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking ''shall conduct a demonstration program by making grants to up to 40 eligible entities for each fiscal year in which the program is conducted under this section for the purpose of developing and establishing systemic mechanisms to improve the prevention and treatment of Sickle Cell Disease'' and inserting ''shall continue efforts, including by awarding grants, to develop or establish mechanisms to improve the treatment of sickle cell disease, and to improve the prevention and treatment of complications of sickle cell disease, in populations with a high proportion of individuals with sickle cell disease'';

(3) in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) by striking clause (ii) (relating to priority); and

(B) by striking ''GRANT AWARD REQUIREMENTS'' and all that follows through ''The Administrator shall'' and inserting ''GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—The Administrator shall'';

(4) in paragraph (2), by adding the following new subparagraph at the end:

''(E) To provide or coordinate services for adolescents with sickle cell disease making the transition to adult health care.''; and

(5) in paragraph (6), by striking ''$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''$4,455,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

(b) TECHNICAL CHANGES.—Subsection (c) of section 712 of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–357; 42 U.S.C. 300b–1 note), as amended by subsection (a), is—

(1) transferred to the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 201 et seq.);

(2) redesignated as subsection (b); and

(3) inserted at the end of section 1106 of such Act, as added by section 2 of this Act.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

It is the Sense of the Senate that further research should be undertaken to expand the understanding of the causes of, and to find cures for, heritable blood disorders, including sickle cell disease.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of S. 2465, the Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2018.

The policy included in this legislation is something on which Congress has been working towards for years, as improvements for individuals with sickle cell have largely remained stagnant.

This text is similar to H.R. 2410, which was introduced by Representative DANNY DAVIS and myself and passed this Chamber unanimously in February.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Representative DAVIS, in addition to Senator TIM SCOTT and Senator CORY BOOKER for working with me on this important policy.

Since the passage of the Sickle Cell Anemia Control Act of 1972, the first law to address sickle cell, individuals living with this disease have seen a substantial drop in mortality rates; however, there remains work to be done.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are approximately 100,000 individuals in the United States with sickle cell. Additionally, the disease occurs in 1 in 365 African American births, and in 1 in 13 African American births, the newborn has the sickle cell trait.

In the 1990s, the Food and Drug Administration approved hydroxyurea, which stimulates the body to resume production of fetal hemoglobin to treat sickle cell disease.

Last year the Food and Drug Administration approved Endari, which was the first new approved treatment in over 20 years.

I met with Dr. Janet Woodcock and Dr. Peter Marks to learn more about why the approvals have taken such a long time.

This bill would further our commitment to helping those with sickle cell by both continuing the Health Resources and Service Administration's Sickle Cell Disease Prevention and Treatment Demonstration Program and by allowing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct surveillance of the disease and other heritable blood disorders.

The CDC's surveillance activity will allow for identification of health disparities, analysis of utilization of existing therapies, and evaluation of genetic, environmental, behavioral, and other risk factors.

Having worked with patients with sickle cell disease while at Parkland Hospital, I have seen firsthand the real consequences that this disease can have on people.

This bill provides an important step forward in ensuring that we have the resources to better understand this illness and maintain access for services for those affected by the disease.

While sickle cell disease has been addressed in bills like the 21st Century Cures Act, among other rare diseases, it has been a long time since this illness was substantially addressed in legislation.

The future of sickle cell disease treatment is bright if we pass this legislation and send it to President Trump. Better understanding of the landscape of sickle cell disease across the Nation and investing in new research for new treatments holds much promise for individuals and families who spend every day managing their disease.

Think of the children who have been unable to play or had to quit competing, or who have had to struggle through school because they are frequently absent due to the complications or pain from their underlying sickle cell illness.

The support this bill provides will enable public-private partnerships to take the reins to fight this disease head-on in communities across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this legislation so we can send it promptly to the President's desk.

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2465, the Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act.

This legislation will reauthorize the Sickle Cell Disease Treatment Demonstration Program at HRSA. This program enhances the prevention and treatment of sickle cell through coordination of service delivery, genetic counseling, testing, training of health professionals, and other related efforts.

The program is particularly important since individuals with sickle cell disease need comprehensive treatment throughout their lives in order to manage their symptoms and prevent their disease from worsening.

Over 100,000 Americans are living with sickle cell disease today. Each will need access to robust network providers with the knowledge and skills to treat this condition.

This is especially important now, for far too many individuals with sickle cell are unable to get the care they need, particularly those who present at emergency departments with intense pain associated with a sickle cell crisis.

In addition to reauthorizing that program, this bill would expand the activities related to sickle cell and other heritable blood disorders by strengthening surveillance and other public health efforts as well as encouraging more research into these health conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Representative DANNY DAVIS, Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD, and Representative BURGESS for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 2465, which will allow HHS to invest critical resources into research, surveillance, and public health initiatives of sickle cell disease as well as other heritable blood disorders. These investments will help bolster the sickle cell workforce and improve treatments for sickle cell patients of all ages.

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

□ 1330

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2465, the Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act.

This legislation, which has been sponsored by Senator SCOTT, makes important updates to statute so as to better help our medical professionals understand and treat sickle cell and other blood disorders.

Sickle cell is a terrible disease, inflicting extremely difficult effects on those who have this condition. Today's legislation will allow us to move forward and combat this and other heritable blood disorders so that we can provide a better quality of life to those who suffer from them.

We are very fortunate to have some world-class treatment options in my home State of Georgia at health systems like Emory University. They are doing incredible work in treating and understanding this disease so that we can improve the lives of all who suffer from these forms of diseases.

This legislation supports State health departments, establishes best practices, improves data collection efforts, and develops strategies that will hopefully allow us to eventually fully address these diseases.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their work on this, and I urge them to support this legislation.

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

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

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this bill we are passing today has already passed the Senate. While we did work on a similar bill well over a year ago, this bill has passed the Senate. With our passage today, this bill goes down the street to the White House for signature to become law: the first major sickle cell bill to be enacted in quite some time.

It is a banner day for this institution that we are providing this help to citizens, fundamentally, on this very crucial problem that affects so many of our fellow citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to vote in favor of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 2410, the Sickle Cell Disease Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2017, that passed the U.S. House of Representatives on February 26, 2018. Today, the House of Representatives passed S. 2465, which is the Senate-amended version of H.R. 2410. As a co-sponsor of H.R. 2410 and the immediate past Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I rise to clarify the Congressional intent of this important legislation.

I commend my friends, Representative DANNY DAVIS from Illinois and Representative MICHAEL BURGESS from Texas, for introducing H.R. 2410. I have been a longtime advocate for those with sickle cell disease and I am a proud co-sponsor of the bill in this Congress and in previous Congresses.

There are approximately forty-four hundred people with sickle cell disease in my home state of North Carolina. My hope is that someday there will be none. Sixty-five percent of individuals with sickle cell disease in North Carolina have at least one emergency room visit per year—that is no way to live. We should do all we can to help improve patients' lives, advance treatment, and find a cure.

That is why we must reauthorize the Sickle Cell Disease Treatment Demonstration Program to enable the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to support research that will increase our understanding of sickle cell disease, and create a grant program to study the prevalence of sickle cell and identify ways to prevent and treat sickle cell disease effectively.

S. 2465 makes changes to the House-approved language that warrant clarification Notably, Sec. 2 of S. 2465 enables the awarding of grants related to heritable blood disorders, including sickle cell disease, for the purposes of research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment. It is imperative to stress that the intent of this language is to require that those grants be awarded for sickle cell disease research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment, at minimum. It is not the intent of the language for grants to be awarded related to other heritable blood disorders (e.g. hemophilia) instead of or in lieu of sickle cell disease.

Finally, Sec. 3 of S. 2465, reauthorizing the Sickle Cell Disease Treatment Demonstration Program, is intended to provide awards related only to sickle cell disease. It is not the intent of the legislation to allocate awards made under Sec. 3 for other heritable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is intended to provide critical funding to assist those with sickle cell disease, and any awards made under Sec. 2 or Sec. 3 of this bill must be used for sickle cell disease response.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2465.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PREMATURITY RESEARCH EXPANSION AND EDUCATION FOR MOTHERS WHO DELIVER INFANTS EARLY REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3029) to revise and extend the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act (PREEMIE Act).

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3029

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Reauthorization Act of 2018'' or the ''PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. RESEARCH RELATING TO PRETERM LABOR AND DELIVERY AND THE CARE, TREATMENT, AND OUTCOMES OF PRETERM AND LOW BIRTHWEIGHT INFANTS.

Section 2 of the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act (42 U.S.C. 247b–4f) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking ''clinical, biological, social, environmental, genetic, and behavioral factors relating'' and inserting ''factors relating to prematurity, such as clinical, biological, social, environmental, genetic, and behavioral factors, and other determinants that contribute to health disparities and are related''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking '' concerning the progress and any results of studies conducted under paragraph (1)'' and inserting ''regarding activities and studies conducted under paragraph (1), including any applicable analyses of preterm birth. Such report shall be posted on the Internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.'';

(2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) PREGNANCY RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING SURVEY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall—

''(1) continue systems for the collection of maternal-infant clinical and biomedical information, including electronic health records, electronic databases, and biobanks, to link with the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and other epidemiological studies of prematurity in order to track, to the extent practicable, all pregnancy outcomes and prevent preterm birth; and

''(2) provide technical assistance, as appropriate, to support States in improving the collection of information pursuant to this subsection.''; and

(3) in subsection (e), by striking ''except for subsection (c), $1,880,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018'' and inserting ''$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 3. PUBLIC AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

Section 399Q of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280g–5) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''conduct demonstration projects'' and inserting ''conduct activities, which may include demonstration projects''; and

(B) by striking ''for babies born preterm'' and inserting ''mothers of infants born preterm, and infants born preterm, as appropriate''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''under the demonstration project'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''programs to test and evaluate various strategies to provide'' and inserting ''programs, including those to test and evaluate strategies, which, in collaboration with States, localities, tribes, and community organizations, support the provision of'';

(ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (F) as subparagraphs (C) through (G), respectively;

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (A), the following:

''(B) evidence-based strategies to prevent preterm birth and associated outcomes;'';

(iv) in subparagraph (C), as so redesignated, by inserting '', and the risks of nonmedically indicated deliveries before full term'' before the semicolon;

(v) in subparagraph (D), as so redesignated—

(I) in clause (ii), by inserting ''intake'' before the semicolon;

(II) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(III) by redesignating clause (iv) as clause (vii); and

(IV) by inserting after clause (iii), the following:

''(iv) screening for and treatment of substance use disorders;

''(v) screening for and treatment of maternal depression;

''(vi) maternal immunization; and'';

(vi) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by adding ''and'' after the semicolon;

(vii) in subparagraph (F), as so redesignated, by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(viii) by striking subparagraph (G), as so redesignated; and

(C) in paragraph (2), by inserting '', as well as prevention of a future preterm birth'' before the semicolon.

SEC. 4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH.

Section 104(b) of the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (42 U.S.C. 247b–4f note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''and recommendations to the Secretary concerning the following activities'' and inserting '', recommendations, or information to the Secretary as may be necessary to improve activities and programs to reduce severe maternal morbidity, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and preterm birth, which may include recommendations, advice, or information related to the following'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and improving the health status of pregnant women and infants'' and inserting '', preterm birth, and improving the health status of pregnant women and infants, and information on cost-effectiveness and outcomes of such programs'';

(C) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''Implementation of the'' and inserting ''The''; and

(D) by striking subparagraph (D) and inserting the following:

''(D) Implementation of Healthy People objectives related to maternal and infant health.

''(E) Strategies to reduce racial, ethnic, geographic, and other health disparities in birth outcomes, including by increasing awareness of Federal programs related to appropriate access to, or information regarding, prenatal care to address risk factors for preterm labor and delivery.

''(F) Strategies, including the implementation of such strategies, to address gaps in Federal research, programs, and education efforts related to the prevention of severe maternal morbidity, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and other adverse birth outcomes.'';

(2) by striking paragraph (3) and redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (3); and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) BIENNIAL REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018, and every 2 years thereafter, the Advisory Committee shall—

''(A) publish a report summarizing activities and recommendations of the Advisory Committee since the publication of the previous report;

''(B) submit such report to the Secretary and the appropriate Committees of Congress; and

''(C) post such report on the Internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.''.

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with other departments, as appropriate, may establish an interagency working group in order to improve coordination of programs and activities to prevent preterm birth, infant mortality, and related adverse birth outcomes.

(b) DUTIES.—The working group established under subsection (a) shall—

(1) identify gaps, unnecessary duplication, and opportunities for improved coordination in Federal programs and activities related to preterm birth and infant mortality;

(2) assess the extent to which the goals and metrics of relevant programs and activities within the Department of Health and Human Services, and, as applicable, those in other departments, are aligned; and

(3) assess the extent to which such programs are coordinated across agencies within such Department; and

(4) make specific recommendations, as applicable, to reduce or minimize gaps and unnecessary duplication, and improve coordination of goals, programs, and activities across agencies within such Department.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the working group is established under subsection (a), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report summarizing the findings of the working group under subsection (b) and the specific recommendations to improve Federal programs at the Department of Health and Human Services under subsection (b)(4).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3029, the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018. This bill passed the Senate with robust bipartisan support, and I expect it will do the same in this Chamber.

This bill reauthorizes a program that is vital to the health and well-being of premature babies and their mothers. It is fitting that we have called this legislation to the floor following Prematurity Awareness Month, which took place the month of November.

While we are taking up the Senate bill, which was led by the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER and Senator MICHAEL BENNET, I would like to thank our House champions of this legislation, Representative ANNA ESHOO and Representative LEONARD LANCE. I am pleased that we were able to rally bicameral, bipartisan support around improving the health of premature infants.

Preterm and low birth weight, combined, make up the second leading cause of infant death following birth defects. This legislation will increase research relating to preterm labor and delivery and the care, treatment, and outcomes of preterm and low birthweight infants.

Preemies and low birthweight infants are at risk for various health challenges and disabilities, and we still have much to learn about factors relating to prematurity. This bill allows for continued collection of maternal-infant clinical and biomedical information in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System. Such data collection and surveillance will allow the CDC, and national, State, and local health officials to have a better picture of what prematurity, including its causes and impacts, looks like in our country.

This legislation also requires the Advisory Committee on Maternal and Infant Health to publicly publish and submit to Congress a report on its activities and recommendations. That advisory committee has been tasked with

developing strategies to address gaps in Federal research, programs, and education efforts related to the prevention of severe maternal morbidity, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and other adverse birth outcomes. This ties nicely into H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act, which will also be on the floor of this House this afternoon.

Additionally, this legislation establishes an interagency working group, directing the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to collaborate with other departments to improve coordination of programs and activities to prevent preterm birth, infant mortality, and related adverse birth outcomes. The working group is required to submit a report to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 3029, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3029, the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers Who Deliver Infants Early, or PREEMIE, Reauthorization Act of 2018.

Over the past 3 years, the preterm birth rate in the United States worsened, placing more mothers and babies at risk. Such preterm births are the largest contributors to infant death in the United States and, for those infants who survive, a major cause of long-term health problems throughout their lives.

While this preterm rate in the U.S. is 9.93 percent, mothers and infants in Texas are at even greater risk. In fact, in 2017, the most recent year for which data is available, 10.6 percent of live births were born preterm. The percentage is even greater for African American mothers and infants at 13.6 percent, a rate that is 39 percent higher than the rate among all women in Texas.

This legislation would help combat those negative trends by continuing support for federally supported activities that prevent premature births, such as research and programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as activities that promote healthy pregnancies and preventing preterm birth at the Health Resources and Services Administration.

This reauthorization legislation also requires such efforts to address the determinants that contribute to the health disparities in preterm birth.

I thank Representative ESHOO and Representative LANCE for their leadership on this issue.

I encourage my colleagues to support S. 6085 to extend and expand Federal efforts to prevent and address preterm birth.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE), one of the authors of this legislation.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act. My partner in this effort over several years has been the distinguished Congresswoman from California, ANNA ESHOO.

There may be no greater calling than to help infants thrive in the early days of their lives. Working together and getting this legislation signed into law is a matter of essential importance. This is good and important work and the kind of positive difference Federal efforts can make in the lives of many.

We have a tremendous partner in the March of Dimes. For many families, the March of Dimes and its network and advocates across the country are beacons of light at dark moments. I thank the March of Dimes and their supporters for being the great defenders and fighters for mothers and for their infants.

This legislation will keep up the momentum to help pregnant women. We need to reauthorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's research and data collection efforts and improve the Health Resources and Services Administration. Doctors and the public need to have the best information and care options available, and this bill does that.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), the cosponsor of this bill and a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Health Subcommittee.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and my classmate, Mr. GREEN, for his distinguished service here in the House. He is retiring, and I want to salute him.

I also want to salute my partner in this effort, Mr. LANCE from New Jersey. He is going to be missed at the committee and missed in the House. I think he has always been value added to the Congress, and we all wish him well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan legislation. The shorthand for it is the PREEMIE Act. It is legislation that I introduced with Congressman LANCE to expand research, education, and the prevention of preterm birth.

Preterm birth, or birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy, is the leading cause of newborn mortality and the second leading cause of infant mortality in our country. In 2016, over 388,000 infants were born too early; and, every year, over 20,000 babies in the United States will die before their first birthday, many of them from complications of preterm birth.

In addition to being the leading cause of newborn death, premature birth can cause a lifetime of health challenges and intellectual disabilities for children who survive.

In addition to the emotional and physical toll of prematurity, there are significant healthcare costs to families, medical systems, and our overall economy. A report by the Institute of Medicine found the cost associated with preterm birth in the United States was $26.2 billion annually—that is a staggering amount of money—or $51,600 per infant born preterm. While employers, private insurers, and individuals bear about half the costs of healthcare for these infants, 40 percent of this amount is paid for by Medicaid.

Moms and babies face higher risks than ever before. After the statistics decreasing for over a decade, which is exactly what we wanted them to do, for the third year in a row now the preterm birth rate in our country has worsened, so the passing of this legislation has come at the right time.

I am proud of the work that we have done on this Reauthorization Act and that it is going to head to the President for his signature, and I am proud to have authored the original PREEMIE Act with Congressman FRED UPTON in 2006.

This updated reauthorization builds on the important investments that have been made, and we add to them. I think that is the most important thing to say.

With the incidence of preterm birth increasing across the United States, we need to do everything that we can for the mothers and for the newborns so that we improve the outcomes for them because it is their lives.

The PREEMIE Act did pass the Senate unanimously on September 12, and I have every confidence that the House is going to double the record.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and, again, pay tribute to him for his exceptional service here in the House.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS).

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

I also want to commend the Subcommittee on Health and the Committee on Energy and Commerce for its outstanding work under the leadership of Dr. BURGESS.

□ 1345

Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak about sickle cell, a bill that has been worked on and passed. Of course, sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder characterized by affected red blood cells that mutate into the shape of a crescent or sickle. And as such, these cells are unable to pass through small blood vessels. It is a recessive-genetic condition that occurs when a

child inherits two sickle cell genes, or traits, from each parent.

The consequences and complications of this disease are extreme. The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, whom we have worked with for many years on this legislation, have studied and reported that common complications with this disease include early childhood death from infection; stroke in young children and adults; lung problems similar to pneumonia; chronic damage to organs, including the kidney, leading to kidney failure; damage to the lungs, causing pulmonary hypertension; and severe, painful episodes. In fact, pain episode are a hallmark of sickle cell disease.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are at this juncture in passing S. 2465, a bill designed to help improve, treat, prevent, and conduct research on sickle cell disease and to include other blood diseases for surveillance and data collection.

While this legislation includes other blood diseases, its original intent and its continuing focus is to put major emphasis on sickle cell disease and issues related to it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues, Representative MICHAEL BURGESS, and Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD, Senator TIM SCOTT, and Senator CORY BOOKER for their tireless support and efforts to bring this bipartisan and bicameral bill to fruition.

There has been a great deal of back and forth on this bill. Therefore, I want to thank, again, Dr. BURGESS, the chief Republican cosponsor and advocate. I want to commend the leadership on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, Chairman GREG WALDEN and Ranking Member FRANK PALLONE.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight the work of my colleague and friend, Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD, who carried the bill for this legislation in the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Our staffs did outstanding work, and I commend all of them, especially my Health Subcommittee staffer, Dr. Caleb Gilchrist. I want to acknowledge and thank our advocate organizations, the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, the American Society of Hematology, and other organizations, hospital providers, families, and those infected with the sickle cell disease.

Mr. Speaker, those who say that Congress does not work and is not working, I tell you, when we pass legislation of this sort, it tells me that America is on the right track and we are, indeed, moving forward to help make our communities as safe and healthy as they can possibly be.

I end by just thanking Dr. BURGESS, again, for his outstanding leadership on this issue.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a second and thank Representative DAVIS for his kind remarks, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 3029, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3029.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6615) to reauthorize the Traumatic Brain Injury program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6615

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Traumatic Brain Injury Program Reauthorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF INJURIES.

Part J of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280b et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 393C (42 U.S.C. 280b–1d) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) NATIONAL CONCUSSION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, may implement a national concussion surveillance system to determine the prevalence and incidence of concussion.''; and

(2) in section 394A (42 U.S.C. 280b–3)—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) by striking ''393B and 393C'' and inserting ''393B, 393C(a), and 393C(b)''; and

(ii) by striking ''$6,564,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019'' and inserting ''$6,750,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) NATIONAL CONCUSSION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM.—To carry out section 393C(c), there are authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 3. STATE GRANTS FOR PROJECTS REGARDING TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.

Section 1252 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300d–52) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting '', acting through the Administrator for the Administration for Community Living,'' after ''The Secretary'';

(2) by striking subsection (e);

(3) by redesignating subsections (f) through (j) as subsections (e) through (i), respectively; and

(4) in subsection (i), as so redesignated, by striking ''$5,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2019'' and inserting ''$7,321,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 4. STATE GRANTS FOR PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SERVICES.

Section 1253 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300d–53) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting '', acting through the Administrator for the Administration for Community Living,'' after ''The Secretary''; and

(2) in subsection (l), by striking ''$3,100,000 for each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2019'' and inserting ''$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6615, the Traumatic Brain Injury Program Reauthorization Act, and I would like to thank Representatives BILL PASCRELL and Representative THOMAS ROONEY for introducing this important legislation.

Traumatic brain injuries impact many families each and every year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report last month that found that young children have one of the highest rates of TBI-related emergency department visits.

These injuries can harm the developing brain and have the potential to impact a child's cognitive abilities in the long term.

Whether the result of a hard hit during a football game as a teen, a car crash in middle age, or a fall as a senior, traumatic brain injuries pose various and serious risks to Americans.

This legislation reauthorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention traumatic brain injury initiatives at a level of $675 million per year for fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

Additionally, this bill authorizes the National Concussion Surveillance System at a level of $5 million per year through fiscal year 2023. This is important in ensuring that we have adequate data regarding who is getting concussions, how they are treated, and if there are any trends.

This data will help identify where individuals are seeking healthcare treatment, if they are seeking treatment at all. Additionally, we do not currently have national estimates of the number of individuals living with disabilities due to brain injury, and this system will help to establish such estimates.

The Centers for Disease Control plans to conduct its data collection via telephone surveys and a pilot test to ensure that we will get the best data from a wide range of households. The bill also reauthorizes State grants for protection and advocacy services at the Administration for Community Living.

These services protect individuals with disabilities by providing them with legal support, especially when it comes to their ability to make certain lifestyle choices, such as living independently. This is particularly important given that individuals who suffer from traumatic brain injury, such as concussions, may experience a disability.

According to the CDC, more than 61 percent of children with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury experience a disability. We have yet to see what cost to these individuals and to society these disabilities convey in the long term.

The culmination of the programs that will be reauthorized by this legislation provides hope to individuals and families that are affected by traumatic brain injury. We still have much to learn about the risks and the short- and long-term effects of traumatic brain injury, and this legislation will chip away at our goal of increasing knowledge, awareness, and treatment of traumatic brain injury.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 6615, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6615, the Traumatic Brain Injury Program Reauthorization Act of 2018, introduced by Representative PASCRELL and Representative THOMAS ROONEY. This legislation would reauthorize funding for Administration for Community Living's Traumatic Brain Injury Program, TBI, to fiscal year 2024.

The TBI program provides grants to States to support activities, such as improving screening to identify individuals with TBI, building a trained TBI workforce, providing resources to families, and funding protection and advocacy systems for people with TBI.

H.R. 6615 will also reauthorize programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to increase the incidence of traumatic brain injury and reduce the prevalence of TBI. These programs are important in improving our understanding of traumatic brain injury, and our ability to prevent and treat such injuries.

Recently, the CDC released new diagnostic guidelines focused on treating children with mild TBI and concussions, largely based on research and surveillance efforts funded by CDC's traumatic brain injury program.

Finally, this legislation also will reauthorize a new National Concussion Surveillance System to determine the prevalence and the incidence of concussions in the U.S. This is particularly important for improving our understanding of long-term consequences of concussions, as well as efforts to prevent, diagnose, and treat concussions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6615, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), the cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 6615, the Traumatic Brain Injury Program Reauthorization Act of 2018, and I also would like to thank Chairman WALDEN and Ranking Member PALLONE for their work to move this important legislation forward. I am grateful to House leadership for bringing this for a vote. I want to associate myself with the words of Mr. BURGESS and Mr. GREEN.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Congressman GREEN and Congressman BURGESS for their steadfast work to improve our Nation's health landscape over the past several decades, and especially during Mr. GREEN's tenure on the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee. How time flies.

I would also like to give a special thanks to my colleague, TOM ROONEY, who sponsored this legislation with me. Congressman ROONEY has been a great partner as my co-chair of the Congressional Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force. Over 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, we put together the task force on a bipartisan basis, and it is still going, and it is still very, very active.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for all he has done for Americans living with brain injuries during his time in Congress.

I am glad to see this body come together in a bipartisan manner to support the work being done in our Federal agencies and across the country to expand research and prevention in the treatment of traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic brain injury knows no bounds. It affects people of all backgrounds and every ZIP Code. We are only at the precipice of understanding how prevalent that is. The passage of this legislation will fulfill a very critical obligation to Americans living with brain injuries, including our servicemembers, our athletes, and our children.

This reauthorization is especially important because it includes for the first time funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention so that they can determine how many Americans have sustained a brain injury. This will give us critical insight into the problem.

Dubbed the signature injury of servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, TBI has continued to occur on the battlefield. TBI happens on the sports field as well, and we are working diligently to address this.

We have come a long way to improve safety screening and rehab since we first talked about TBI two decades ago, but much more must be done. This legislation makes the right investments in our Federal and State TBI initiatives; provides those living with brain injuries the supports that they need, and when we are supporting the brain injured, we are also supporting their families. It includes critical increases in funding and modernizes how the government oversees TBI.

Our legislation is endorsed by the Brain Injury Association of America, the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators, and the American Academy of Neurology.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with Congressman ROONEY, the membership of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, as well as Senator CASEY and Senator HATCH to send this legislation swiftly to the President's desk.

□ 1400

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6615, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6615, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PREVENTING MATERNAL DEATHS ACT OF 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1318) to support States in their work to save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and in the postpartum period, to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes for pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, to identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1318

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. SAFE MOTHERHOOD.

Section 317K of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247b–12) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''purpose of this subsection is to develop'' and inserting ''purposes of this

subsection are to establish or continue a Federal initiative to support State and tribal maternal mortality review committees, to improve data collection and reporting around maternal mortality, and to develop or support'';

(ii) by striking ''population at risk of death and'' and inserting ''populations at risk of death and severe''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) The Secretary may continue and improve activities related to a national maternal mortality data collection and surveillance program to identify and support the review of pregnancy-associated deaths and pregnancy-related deaths that occur during, or within 1 year following, pregnancy.''; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) The Secretary may, in cooperation with States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations, develop a program to support States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations in establishing or operating maternal mortality review committees, in accordance with subsection (d).'';

(2) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''encouraging preconception'' and inserting ''prepregnancy''; and

(ii) by striking ''diabetics'' and inserting ''women with diabetes and women with substance use disorder'' before the semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (H)—

(i) by inserting ''the identification of the determinants of disparities in maternal care, health risks, and health outcomes, including'' before ''an examination''; and

(ii) by inserting ''and other groups of women with disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality'' before the semicolon;

(C) in subparagraph (I), by striking ''domestic'' and inserting ''interpersonal'';

(D) by redesignating subparagraphs (I) through (L) as subparagraphs (J) through (M), respectively;

(E) by inserting after subparagraph (H) the following:

''(I) activities to reduce disparities in maternity services and outcomes;''; and

(F) in subparagraph (K), as so redesignated, by striking '', alcohol and illegal drug use'' and inserting ''and substance abuse and misuse'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''(1) IN GENERAL—The Secretary'' and inserting ''The Secretary'';

(B) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (C) as paragraphs (1) through (3), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(C) in paragraph (1), as so redesignated, by striking ''and the building of partnerships with outside organizations concerned about safe motherhood'';

(D) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(E) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(F) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) activities to promote physical, mental, and behavioral health during, and up to 1 year following, pregnancy, with an emphasis on prevention of, and treatment for, mental health disorders and substance use disorder.'';

(4) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (f);

(5) by inserting after subsection (c) the following:

''(d) MATERNAL MORTALITY REVIEW COMMITTEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to participate in the program under subsection (a)(2)(D), the applicable maternal mortality review committee of the State, Indian tribe, or tribal organization shall—

''(A) include multidisciplinary and diverse membership that represents a variety of clinical specialties, State, tribal, or local public health officials, epidemiologists, statisticians, community organizations, geographic regions within the area covered by such committee, and individuals or organizations that represent the populations in the area covered by such committee that are most affected by pregnancy-related deaths or pregnancy-associated deaths and lack of access to maternal health care services; and

''(B) demonstrate to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that such maternal mortality review committee's methods and processes for data collection and review, as required under paragraph (3), use best practices to reliably determine and include all pregnancy-associated deaths and pregnancy-related deaths, regardless of the outcome of the pregnancy.

''(2) PROCESS FOR CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING.—States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations that participate in the program described in this subsection shall, through the State maternal mortality review committee, develop a process that—

''(A) provides for confidential case reporting of pregnancy-associated and pregnancy-related deaths to the appropriate State or tribal health agency, including such reporting by—

''(i) health care professionals;

''(ii) health care facilities;

''(iii) any individual responsible for completing death records, including medical examiners and medical coroners; and

''(iv) other appropriate individuals or entities; and

''(B) provides for voluntary and confidential case reporting of pregnancy-associated deaths and pregnancy-related deaths to the appropriate State or tribal health agency by family members of the deceased, and other appropriate individuals, for purposes of review by the applicable maternal mortality review committee; and

''(C) shall include—

''(i) making publicly available contact information of the committee for use in such reporting; and

''(ii) conducting outreach to local professional organizations, community organizations, and social services agencies regarding the availability of the review committee.

''(3) DATA COLLECTION AND REVIEW.—States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations that participate in the program described in this subsection shall—

''(A) annually identify pregnancy-associated deaths and pregnancy-related deaths—

''(i) through the appropriate vital statistics unit by—

''(I) matching each death record related to a pregnancy-associated death or pregnancy-related death in the State or tribal area in the applicable year to a birth certificate of an infant or fetal death record, as applicable;

''(II) to the extent practicable, identifying an underlying or contributing cause of each pregnancy-associated death and each pregnancy-related death in the State or tribal area in the applicable year; and

''(III) collecting data from medical examiner and coroner reports, as appropriate;

''(ii) using other appropriate methods or information to identify pregnancy-associated deaths and pregnancy-related deaths, including deaths from pregnancy outcomes not identified through clause (i)(I);

''(B) through the maternal mortality review committee, review data and information to identify adverse outcomes that may contribute to pregnancy-associated death and pregnancy-related death, and to identify trends, patterns, and disparities in such adverse outcomes to allow the State, Indian tribe, or tribal organization to make recommendations to individuals and entities described in paragraph (2)(A), as appropriate, to improve maternal care and reduce pregnancy-associated death and pregnancy-related death;

''(C) identify training available to the individuals and entities described in paragraph (2)(A) for accurate identification and reporting of pregnancy-associated and pregnancy-related deaths;

''(D) ensure that, to the extent practicable, the data collected and reported under this paragraph is in a format that allows for analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

''(E) publicly identify the methods used to identify pregnancy-associated deaths and pregnancy-related deaths in accordance with this section.

''(4) CONFIDENTIALITY.—States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations participating in the program described in this subsection shall establish confidentiality protections to ensure, at a minimum, that—

''(A) there is no disclosure by the maternal mortality review committee, including any individual members of the committee, to any person, including any government official, of any identifying information about any specific maternal mortality case; and

''(B) no information from committee proceedings, including deliberation or records, is made public unless specifically authorized under State and Federal law.

''(5) REPORTS TO CDC.—For fiscal year 2019, and each subsequent fiscal year, each maternal mortality review committee participating in the program described in this subsection shall submit to the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention a report that includes—

''(A) data, findings, and any recommendations of such committee; and

''(B) as applicable, information on the implementation during such year of any recommendations submitted by the committee in a previous year.

''(6) STATE PARTNERSHIPS.—States may partner with one or more neighboring States to carry out the activities under this subparagraph. With respect to the States in such a partnership, any requirement under this subparagraph relating to the reporting of information related to such activities shall be deemed to be fulfilled by each such State if a single such report is submitted for the partnership.

''(7) APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS FOR INDIAN TRIBES AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary, in consultation with Indian tribes, shall identify and establish appropriate mechanisms for Indian tribes and tribal organizations to demonstrate, report data, and conduct the activities as required for participation in the program described in this subsection. Such mechanisms may include technical assistance with respect to grant application and submission procedures, and award management activities.

''(8) RESEARCH AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall develop a process to ensure that data collected under paragraph (5) is made available, as appropriate and practicable, for research purposes, in a manner that protects individually identifiable or potentially identifiable information and that is consistent with State and Federal privacy law.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the terms 'Indian tribe' and 'tribal organization' have the meanings given such terms in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act;

''(2) the term 'pregnancy-associated death' means a death of a woman, by any cause,

that occurs during, or within 1 year following, her pregnancy, regardless of the outcome, duration, or site of the pregnancy; and

''(3) the term 'pregnancy-related death' means a death of a woman that occurs during, or within 1 year following, her pregnancy, regardless of the outcome, duration, or site of the pregnancy—

''(A) from any cause related to, or aggravated by, the pregnancy or its management; and

''(B) not from accidental or incidental causes.''; and

(6) in subsection (f), as so redesignated, by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2001 through 2005'' and inserting ''$58,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act. I am glad that we are finally calling up this bill for a vote, as it is a truly important bill that will impact the lives of pregnant women and new mothers across this country. The media's attention to the issue of maternal morbidity and mortality has shed light on serious problems within our healthcare system in terms of pre- and postpartum care and complications in the delivery room.

I thank Representative JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER and Representative DIANA DEGETTE for their leadership on this critical legislation. Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER testified before the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health this September in support of her bill, which she and her staff have been working on daily to get across the finish line. She and I have shared a goal to improve maternal outcomes, and I am grateful that we had an opportunity to continue to push this priority forward together.

I also thank the committee staff, which has been working through the language with the various stakeholders over the course of the past year. Their work has been imperative in getting this bill to the floor.

Having spent nearly three decades as an OB/GYN, I believe it should be a national goal to eliminate all preventable maternal deaths. A single one is too many.

The alarming trend in our country's rate of maternal mortality first came to my attention in September 2016 when I was reading in my professional journal called The Green Journal, the journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. The original research found that the maternal mortality rate had increased in 48 States and Washington, D.C., from 2000 to 2014 while the international trend was moving in the opposite direction. Since reading that article, I have spoken with providers, hospital administrators, State task forces, and public health experts. The more I dove into this troubling issue, the more I realized how little we understand about how our data is lacking.

The Health Subcommittee has held both a member briefing and a hearing on the issue of maternal mortality. Our hearing this past September had a varied panel of witnesses, including Charles Johnson, who lost his wife, Kira, following the birth of their second child in 2016. Mr. Johnson's wife was a healthy and energetic woman, yet he now has to explain to his two sons why their mother is never coming home.

The Johnson family is not alone in living through such tragedy. However, if we pass this bill today and send it to the President's desk, we will be taking a step in the right direction toward preventing future maternal deaths.

This is a problem that we cannot address without accurate data. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States' maternal mortality rate was 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1999 and increased to 18 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2014. These are statistics that deserve our full attention.

Representative JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER's bill will address the complex issue of maternal mortality by enabling States to form maternal mortality review committees to evaluate, improve, and standardize their maternity death data. Once we fully understand the problem, there will be an opportunity to use the data to implement best practices.

Texas is an excellent example of a State that has created and sustained a maternal mortality and morbidity task force. Texas has put time, effort, and funding into reviewing maternal deaths in order to identify trends and causes.

Most of the pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths—or many, I should say—are preventable, but they are all tragic. We should not be losing women to such a fixable problem, leaving their newborn babies and their families to have to wake up each day to face the unsolved mystery of why the mother did not make it home from the hospital or died shortly thereafter.

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act, sponsored by Representatives JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER and DIANA DEGETTE.

This is an important first step to addressing the maternal mortality crisis that is claiming the lives of too many new mothers in our country. Hundreds of women die each year from pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated complications in the U.S. More than 60 percent of these deaths are preventable.

The Preventing Maternal Deaths Act encourages States to implement maternal mortality review committees that track maternal deaths and identify their underlying causes. Together, the data generated by these review committees will help experts identify trends, patterns, and disparities that contribute to preventable maternal deaths in order to save lives in the future.

It is shocking that the maternal mortality rate in the United States has increased while in most of the rest of the developed world it has fallen. It is also shocking that women of color, low-income women, and women in rural areas are disproportionately more likely to face pregnancy-related complications. This must change.

But in order to reverse this unconscionable trend, we must have the necessary data so providers can monitor their practices and improve their care delivery.

The mortality rate is a critical indicator of the quality of our healthcare system, as well as how we prioritize women's health in this country. While much more work still must be done, including improving access to care, I am proud to support this bill and believe it will set us on a path to understanding why women are dying and how we can stop it.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER), who is the principal author of the bill.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BURGESS for his tireless commitment on this issue. It is not just the gentleman's career, but it has been something that the gentleman has fought for here in Congress as well, and I am very grateful to be standing here today. I also want to thank my co-conspirator, DIANA DEGETTE, for her work on this bipartisan legislation that has more than 180 cosponsors.

So why is this bill important to you, Mr. Speaker, or to those who are listening? Well, you either are a mom or you have got a mom. This bill impacts you.

I stand in strong support of the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act, a bill to save mothers' lives and prevent more parents, husbands, grandparents, and children from the profound loss of their mother.

Today in the 21st century United States of America, the U.S. is ranked fourth globally for maternal mortality. Many are shocked to learn that the

U.S. not only has the worst maternal mortality rate in the entire developed world, but that these rates are on the rise. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, we are worse than Iran.

Every year, between 700 and 900 maternal deaths occur in the United States, and I have seen tears brought to the eyes of many a colleague when they learn that more than 60 percent of these deaths could have been prevented, according to the CDC. It is difficult to imagine the grief felt by these families when a life is cut short and they learn that it could have been prevented.

As a mom, as an American, and as a lawmaker, we must do better. Combating maternal mortality must become a national priority, which is why I urge my colleagues to support this bill. The Preventing Maternal Deaths Act represents the biggest step taken by Congress to date on this issue. It would enable States to establish and strengthen maternal mortality review committees, which bring together experts in public health, in maternal health, and in infant health to investigate each and every pregnancy-related death to understand what went wrong and how to save future mothers' lives.

Currently, the available data is woefully inadequate, which hinders our ability to understand why moms are dying and why certain women are more at risk. Right now, African American women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes, and women living in rural areas are also facing higher risk. This bill will not only improve data collection, but it will empower States to participate in national information sharing, increase collaboration, and develop best practices.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to dedicate this bill to the mothers whom we have lost, moms like Kira Johnson who lost her life just hours after giving birth to a healthy baby boy.

I will never forget hearing from Kira's husband, Charles, who has been a tireless advocate on this issue. He is a single father of two boys and now lives by the motto: ''Wake up, make mommy proud, repeat.''

Stories like Kira's have struck at the hearts of many of us and have compelled us to action today. Today, we honor the lives of these moms and the loved ones who remember them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers. I thank both Congresswoman DEGETTE and Congresswoman HERRERA BEUTLER for bringing this issue to our committee and also to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a positive vote today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), who is a valuable member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act.

Unfortunately, we know all too well in Georgia the need to address maternal mortality rates in the Nation. My home State of Georgia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the country, and we learned about the challenges leading to this statistic on September 27 in the Energy and Commerce Committee when we were able to hear from my colleague and the sponsor of the bill, Congresswoman HERRERA BEUTLER.

As my colleague noted in the hearing, we are seeing an estimated number of between 700 and 900 maternal deaths per year, a number that is unacceptable in today's world. A 2015 World Health Organization report noted that nearly half of these deaths were preventable.

From 1987 to 2009, the number of pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 births nearly doubled. That is why this legislation is so important.

Whether it is updates to maternal mortality data collection or mental treatment options, or the reforms and changes for the maternal mortality review committees, this legislation is necessary to helping us curb this trend and reduce the number of maternal mortality deaths.

We can and we should do more, and I hope that this will be one of our many steps to help us save the lives of mothers across the country.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I know that the ranking member already yielded back, so I thank Mr. BURGESS for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to hurry down here to speak in favor of this bill because I have been working on it for many years with my colleague and friend, JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER.

According to the CDC, maternal mortality rates rose by 26 percent in the U.S. between 2000 and 2014. These deaths are preventable, and they should not be happening in 2018. So to combat this alarming trend, 33 States have established maternal mortality review committees made up of healthcare professionals who review individual maternal deaths and then recommend policy decisions.

Our bill provides Federal support for these committees and supports efforts to standardize them. It has 190 cosponsors. It has received support from 90 national public health organizations.

It is really a great example of how the Energy and Commerce Committee works in a bipartisan way. So I thank everybody for being here and thank the chairman for his comity.

□ 1415

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

Just in addition to all the other people who have been thanked, I want to acknowledge the work of my personal staff, Mr. Ed Kim and Elizabeth Allen, who have worked so hard on this bill, as well as Dr. Kristen Shatynski on the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health staff, who really helped push this along and made sure that we got here today in a successful manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1318, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF BURMA TO RELEASE BURMESE JOURNALISTS WA LONE AND KYAW SOE OO

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1091) calling on the Government of Burma to release Burmese journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo sentenced to seven years imprisonment after investigating attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1091

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

Whereas the Burmese military and security forces have committed numerous crimes against civilians over many years in Burma's Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, and Karen States;

Whereas beginning August 25, 2017, the Burmese military and security forces, as well as civilian mobs, carried out widespread attacks, rapes, killings, and the burning of villages throughout Rakhine State resulting in approximately 730,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh and bringing the total Rohingya refugee population in Cox's Bazar to over 900,000;

Whereas on November 14, 2018, Vice President Mike Pence said, ''This is a tragedy that has touched the hearts of millions of Americans. The violence and persecution by military and vigilantes that resulted in driving 700,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh is without excuse.'';

Whereas to date, though the refugee crisis is not of their making, the Government of Bangladesh has generously accommodated the rapid and massive influx of Rohingya refugees into Cox's Bazar;

Whereas the Government of Bangladesh continues to express concern about the lack of accountability for the perpetrators of these crimes and the need to find durable solutions;

Whereas in June 2018, it was announced that the United Nations and the Government of Burma had reached an agreement for the ''voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable'' return of Rohinyga to Burma;

Whereas that agreement was contingent upon the provision of unimpeded access to northern Rakhine by United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in order to verify the necessary conditions on the ground for such voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns;

Whereas Burma's civilian government, led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, has not yet taken the necessary steps to address the violence directed against the Rohingya and has failed to create the necessary conditions for returns, including by actively impeding access to northern Rakhine by UNHCR, UNDP, humanitarian organizations, and journalists;

Whereas on August 24, 2018, the United Nations International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar released a preliminary report stating that, ''The Mission concluded . . . that there is sufficient information to warrant the investigation and prosecution of senior officials in the Tatmadaw chain of command, so that a competent court can determine their liability for genocide in relation to the situation in Rakhine State.'';

Whereas on August 25, 2018, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said ''A year ago, following deadly militant attacks, security forces responded by launching abhorrent ethnic cleansing of ethnic Rohingya in Burma'', and continued ''The U.S. will continue to hold those responsible accountable. The military must respect human rights for Burma's democracy to succeed.'';

Whereas the Department of the Treasury announced sanctions on five Tatmadaw officers and two Tatmadaw units for human rights abuses in Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan States;

Whereas on September 24, 2018, the Department of State released a report entitled ''Documentation of Atrocities in Northern Rakhine State'' that stated the military ''targeted civilians indiscriminately and often with extreme brutality'' and that the violence in northern Rakhine State was ''extreme, large-scale, widespread and seemingly geared toward both terrorizing the population and driving gout the Rohingya residents'' and that the ''scope and scale of the military's operations indicate that they were well-planned and coordinated'':

Whereas Reuters, a highly respected worldwide news organization, discovered evidence of mass murder in the village of Inn Din as part of its ongoing reporting on the Burmese military's campaign against the Rohingya, and deployed journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo to fact-check and interview eyewitnesses to these and other events;

Whereas on December 12, 2017, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were arrested by Burmese security forces in a suburb of Yangon and remain in custody to date;

Whereas on April 20, 2018, a key witness for the prosecution, Police Captain Moe Yan Naing, testified that he was ordered by his superiors to ''trap'' Wa Lone;

Whereas on September 3, 2018, Yangon Northern District Judge Ye Lwin ruled that Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo breached the colonial-era Official Secrets Act during their investigation into the massacre in Inn Din and subsequently sentenced them each to 7 years in prison with hard labor, despite admissions by the police under oath in court that the documents in question were planted with the journalists as a front for their arrest;

Whereas United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Burma's Foreign Minister, Kyaw Tin, at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in August 2018 and called for the immediate release of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo;

Whereas on September 4, 2018, Vice President Mike Pence stated, ''Wa Lone & Kyaw Soe Oo should be commended—not imprisoned—for their work exposing human rights violations [and] mass killings. Freedom of religion [and] freedom of the press are essential to a strong democracy.'';

Whereas Members of Congress, professional journalist organizations, human rights groups, and other distinguished leaders from around the world have called on the Burmese authorities to release Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo from their unjust imprisonment; and

Whereas the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed at Paris December 9, 1948 declares that ''means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group'' and ''The following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the atrocities committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese military and security forces since August 2017 constitute crimes against humanity and genocide;

(2) the Secretary of State should—

(A) determine, based on available evidence, whether the actions by the Burmese military in northern Rakhine State in 2017 constitute crimes against humanity, genocide, or other crimes under international law; and

(B) fully support efforts to collect, preserve, and make available evidence related to the commission of these crimes;

(3) all those responsible for these crimes against humanity and genocide should be tracked, sanctioned, arrested, prosecuted, and punished under applicable international criminal statutes and conventions;

(4) every Government and multinational body should call such atrocities by their rightful names of ''crimes against humanity'', ''war crimes'', and ''genocide'';

(5) the Governments of Bangladesh, the United States, and China, as well as the UNHCR and other actors, should only support repatriations to Burma when the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns are achieved, including that of removing any impunity for Burma's military, security forces, and vigilantes with respect to their actions contributing to the systemic deprivation of the human rights, such as physical safety, citizenship, freedom of movement, and livelihoods, of the Rohingya;

(6) the President should impose additional sanctions on senior members of the Burmese military and security forces who are responsible for genocide and human rights abuses, including Tatmadaw Commander-In-Chief Min Aung Hliang;

(7) independent and professional journalism play a central role in strengthening democratic governance, upholding the rule of law, mitigating conflict, and informing public opinion around the world; and

(8) the Burmese military and Government should—

(A) provide immediate, unimpeded access to northern Rakhine by UNHCR, UNDP, other humanitarian actors, and journalists, in order to verify that the necessary conditions exist for voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns by displaced Rohingya in a manner consistent with internationally recognized human rights and principles for refugee protection;

(B) change the laws and policies that have contributed to insecurity in the Rakhine State; and

(C) rescind any laws that obstruct the freedom of the press; and

(9) State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint should pardon and immediately release from prison Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, as well as all other journalists and political prisoners.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, with this resolution, the House will take the important step of naming the atrocities committed against the Rohingya people in Burma for what they are. The word for that is ''genocide.''

The Rohingya people, predominantly of Burma's Rakhine State, are often called the world's most persecuted minority. The Rohingya are essentially stateless people, as the Burmese Government refuses to recognize them as citizens, despite the fact that the Rohingya people have lived in Burma for generations. Further, institutional restrictions on the Rohingya have impacted their rights to study, work, travel, access healthcare services, practice religion, and even to marry.

The most recent wave of persecution began in August 2017, when Burmese security forces and civilian mobs began a horrific wave of attacks. Mass murder, rape, and destruction of villages throughout Rakhine State has been well documented. We have talked to the survivors.

These atrocities have driven 700,000 Rohingya from their homes to Bangladesh, bringing the total Rohingya refugee population in that country to nearly 1 million. Bangladesh has been very generous in accepting all these refugees in the face of such dire circumstances.

A year and a half later, the evidence is overwhelming. As I said at our hearing on the subject this past September,

it is time that we take the next step in declaring that these crimes amount to genocide.

In September, the State Department released a report on the stomach-turning, systematic, and widespread acts of violence against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine State, but failed to label these atrocities genocide.

The State Department's investigation revealed countless heart-wrenching pieces of evidence, like the account of one woman who hid in bushes as she watched Burmese soldiers throw infants and toddlers into a river to drown and shot the mothers of these infants who tried to save them.

The United States has a moral obligation to call these crimes genocide. Failing to do so gives the perpetrators cover and hinders efforts to bring those accountable to justice. With this resolution, the House fulfills its part of that duty.

The measure also accomplishes a number of other important goals. It provides a thorough accounting of the crisis, calls out the complicit Burmese Government, urges the Secretary of State to join us in formally declaring genocide, and promotes multilateral agreement on that declaration.

Importantly, the resolution also calls for the immediate pardon and release of two journalists who were framed and jailed by Burmese authorities for shining a light on some of the atrocities by government forces.

Congress has a proud legacy of declaring genocide when warranted, just as we did over 2 years ago when the House voted unanimously to declare ISIS' atrocities against religious minorities in Iraq and in Syria genocide. It is time to take this sober step again.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure and fulfilling our responsibility to reinforce the universal values we hold dear.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

First of all, I want to thank Mr. CHABOT for authoring this resolution. I also want to thank Representative JOE CROWLEY for his extraordinary dedication to all the people of Burma, including the Rohingya people. I thank Chairman ROYCE for bringing this resolution forward and for his leadership on this crucial issue throughout the years.

This resolution calls on the Government of Burma to release Burmese Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who have been sentenced to 7 years following their investigation into the attacks on Rohingya civilians by the Burmese military and security forces. There is overwhelming evidence that these journalists were entrapped by the Burmese Government, who targeted them because of their reporting of the military's horrific crimes.

Their jail sentence is a part of a broader issue. Despite elections in 2015 that brought a pro-democracy civilian government to power, the Burmese Government still operates on antiquated laws that lead to locking up prisoners of conscience, even when their only crimes are reporting information that is unflattering or inconvenient for the government or for the military.

This resolution rightly calls on the civilian government in Burma to repeal the laws that have been used to crack down on civil society and free expression and to pardon prisoners of conscience who have been imprisoned under these unjust laws.

We must take a moment and reflect on the context of these arrests.

The journalists were investigating what we now know were the crimes against humanity and genocide of the Rohingya people. They should not be sitting in a prison cell. They should be celebrated for faithfully carrying out their obligation to report the truth.

This resolution does something else that is very important. It states that, in the opinion of the House, the atrocities inflicted on the Rohingya people by the Burmese military constitute genocide.

It is important that we call it by name. It is a critical step towards justice for the victims. So we need to use the word ''genocide.''

I am glad that this resolution urges the Trump administration to call this atrocity what it is and pursue accountability for this heinous violence.

With this resolution, Congress continues to assert our leadership and show that we stand with the Rohingya people. We will not be silent as the Burmese Government allows or tacitly encourages attacks on the press and on civil society. We will call out injustice when we see it.

So I support this measure, and I urge all Members to do the same.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairwoman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my friend STEVE CHABOT's resolution, H. Res. 1091, which calls for the release of two Burmese journalists who were unjustly imprisoned for what crime? Courageously reporting on the genocide against the people known as the Rohingya.

In September, I joined Jan Schakowsky and STEVE CHABOT in sending a letter to Secretary of State Pompeo expressing our grave concern for the 7-year sentence given to these brave journalists. Unfortunately, the stories of these men are just two of the many, many sad examples of the erosion of press freedom and other basic rights in Burma.

At a time when these brave men should be rewarded for helping make the evidence available to the U.N. commission investigating these crimes, they get jail time. This resolution sends a strong message that the world is paying attention.

In 2012, I was worried that it was too soon for the Obama administration to ease sanctions on Burma. Unfortunately, it has proven to be too soon. In the aftermath of the massacre of the Rohingya, we must hold all individuals responsible for these crimes against humanity accountable. I call on the Burmese Government to release these journalists and reform the law so that freedom of the press is not obstructed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, once again, our chairman, ED ROYCE, and ELIOT ENGEL for their continued commitment to bringing forth bipartisan and important bills to the floor.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. CHABOT's resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), who retires this year and leaves an extraordinary legacy in this Chamber.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution calling for the release of the two journalists imprisoned after investigating attacks against the Rohingya ethnic minority in Burma, also known as Myanmar.

As I said in the resolution I introduced in early September calling for their release: ''The Burmese police captain involved in their arrest reportedly admitted during the trial that his superior ordered him to entrap the journalists.''

The atrocities committed against the Rohingya—mass killings; rape perpetrated on a massive scale; whole villages burned to the ground, with people being burned alive in their homes; and over 700,000 fleeing the violence to neighboring Bangladesh—have been so extreme that the United Nations issued a report earlier this year calling for Burma's military leaders to be investigated and prosecuted on the charges of genocide. There can be no doubt about the culpability of Burma's military in the oppression and violence inflicted on the Rohingya.

I had the privilege of meeting Aung San Suu Kyi a few years ago as part of a delegation led by NANCY PELOSI, joining in admiration for her perseverance and triumph over oppression. There has been a hesitation by some to criticize Suu Kyi, worrying that it could make it more likely the military would take over the civilian government she leads. But her words and actions in the face of what, in reality, has been genocide have been deeply disturbing, contrary to her past example as a beacon of freedom.

□ 1430

In 2017, the late John McCain and RICHARD DURBIN introduced in the Senate and I introduced in the House a resolution that encouraged ''Aung San Suu Kyi to live up to her inspiring

words upon receiving the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize with respect to ethnic reconciliation in Burma, and in particular to address the historic and brutal repression of the Rohingya in Rakhine State.''

Unfortunately, that resolution was not acted upon.

When Aung San Suu Kyi later said: ''We believe that, for the sake of long-term stability and security, we have to be fair to all sides,'' it was a disturbing message of minimization.

Suu Kyi later said: ''In a way we can say that we understand our country better than any other country does, and I'm sure you will say the same of yours, that you understand your country better than anybody else.''

As Bishop Desmond Tutu said in a letter to Suu Kyi: ''My dear sister: If the political price of your ascension to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep.''

This resolution speaks out against the genocide and crimes against humanity that occurred in Rakhine State. All of humanity must speak out clearly and decisively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge unanimous support for this resolution.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He is the author of this measure.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership on this issue, H. Res. 1091, which I introduced to commit the House to a determination that the Burmese military's atrocities against the Rohingya minority in Rakhine State were genocide and to call for the release of the two Reuters journalists who have been unjustly imprisoned by the Burmese government for their investigation into these atrocities.

On August 25 last year, the Burmese military began a barbaric campaign against the Rohingya people in Rakhine State. This premeditated operation resulted in 700,000 Rohingya fleeing from Burma into Bangladesh. In September, Congressman CROWLEY and I wrote to then-Secretary Tillerson to raise our serious concerns about the violence.

Since then, sufficient evidence has been brought to light to fill in many gruesome details of what exactly happened. Much of this evidence is contained in two reports released in September.

First, the U.N. Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar released its final report that argued that the Burmese military had genocidal intent against the Rohingya.

Second, the State Department released a report summarizing a survey of Rohingya survivors in Bangladesh that it had commissioned. The State Department's report is particularly disturbing. It calls the violence extreme, large-scale, widespread, and states that ''the scope and scale of the military's operations indicate they were well planned and coordinated.''

Of the 1,000 Rohingya interviewed, about 80 percent witnessed killings and the destruction of villages. In total, 400 villages were burned to the ground. About half of those surveyed witnessed a rape.

I could go on, but the gruesomeness of the eyewitness accounts I would rather not repeat in a civilized setting.

Senior administration officials and numerous Members of Congress have all condemned these atrocities in harsh, unmistakable terms. In light of this evidence, I am asking my colleagues today to join me in making a legal determination by labeling these crimes what they were: genocide and crimes against humanity.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

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

Mr. Speaker, I also urge the administration and the Senate to make determinations similar to the one in this resolution so that we send a clear, unequivocal message to the Burmese Government and to the world that these barbaric and vicious atrocities will not be tolerated.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the House Freedom of the Press Caucus, I also want to draw attention to the second half of the resolution, which condemns the Burmese Government's decision to jail two Reuters journalists for trying to uncover the facts about the massacre in Rakhine State.

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of their arrest, so it is especially timely that we are considering this resolution and calling for their release.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), a senior member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, for reasons well explained by the preceding speakers, I am pleased to join in supporting this resolution and to commend Mr. CHABOT for introducing it. I was pleased to introduce it along with him and along with the chair, the ranking member, and several other Members of this House.

This resolution deals with Burma, whose government chooses to call itself Myanmar, but we officially take the position that the country retains its name of Burma. This resolution calls out the Burmese military for their acts of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya and highlights the cases of two journalists who were imprisoned for simply trying to shed light on these historic stories.

One of my priorities as ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee has been to focus attention on the 700,000 Rohingya who have been forced to flee Burma and relocate to Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries.

They have not fled because they wanted to leave home. They have not fled because Bangladesh is someplace where it is easy to make a living. They have fled to refugee camps because they have no choice, for the Rohingya communities have faced widespread attacks, rapes, killings, and burning of villages, all orchestrated by the Burmese military.

Not only that, but the Burmese State takes the position that the Rohingya are not citizens of their country because they can't prove that their great-grandparents were born in the country.

So, if someone is born in Burma, their parents were born in Burma, they could even prove their grandparents were born in Burma, they are denied a Burmese passport.

Now, this resolution uses the term ''genocide,'' not a word we should throw around, but in this case it is clearly a test that has been met.

In reports by the Public International Law & Policy Group and by our own Holocaust museum, the evidence is there that the United Nations' definition of genocide has been met.

The United Nations' Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines ''genocide'' as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. That is exactly what the Burmese military is doing, and denying citizenship is just part of that effort.

This resolution sends an important message to the Burmese military, and it also focuses on two Reuters journalists who exposed the mass murder in the village of Indin. Those two journalists are Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who were interviewing eyewitnesses to this crime. This is part of the Burmese genocide of the Rohingya.

But instead of applauding their bravery, the Burmese Government arrested them and accused them of violating the Official Secrets Act. Of course, we understand that a government that is committing genocide wants to declare that genocide to be a state secret.

And so, for that as their only crime, these two journalists have been sentenced to 7 years of hard labor in prison.

There is only one just outcome here. State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint must pardon these journalists. They must acknowledge that the Burmese military is committing atrocities against the Rohingya. They must provide the Rohingya papers of citizenship.

We need to pass this resolution, hopefully unanimously, to say that genocide must be stopped and the two journalists must be released.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1091. This resolution

calls the atrocities committed against the Rohingya what they are—genocide—and asks the government of Burma to release two innocent journalists who were framed for helping to bring these crimes to light.

I want to thank my predecessor, as chair of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Congressman CHABOT, and Ranking Member ENGEL for introducing this resolution.

Since August 2017, 700,000 Rohingya have fled their homes in Rakhine to neighboring Bangladesh to escape the horrible violence perpetrated by the Burmese military. In total, almost a million Rohingya refugees have been driven out of their homes in northern Rakhine and are sheltering in Bangladesh.

They, the Rohingya, didn't just decide to pick up all their belongings one day and leave. They are fearing for their lives, and so they left.

The United Nations released a report just months ago asserting that the Burmese military systematically targeted civilians in a manner consistent with genocidal intent. This fact-finding mission and other international NGOs have documented the violence, including torture; rape; killing unarmed civilians, including women and children; and burning down the Rohingya villages.

Make no mistake; this is genocide.

In a recent committee hearing on Burma, I spoke about the importance of journalists documenting these atrocities. However, we are seeing journalists inside Burma being punished and jailed for doing the basic requirements of their job.

This resolution rightly calls for the release of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, the two Reuters journalists who were framed wrongfully and sentenced by the Burmese government to over 7 years in jail after investigating the very violence we are calling a genocide here today.

How many more times do we and the world allow this to happen again? We either stand together as civilized nations, call this what it is—genocide—or we look the other way again as nations of the world did in World War II in Nazi, Germany, or during the Darfur genocide.

We either are serious about this or not.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my fellow colleagues as an original cosponsor on this resolution and urge the rest of the House to join in support. When we say never again, we must mean never again. The House is today taking an important first step and speaking clearly on these atrocities.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, again, thank my colleagues and Chairman ROYCE for their hard work on this measure, as always. This is an important resolution. It gives a name to the atrocities that occurred in Rakhine State, calling them genocide, and urges the Trump administration to take appropriate action to hold the Burmese military accountable for these crimes.

I agree with what everybody has mentioned. The resolution also calls for the release of two journalists wrongly imprisoned in Burma; and by passing this resolution today, we not only speak on behalf of these two journalists, but call for an open, civil, transparent, and increasingly democratic society in Burma.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me in supporting this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for actually, again, speaking with one voice on this issue, especially the author, Representative CHABOT, but also Representatives ENGEL, SCHIFF, YOHO, SHERMAN, COMSTOCK, and CROWLEY for joining as original cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, this past September our committee convened another hearing to examine the desperate living conditions of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and again we heard the story of survivors, all describing the same methodical, unthinkable acts of terror perpetrated by the Burmese military and by the security forces. Witnesses had no doubt that, based on all the evidence, genocide had occurred.

It is time Congress, the administration, and the rest of the world called these atrocities by their rightful name, and that is genocide.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1091, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1445

RECOGNIZING THE UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA ALLIANCE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1149) recognizing that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance serves as a linchpin of regional stability and bilateral security, and exemplifies the broad and deep military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties shared between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1149

Whereas the United States Armed Forces and South Korean troops fought together to defend the Korean peninsula from Communist aggression before the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953, and the United States of America and the Republic of Korea have continued this camaraderie since signing the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea that same year;

Whereas the Republic of Korea is a model for alliance burden-sharing, currently hosting 28,500 American active-duty military personnel, funding fifty percent of the total non-personnel costs of the U.S. troop presence on the Korean peninsula, fielding the world's seventh-largest military, and spending over 2.5 percent of its gross domestic product on defense;

Whereas the Republic of Korea is among the closest allies of the United States, having contributed troops in support of United States operations during the Vietnam war, Gulf war, and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, while also supporting numerous United Nations peacekeeping missions throughout the world;

Whereas United States forces on the Korean Peninsula are critical not only to the security of the Republic of Korea but also to protect against adversaries that threaten regional stability and the United States homeland;

Whereas the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command is the most integrated and effective combined military command in the world and, taken together with the United Nations Command, has formed a structure that has provided effective defense and deterrence on the Korean Peninsula for decades;

Whereas North Korea has the world's fourth-largest military, in addition to potentially as many as 60 nuclear weapons and between 2,500 and 5,000 metric tons of chemical weapons;

Whereas the United States supports the Republic of Korea's efforts at peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula and recognizes the critical importance of close policy coordination between Washington and Seoul;

Whereas in February 2017, a United Nations investigatory body confirmed that North Korea attempted to sell key materials for constructing miniaturized nuclear warheads, and found that ballistic missile cooperation between Iran and North Korea was ''significant and meaningful'';

Whereas the United States and South Korea share a commitment to democracy, human rights, and free market principles, as laid out in the 2009 U.S.-ROK Joint Vision Statement as the foundation for a 21st century ''strategic alliance'' based on shared values;

Whereas the Republic of Korea actively contributes to peacekeeping, cybersecurity, non-proliferation, overseas development assistance, climate change mitigation, counterterrorism, and post-conflict stabilization;

Whereas the Republic of Korea suffered economic retaliation from China for installing the United States Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) ballistic missile defense system, a measure necessitated by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile belligerence;

Whereas Korea is the world's eleventh-largest economy and the sixth-largest goods trading partner of the United States, and

creates bilateral trade and investment which supports 400,000 American jobs;

Whereas the United States is the largest foreign direct investor in the Republic of Korea, and Korean investment in the United States is increasing;

Whereas the Republic of Korea evolved from authoritarian governance to a vibrant, model democracy that embraces human rights and the rule of law in a region increasingly challenged by authoritarianism, which stands in stark contrast to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which commits human rights violations ''that do not have any parallel in the contemporary world'' according to a 2014 United Nations report;

Whereas the Republic of Korea has become a key stakeholder and an active and constructive participant in various international organizations, including the United Nations, G–20, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization;

Whereas Korean American Day commemorates the first arrival of Koreans to the United States in 1903 and honors the great contributions of Korean Americans across all aspects of society, which will only continue to grow as this population now numbers nearly two million citizens and as Korean students constitute the third-largest source of foreign students in the United States; and

Whereas the Korean-American community remains one of the most important bridges between the Republic of Korea and the United States and has helped foster deeper ties between the two nations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance serves as a linchpin of regional stability and bilateral security, and exemplifies the broad and deep military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties shared between the United States and the Republic of Korea;

(2) reiterates that the Republic of Korea and the United States share an interest in the continued strength of the bilateral alliance, and in further deepening the bilateral relationship;

(3) emphasizes that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance remains not only a bulwark for peace and stability in Northeast Asia, but also an exemplar of democratic values, free market principles, commitment to universal human rights, and the rule of law throughout the Indo-Pacific and globally;

(4) reaffirms the need for the United States and the Republic of Korea to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in continuing to apply the economic and financial pressure necessary to help peacefully end the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's dangerous nuclear and missile programs; and

(5) emphasizes that, regardless of the outcome of attempted negotiations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States-Republic of Korea alliance will continue to deter, defend against, and defeat any outside aggressors, uphold the peace, and guard the prosperity built by our two nations.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, strengthening U.S.-Korea ties has been one of my top priorities in Congress. As a southern Californian, I have seen firsthand how Korean Americans serve as pillars not only for their communities in the U.S., but also for the friendship between the U.S. and South Korea.

It was an honor to see my former staff member, Young Kim, represent my Orange County neighbors and myself in the California State Assembly. She served ably and energetically. Her story is the same as so many South Koreans who have come to this country and thrived.

The United States has no better partner in the Asia Pacific than the Republic of Korea. We signed the KORUS Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect in 2012. Since enactment of the KORUS Free Trade Agreement in 2012, trade has flourished, creating jobs in America and South Korea. In fact, South Korea is now our sixth largest trading partner, and, today, this partnership remains as important as ever as we look at the growing challenges across Asia.

We stood by Seoul as it was wrongfully punished by China for installing the THAAD ballistic missile defense system. And we continue to lead in helping to address the grave and immediate threats North Korea poses to Seoul and poses to the United States and our neighboring partners.

Despite recent diplomatic efforts, it was recently reported that North Korea has expanded a missile base along the Chinese border. A nearby second facility was also uncovered, while numerous undeclared missile bases have now been identified. And last month, North Korea's official news media reported that it successfully tested a new ''state-of-the-art weapon that has been long developed . . . significantly improving the combat power of our people's army.'' That is their quote.

These provocations and developments should underscore the threat we face from North Korea. That is why it is so important that we continue to press forward together with a campaign of maximum financial and diplomatic pressure. We must remain clear-eyed that the third generation of the Kim regime poses just as significant of a threat to us, our partners, and, most acutely, the North Korean people as ever.

Again, the U.S. has no better friend in Asia or anywhere else in the world than South Korea. We must continue to strengthen this partnership, particularly in the face of the threats we continue to face.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, let me once again start by thanking Chairman ROYCE. He has been one of Congress' most active leaders, if not the most active leader, on policy related to the Korean Peninsula. He leaves behind a great legacy after a distinguished career in this Chamber and a remarkable record of bipartisanship and leadership on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The measure before us today affirms that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance will continue to defend against outside aggressors, uphold the peace, and guard the prosperity built by our two nations.

This resolution is before us at a critical time. The American alliance with South Korea is under intense strain. It is critical that we coordinate with our partners in Seoul when it comes to North Korea, but we see the administration and our South Korean partner are not on the same page when it comes to this important security issue. I am deeply concerned about the potential consequences of this gap between our administration and our ally, and many of us in both parties share the concern.

Now, the question of how we handle American policy toward North Korea is very important. This resolution rightly lays out that we should continue to apply economic pressure to the Kim regime, but we need to remember sanctions are a tool, not a complete strategy. We need to fully articulate a diplomatic strategy to accompany sanctions and enable them to work properly.

I also think it is important that our sanctions policy provides specific humanitarian exemptions. Life-saving humanitarian aid has never been held hostage to the political whims of the Kim family. We need to continue that tradition and not allow the impoverished, mistreated people of North Korea to pay the price for their dictator's political machinations.

I agree with the chairman that we need to put economic pressure on the North Korean regime. But Congress should continue to provide space for diplomacy and humanitarian assistance, as we do now in our current sanctions policy. The resolution before us today would be a stronger piece of legislation if it contained mention of this principle.

Although I wish the resolution laid out more explicitly the importance of a holistic strategy to accompany sanctions, it is a good measure that I am proud to support.

Our alliance with Korea is of paramount importance to our strategic and security interests, and I am glad this

measure reaffirms our strong commitment to that partnership.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, with this resolution, the United States recognizes its longstanding and multifaceted relationship with the Republic of Korea, one that runs much deeper than the headlines of today's news may convey.

Once among the world's poorest countries and devastated by war less than 70 years ago, you would find it difficult to believe the stories of Korea's past by visiting Seoul today. I led a bipartisan codel to Seoul this September to meet with members of the parliament, Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Defense Ministries, and North Korean defectors. The U.S.-South Korea partnership is so much more than a military alliance. Our partnership cultivated the Miracle on the Han River and showed the world how a nation can transition from aid to trade.

As stated, South Korea is now our sixth largest trading partner and tenth largest importer of agricultural products. South Korea has lived under the threat of war since its founding, but it has managed to lift its people out of extreme poverty and become an aid donor, a leader in international fora, one of the greatest sources of investment in the United States, and a shining example to many other countries in the region.

As revisionist powers challenge the vision and values that underpin the South Korean miracle, the United States needs partners more today than ever before, partners that embody and promote the open border from which we have both deeply benefited.

With this resolution, the House recognizes the United States' special bond with the Republic of Korea, and the need to deepen and cultivate this partnership to promote peace and prosperity of both nations well into the future.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), one of our most senior and ranking members on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. He is ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for introducing H. Res. 1149, which recognizes the importance of our alliance with South Korea.

As ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee and a member of the Congressional Caucus on Korea, I am pleased to cosponsor this resolution with several other Members of Congress.

The U.S. and South Korea share common values—democracy, commitment to justice—but we also share a unique bond of history. The United States military and South Korean troops fought side by side to defend the Korean Peninsula before the Armistice Agreement of 1953. Today, we continue to cooperate in order to defend the Korean Peninsula. In fact, South Korea currently hosts 28,500 American Active Duty military personnel.

Only 35 miles separate Seoul from North Korea, and when I was there with the chairman, we noticed that property values are considerably lower on the north side of Seoul than on the south side of Seoul. While we have substantial conventional forces there, no number of soldiers can deal with the biggest threat from North Korea; namely, its nuclear arsenal.

Now, I know it has been tweeted that we no longer face a nuclear threat from North Korea, would that that be so. Secretary of State Pompeo has recently stated that North Korea continues to make more fissile material, no doubt using that to make more nuclear bombs, even several every year. And satellite imagery shows that North Korea is continuing to build and expand bases for intercontinental ballistic missiles.

So we are standing shoulder to shoulder with South Korea, but we face a real threat from North Korea, and we will not be able to deal with that threat without the assistance of both South Korea and Japan.

This resolution reaffirms the need for the United States and South Korea to stand shoulder to shoulder in continuing to apply necessary economic pressure on North Korea. Toward that end, I would say that we have scaled back in substance, if not in legal form, our sanctions against North Korea, perhaps falsely believing that a few words exchanged in Singapore are a reason to do so.

Recently, we have sent a letter to the administration, a bipartisan letter urging them to sanction major Chinese banks, not just small ones, that have done business with North Korea in violation of U.S. law and U.N. sanctions.

Now, it is important also to look at the Korean American community, and I am pleased that the resolution recognizes the importance of the bridges created by the American Korean community between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

I recently led a letter urging President Trump and President Moon to make a major priority among North Korea, the United States, and South Korea allowing American citizens, some 100,000 of them, who have relatives in North Korea to at least be allowed to visit their relatives and, even before that, at least be allowed to talk to them over the phone. We must recognize the potential for the Korean American community to serve the cause of peace and to help establish a dialogue.

Again, I thank Chairman ROYCE for his leadership on this measure and urge its adoption.

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

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

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I again thank Chairman ROYCE for his years of leadership on the Foreign Affairs Committee and his remarkable legacy on setting the agenda for American policy in the Korean Peninsula.

The United States-South Korea alliance is essential to our strategic posture in Asia. Our commitment to the Republic of Korea will persevere as a critical part of American foreign policy. It should be our utmost priority to deepen and strengthen our cooperation, and this resolution continues and aids that strong partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I again recognize and thank ELIOT ENGEL for his work on all of these measures, and I also recognize the importance of the U.S.-South Korean partnership. I have discussed the importance of that defense relationship as we stood shoulder to shoulder during the Korean war and how our economic partnership, bolstered by the enactment of the KORUS FTA, supports 400,000 American jobs.

□ 1500

While we discuss the importance of this partnership, I want to recognize that there is no greater bridge between our countries than the Korean American community. Since first arriving in the United States in 1903, they have worked tirelessly to form closer bonds between the United States and South Korea. And looking forward, the U.S. will remain committed to this important relationship.

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for H. Res. 1149 and the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

Our two nations have forged an important military alliance and strong economic and diplomatic friendship built on shared support for democracy, free markets and human rights. I have long advocated for increasing the American commitment to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, with the important U.S.-Korean relationship central to that strategy.

Both of our nations are threatened by North Korea's nuclear program. With nuclear talks at an apparent standstill, the current reduction in bilateral military exercises may be harming joint readiness with little to show for it. I will continue to urge the administration to conduct exercises when militarily necessary and separate our military cooperation with South Korea from ongoing negotiations about North Korea's nuclear program.

The United States and the Republic of Korea share a desire to eliminate the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile

programs and secure a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. By working together as allies and friends we increase the likelihood of making these aspirations into reality.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1149.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAFFIRMING THE STRONG COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1157) reaffirming the strong commitment of the United States to the countries and territories of the Pacific Islands region.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1157

Whereas the Pacific Islands countries and territories are home to more than 10 million culturally diverse people and are rooted in a unique culture and history spanning thousands of years;

Whereas the South Pacific region, of which the Pacific Islands countries and territories are an integral part, is endowed with a resource-rich ocean stretching over 20 million square miles;

Whereas the United States partnership with the countries of the Pacific Islands region dates back to the battles of World War II on the shores of Tarawa, Pelelieu, and Guadalcanal, where Pacific Islanders and Americans alike sacrificed for our collective security;

Whereas the United States territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are located in the South Pacific region and some of these relationships date back to the Spanish-American War;

Whereas the United States is committed to the future security and prosperity of the Pacific Islands countries and territories and is responsible for security and defense matters in and relating to Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands under their respective Compacts of Free Association;

Whereas the Compacts of Free Association arrangements with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands were renewed in 2003 for a period of 20 years and negotiations regarding the subsequent renewal of these agreements should be concluded in advance of their expiration in 2023;

Whereas the South Pacific region is critical to United States national security and defense, and there are several United States military bases and testing sites in the region, including the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site on the Marshall Islands;

Whereas the United States cooperates closely with Pacific Islands countries and territories as a partner committed to a common future that advances national security, regional cooperation, and trust and collaborating on a wide range of important issues such as addressing environmental and public health threats, distributing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and promoting peace and prosperity in the region;

Whereas in the Boe Declaration of 2018, leaders of Pacific Islands countries and territories reaffirmed that the threat of climate change imperils the livelihoods, security, and well-being of the peoples of such countries and territories;

Whereas a major priority of Pacific Islands countries and territories is addressing environmental and sustainability challenges, including responding to national disasters, and implementing environmental programs to address mitigating their unique vulnerabilities to the effects of rising sea levels, combatting ocean acidification, and protecting natural resources, and extreme weather events remains a priority for and point of collaboration between the United States and Pacific Islands countries;

Whereas the United States works closely with Australia and New Zealand and other like-minded partners in the South Pacific region, and there is opportunity for enhancing such cooperation as all three countries look for opportunities to increase their focus on this important region;

Whereas China's increased influence in the South Pacific region and the possibility of a future Chinese military presence in this region could expand its monitoring and surveillance capabilities, threatening the United States military presence in the region;

Whereas media reports revealed that Chinese scientists placed acoustic sensors in the Mariana Trench near Guam and near the island of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia, which could be used to monitor United States submarine activity in the region;

Whereas planned casino resort developments by Chinese investors on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands could complicate Department of Defense plans on the islands for extensive training and exercises resulting from the relocation of Marines from Okinawa, Japan;

Whereas a bilateral agreement between the United States and Japan will relocate approximately 4,100 United States Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam, significantly bolstering United States national security in the region;

Whereas official Chinese Government statements and policy documents indicate that the Pacific Islands are a component of the Belt and Road Initiative, which according to the Department of Defense aims ''to develop strong economic ties with other countries, shape their interests to align with China's, and deter confrontation or criticism of China's approach to sensitive issues'';

Whereas the Lowy Institute found that China has pledged $5.88 billion worth of aid to the region since 2011, yet despite these large commitments, China has only spent $1.26 billion so far and concerns remain over the types of loans extended and whether the commitments will be kept;

Whereas recent debt sustainability analysis by the World Bank shows that nine Pacific Islands countries and territories are currently classified as either at high or moderate risk of debt distress;

Whereas China continues to shrink the number of Taiwan's international partners around the globe by inducing countries to switch recognition through financial incentives and six of Taiwan's remaining diplomatic allies in the Pacific Islands region advocate on Taiwan's behalf at the United Nations and other international fora;

Whereas the United States plays an active role in regional fisheries management through its involvement in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and in maintaining programs to help Pacific Island countries combat illegal fishing, including bilateral ''shiprider'' agreements that allow law enforcement officers of host partner countries onboard United States Coast Guard ships and aircraft to patrol national exclusive economic zones;

Whereas the United States, through more than 17 departments and agencies, committed more than $350 million in fiscal year 2017 to engagement with Pacific Islands countries;

Whereas the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 authorized and appropriated $123.8 million in funding through 2024 for the 2010 Palau Compact Review Agreement;

Whereas every two years, the United States Navy's Pacific Fleet hosts the world's largest international maritime exercise, known as the ''Rim of the Pacific'', for which this past year Tongan Marines traveled to Hawaii with Australia's Navy to participate and Fiji has been invited to join the exercise in 2020; and

Whereas in September 2018 at the 30th Pacific Islands Forum in Nauru, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke stated the United States ''see[s] all of the Pacific Islands as an essential part of our free and open Indo-Pacific policy'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its strong commitment to United States engagement with all countries and territories of the South Pacific region, including the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, the Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu;

(2) reaffirms its strong support to the United States Pacific Island territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa, home to nearly 300,000 United States citizens;

(3) supports continued efforts to deepen cooperation with countries and territories of the Pacific Islands in areas of mutual interest, such as addressing the negative impacts of climate change, promoting sustainable economic development, and supporting regional organizations and stability;

(4) calls for the United States to increase the frequency of high-level bilateral and multilateral visits with leaders of Pacific Islands;

(5) promotes and supports efforts by Australia, New Zealand, France, and other like-minded partners to strengthen Pacific Islands countries' sovereignty and development through economic and security assistance; and

(6) encourages continued support for the Compacts of Free Association which enhance the strategic posture of the United States in the Western Pacific, reinforce United States regional commitment, preempt potential adversaries from establishing positional advantage, and further self-governance, economic development, and self-sufficiency of the Freely Associated States.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Representative BORDALLO for introducing this measure on an important but often overlooked part of the world, and that is the South Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, the Pacific Islands are an essential part of the South Pacific region. Today we express our commitment to these countries' and territories' security and to their prosperity.

Our country has a long history with the Pacific Islands and territories. Today we have 300,000 United States citizens that reside in the territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and in American Samoa.

The U.S. is engaged in this important region through a variety of programs which promote national security and also regional cooperation. They address conservation and public health threats. They distribute humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and they promote peace and prosperity.

The United States has supported these endeavors under the Compacts of Free Association with Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. These important arrangements have allowed the U.S. to project a presence in the region for 30 years, but these compacts expire in 2023.

The United States must continue to reassure the Pacific Island countries of our enduring commitment to having a continuing presence in the region and negotiate compact renewals before they expire.

Our relationship with this region is unfolding against the backdrop of a shifting strategic environment where Beijing and others seek to wield a greater influence in the South Pacific.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this measure which reaffirms the importance of continuing to engage and cooperate with the Pacific Island countries and territories.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

First of all, I want to acknowledge the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO), my colleague, for her longstanding advocacy of American engagement in the Pacific region. I thank her for introducing this resolution.

This measure supports cooperation with the Pacific Islands in the areas where we both have critical interests, including support for regional organizations and promotion of sustainable economic development.

The resolution rightly focuses on a critical threat facing the Pacific Islands and the United States, which is climate change.

In September of this year, Pacific Island leaders reaffirmed in a joint declaration that ''climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security, and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific.''

I wish that the President and the administration would act on that threat, but, instead, the United States refuses to acknowledge climate change at recent international conferences. The refusal to acknowledge established scientific fact is really wrong and dangerous.

Our country has a critical role to play in the effort to address climate change, and when we abdicate that responsibility, we endanger future generations and the regions most at risk, like the Pacific Islands.

So this is a good resolution, affirming America's commitment to advance self-government, economic development, and self-sufficiency for all the people of this strategically important region.

It is important to note that this resolution expresses our continued support for our compact agreements with the Freely Associated States. The Pacific Islands remain a region critical to our interests and the interests of our partners, including Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. It makes sense that we would continue to support investments that enhance our partnership with the Pacific Islands.

I support this measure, and I urge all Members to do the same.

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

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, as ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, I rise to support H. Res. 1157, which reaffirms the strong commitment of the United States to the countries and territories of the Pacific Islands region. I want to applaud Representative BORDALLO for introducing this, and I am proud to join with others as a cosponsor.

First, this resolution sends an important message to the 300,000 Americans who call the region home. Our fellow Americans in Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa, for them, this measure recognizes that they are a critical part of our Nation's fabric.

Indeed, when North Korea threatened to launch missiles at a U.S. territory, it said that it would hit Guam. We cannot forget about these Pacific territories and, in Congress, we have an obligation to make sure that their voices are heard in these Halls.

This resolution also specifically encourages continued support for the Compacts of Free Association which we currently have with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau. Currently, the United States provides, under these compacts, essential governmental functions, including defense.

While our compact with Palau was recently renewed, the Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands will expire in 2023. We in Congress should not wait. We should ensure that the compacts are expeditiously renewed. These arrangements not only help encourage the development of Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands, but also serve our core national security interests.

I know firsthand that we cannot take our Pacific partnerships for granted—not just in the compact states, but across the region, because other states around the region are facing entreaties from the Chinese Government.

The Chinese Government states that the Pacific Islands are a core component of their One Belt, One Road initiative, which seeks to ensnare small nations into Beijing's debt traps.

We know that China is stepping up its military involvement in the region, recently placing acoustic sensors in the Mariana Trench to track American submarine movements.

As the resolution recognizes, the solution to this challenge is for the U.S. to strengthen its engagement. We must ''increase the frequency of high-level bilateral and multilateral visits with leaders of Pacific Islands'' and find issues to work on in common.

For example, many of the Pacific Island nations face an existential threat from rising sea levels. Accordingly, this resolution calls for us to work with these countries to address the negative impacts of climate change. Many of the territories or islands of these countries actually face submersion as a result of rising sea levels. In doing so, we would work with our partners around the world.

While China employs bully tactics to unilaterally assert itself in the Pacific, the United States sets an example by working closely with the island nations and with Australia and New Zealand to promote sustainable development across the region.

I want to thank Representative BORDALLO again for her leadership on this issue. This resolution is an overdue affirmation of our commitment to the prosperity of the American territories in the Pacific and to the strengthening of the relationships between the United States and the nations of the region.

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

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

I want to again thank Congresswoman BORDALLO for introducing this resolution.

American engagement in the Pacific Islands region is critical to our strategic posture in the Western Pacific. With its passage, we reaffirm our commitment to the islands. I support this resolution, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, with the shifting strategic environment of the South Pacific, it is really more important than ever that we engage Pacific Island nations and the Pacific Islands Forum to solve regional problems and to promote prosperity.

We must maintain support for the Compacts of Free Association which enhance the strategic posture of the U.S. and the Western Pacific, which also reinforce our regional commitment and preempt potential adversaries from establishing positional advantage there.

This resolution signals our resolve to maintain and deepen our collaboration with our friends and allies in the Pacific Islands and territories. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1157.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONDEMNING THE ASSAD REGIME AND ITS BACKERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF WAR CRIMES AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN SYRIA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1165) condemning the Assad regime and its backers for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1165

Whereas Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, with the support of Iran and the Russian Federation, has committed widespread atrocities against the people of Syria, leading to one of the worst humanitarian crises in over 70 years, including the deaths of more than 500,000 people, the destruction of more than 50 percent of Syria's critical infrastructure, and the forced displacement of more than 14 million people;

Whereas the Assad regime, with the support of Iran and the Russian Federation, has conducted violent attacks against humanitarian aid workers, supplies, facilities, transports, and assets, and impeded the access and secure movement of humanitarian personnel, and has used chemical weapons against the Syrian people on numerous occasions;

Whereas since the introduction of Russian forces into Syria in September 2015, Russia has deployed over 68,000 Russian personnel to help sustain the Assad regime, and has reportedly transferred the S–300 surface-to-air missile system to Syria, giving Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, and other Iranian-backed militias additional cover for their activities in Syria;

Whereas Iran is estimated to have deployed over 3,000 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and regular Iranian military advisers to Syria and approximately 20,000 militia fighters, including 'Asaib ahl al-Haqq, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Fatimeyoun, and Zainabiyoun, which continue to expand their presence in Syria;

Whereas Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats has stated ''it's unlikely Russia has the will or capability to fully implement and counter Iranian decision and influence'' in Syria;

Whereas Iran's positions in Syria, which Iran has used to launch rockets and drones toward Israel, are critical to Iran's efforts to create a ''land bridge'' from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon so that it can arm Hezbollah in Lebanon with rockets and missiles, and increase the accuracy of Hezbollah's munitions;

Whereas Iranian-backed militias have demolished civilian areas, implemented sieges, and evicted civilian residents throughout Syria in a campaign of forced displacement, where Iranian-funded reconstruction plans to sell housing developments to foreign militias risk establishing a permanent Iranian presence and obstacle for return of thousands of Syrian families who fled Syria; and

Whereas the Syrian Government has reportedly signed agreements with Iran and IRGC controlled companies with respect to military cooperation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports a political solution to the conflict which will result in the air space of Syria no longer being utilized by the Assad regime or Russia to target civilians, an end to the sieges carried out by Assad, Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, and other Iranian-backed militias, and the release of all political prisoners;

(2) opposes international reconstruction funds from supporting projects in Syria in areas controlled by the Assad regime as long as the Assad regime remains in power;

(3) condemns the Assad regime, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of Iran, and Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed militias for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria, including the widespread use of torture, summary executions, prolonged sieges, forced relocations, and indiscriminate targeting of civilians and humanitarian actors;

(4) recognizes that as long as the Assad regime remains in power, it will continue to oppress the Syrian people, the Russian Federation will continue to expand its influence in the Middle East, and Iran will remain entrenched in Syria;

(5) calls upon the President and Secretary of State to work towards a sustainable political transition in Syria that results in a government in Syria that is not a danger to its own people, abandons its chemical weapons program, allows for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of displaced persons, and does not provide Iran with a platform to threaten Syria's neighbors;

(6) urges the President and the Secretary of State develop a strategy to prevent a permanent Iranian presence in Syria, understanding that the Russia Federation has not proven to be a viable partner to help in this effort;

(7) urges the Secretary of State to investigate and determine whether the forced displacement of Syrian civilians from their homes through brutal sieges, starvation, and indiscriminate targeting of civilians, and repopulation with foreign fighters constitutes sectarian or ethnic cleansing; and

(8) calls on the President and Secretary of State to determine whether militias operating in Syria under the command of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), including Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Fatemiyoun, Zainabioun, and 'Asaib ahl al-Haq are terrorist organizations and meet the criteria for sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13460 or 13582.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this resolution represents a broad bipartisan agreement that there will be no peace in Syria as long as the Assad regime remains in power and as long as Russia and Iran continue their entrenchment in that country.

For 7 years, the world has watched the brutal dictator, Bashar al-Assad, inflict untold suffering on the Syrian people. Since the beginning of the conflict, half a million people have been killed and 13 million, largely women and children, remain in dire need of basic humanitarian assistance in Syria.

The brutal Assad regime continues its onslaught on the civilian population in Syria, aided by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on the ground and the Russian Air Force in the sky.

Rather than working to eject Iran from Syria, Russia has been directly coordinating with Hezbollah, with the IRGC, and with other Iranian-backed militias that have expanded significantly throughout Syria.

□ 1515

Russia has even now reportedly transferred the S–300 surface-to-air missile system to Syria, giving these militias additional cover for their activities in Syria.

Despite signing a deescalation agreement with President Trump last year

promising a cease-fire in southern Syria, Russia directly assisted Iranian-backed militias in their takeover of southern Syria, moving these militias right up to the border with Israel.

This resolution makes clear that it is unrealistic to believe that Russia will ever be a reliable partner to counter the Iranian presence in Syria.

As Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats has stated so clearly:

It's unlikely Russia has the will or capability to fully implement and counter Iranian decision and influence in Syria.

This resolution also states that Iranian-backed militias should be investigated for the war crime of sectarian cleansing for their forced displacement of civilians in the Damascus suburbs, which has included demolishing civilian areas, implementing brutal sieges, and selling housing developments and then turning them over, once they have been occupied by these militias, to Iranian-backed militias, including Hezbollah.

Finally, this resolution calls for the administration to act quickly to develop a strategy towards a political transition in Syria where the Assad regime leaves power and all Iranian and Russian forces leave the country.

The Assad regime's atrocities, which include the use of chemical weapons, barrel bombs, and brutal sieges, helped create the conditions whereby ISIS emerged in the first place.

The regime's continued survival, along with the Iranian influence in Syria, will only perpetuate the cycle of violence, once again creating the conditions for the reemergence of ISIS or al-Qaida and other radical Islamist groups.

After 7 years of horror, U.S. policy in Syria should be guided by this key reality: there is no solution to the conflict in Syria as long as the brutal Assad regime remains in power.

Efforts to legitimatize the regime through so-called constitutional reform negotiations or in allowing Assad to run in elections are unrealistic and are doomed to fail.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, I want to thank my colleague and friend, the ranking member of this committee, Mr. ENGEL, for his efforts over the years in order to try to focus our attention.

From the beginning, when this process of people protesting in Damascus began with people walking through the street saying, ''Peaceful, peaceful,'' and we watched on CNN as the automatic weapons of Assad's forces opened up on those peaceful protesters, from that day on, Mr. ENGEL worked to try to get engagement and to head off some of this crisis, the magnitude of which we deal with today as a result of the Iranian militias.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume, and I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. MAST of Florida, who authored this measure, and I want to, again, extend my thanks to Chairman ROYCE, particularly for his very kind and generous words.

We have worked for the last several years, so many years, on the Foreign Affairs Committee to try to bring peace to Syria. We have been frustrated in watching the dictator kill hundreds of thousands of his own people, innocent men, women, and children.

I think one of the most horrific days that I have ever spent in Washington was when we had Caesar, the photographer who was part of the regime but defected and escaped with his pictures of genocide and pictures of unbearable, unthinkable atrocities that kind of scarred my brain forever, and I know the same goes for the chairman. We will never forget it. And we will keep trying to fight for the people of Syria and try to bring the dictator and the people who allow him to do these horrific things to justice.

It has been very difficult, because the Russians have embraced Assad, but it is absolutely disgraceful.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. ROYCE for his kind words. He has said a lot of things about what I did, but it couldn't have possibly been done without him as the chairman working side by side, the two of us, pushing these important issues, and Syria has certainly been a situation that needed our attention.

I just regret that we weren't able to do more to stop the slaughter in Syria, but I want to thank Chairman ROYCE, who has just been fantastic in terms of having a moral compass to say that what is going on should not stand and calling attention to the atrocities.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Mr. MAST.

Mr. Speaker, the crisis in Syria has gone on for far too long, a civil war that has killed at least half a million people, displaced more than 11 million Syrians, and stoked instability and extremism well beyond Syria's borders.

Iran and al-Qaida are on Israel's doorstep; refugees have overwhelmed Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan; and the human suffering inside Syria is still unimaginable.

Just 2 weeks ago, an American family learned the tragic news that their daughter was tortured and killed in Assad's prison. Leila was one of thousands of cases of enforced disappearance in Syria.

The Assad regime has had plenty of help, as this resolution points out. The Syrian regime was on the ropes earlier in the conflict when Iran sent thousands of fighters to defend its ally, Bashar al-Assad. Iranian-backed Hezbollah has been battle hardened, gaining fighting experience in Syria, displacing communities wholesale, and remaking Syrian society in their image.

The Russian Government came in to save the Assad regime when they again seemed to be losing the war, and the Russians sent fighter jets to target civilian populations and infrastructure, hospitals, schools, markets. We have heard from Syrian doctors who were delivering babies as air strikes threatened them from above, and then when civilian defense workers, the White Helmets showed up to clear the rubble, Russian bombs targeted the emergency workers, too. That is just shameful.

And it is not over. Idlib, a city of 2 million people, many of whom fled other conflict zones, is now under threat of annihilation. Truth be told, terrorists have a strong presence there, emboldened by the war crimes of the Syrian regime and their allies.

As Assad seeks to consolidate power and territory, millions of innocent people stand in the crosshairs.

There is no military solution to this conflict. Assad may believe that he can bomb his way out of this, but the regime's presence will continue to be a magnet for extremists.

Iran's permanent presence in Syria will only lead to further instability. And let me be very clear: we cannot and should not rely on Russian assurances to remove Iran from Syria.

You know the old adage, ''Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.'' The only thing that the Russians can be trusted to do in Syria is foment further instability on behalf of the regime.

This resolution comes at a critical time. It calls on the administration to work toward a political solution to this conflict and it seeks to build American leverage in negotiations by opposing international reconstruction funds that would support projects in Assad-controlled territory.

Lastly, I want to thank the many Syrian-American groups, which I have worked closely with, who have been doing whatever they can possibly do to stop the carnage and the evilness of the Assad regime. I will be continuing to work with the Syrian-American groups. Hopefully we can one day restore freedom and democracy to that beleaguered land.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership in bringing this bipartisan measure to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to especially thank the author of this important resolution, my Florida colleague, BRIAN MAST, for his efforts in calling attention to the bloody Assad regime. What a highly valued member Mr. MAST is to our committee and to this institution. He is an American hero and an American treasure.

There is no one more responsible for what is going on in Syria, as Mr. MAST

has pointed out in his resolution, than Bashar al-Assad. Who is the one responsible for this massacre of his own people? Al-Assad.

Assad brutally repressed peaceful Syrians who were demanding change in their country. Assad unleashed thousands of terrorists from the prisons into Iraq in 2003, helping to create the precursor to ISIS, and he did so again during the Syrian protests of 2011, leading to the founding and growth of ISIS.

And Assad, with his brutal and insidious tactics, is responsible for the hundreds of thousands of murders, for war crimes, for crimes against humanity. He continues to be responsible for the daily terror occurring in Syria to this day. Bashar al-Assad is the one responsible.

This is not a man who can lead a country. So we must use every tool at our disposal to put pressure on Assad and his backers, including pressure on Iran, pressure on Russia. They are the ones who are backing him. We have got to pass my good friend Mr. ENGEL's bill, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, and the bill that he puts forth with Mr. ROYCE, the No Assistance for Assad Act. These are important bills, and they are still pending in the Senate, as all good bills go, pending in the Senate.

We must ensure that Assad is not allowed to participate in any future election in Syria.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. MAST of Florida, for authoring this important resolution. I urge all of my colleagues to give it their support.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the author of this bill.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for yielding me the time and for his continued leadership on this critical issue. It has been an honor to serve with him and to learn from him. Absolutely, I couldn't say that more seriously. It has been an honor.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise today in support of H. Res. 1165. It is a resolution condemning the Assad regime and its backers, including Iran and Russia, for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria.

Now, after 7 years of war, as was already mentioned, the deaths of more than half a million people have occurred. Now, let's do a little bit of math on that. That would be over 70,000 people each year. When you think of the march of killing each and every day, that is a government march by the Assad regime of killing over 200 people every single day of the year.

The atrocities of the Assad regime are still ongoing with the help of Russia and Iran. And what do these atrocities look like: burning individuals to death, having them buried under rubble, having an adult put a 7.62 Kalashnikov round into a child, the use of chemical devices. The United States must push for an end to this and must push to hold these perpetrators accountable.

Currently, Iran is estimated to have deployed over 3,000 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps soldiers into the area. Iran is also responsible for directing Hezbollah and other militia fighters to battle on behalf of the regime.

Should Iran be allowed to maintain a permanent military presence in Syria, it will pose an even greater threat to Israel, to Jordan, and to all United States interests in the region.

This resolution calls upon the President and the Secretary of State to work towards a sustainable political transition in Syria and a strategy to stop a permanent Iranian presence in the region.

□ 1530

The resolution also condemns the Russian Federation, which has deployed more than 68,000 Russian personnel, for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria.

H. Res. 1165 reiterates Congress' opposition to U.S. assistance to government-controlled areas in Syria.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must continue to work with our partners to condemn the Assad regime's horrific abuses against the Syrian people and counter Iran and Russia's malign influence in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1165, condemning the Assad regime and its backers for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria: nearly half a million Syrians killed, 14 million Syrians displaced, and countless acts of atrocities from the Assad regime supported by its backers in Iran and in Russia. Clearly, it is right that Congress takes this step and acts.

This resolution urges a political solution to this conflict, to ensure the Assad regime cannot use the air to target its own civilians.

This resolution brings much-needed attention to the atrocities of this regime, which is responsible for horrific crimes, again, against its own people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their hard work and advocacy for this resolution that seeks to hold this regime accountable, and I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation. It shines a bright light on what is happening in Syria and the crimes committed by the Assad regime, along with its backers in Russia and in Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this resolution, and, again, I thank my colleagues for their work on this effort.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, for more than 7 years, the butcher of Syria has been slaughtering his own people. This relentless mass murderer has left half a million dead and millions others displaced. He has bombed, gassed, gunned down, and executed the Syrian people. He is, obviously, the Satan of Syria.

After the horrors of World War II, we were supposed to have rid the world of such evil, but, for years, we have shamefully watched it unfold. Mr. Speaker, it has always been crystal-clear who is responsible. The criminal butcher, the barbarian, Bashar al-Assad and his Russian and Iranian outlaws have turned the cradle of civilization into ashes.

Russian and Syrian warplanes have laid waste to Syrian towns, hospitals, and aid convoys from the air. On the ground, thousands of Iranian-backed militiamen have waged a campaign of outright sectarian cleansing.

These militias are the wicked arm of the IRGC and the Ayatollah of Iran. These militias are one of the most dangerous aspects of this chaotic war. They not only kill innocents today, but they kill any hope for a future Syria by sowing deep divisions along sectarian lines.

The time is well past that they are all called to be accountable. That is why I introduced legislation more than a year ago calling on the State Department to designate some of these Iranian-supported militias as terrorists. I am pleased this resolution also calls for these groups to be designated as such. These killers must meet justice for the crimes they have committed against the people of the world.

I congratulate Mr. MAST on bringing this to the House floor. I also thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their tenacious efforts in making sure the American people understand what is taking place throughout the world.

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

And that is just the way it is.

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

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that this resolution reminds us of the importance of building leverage as we push for an end to the crisis in Syria. We can and we should do more to increase that leverage.

Congress, as Chairman ROYCE mentioned before, could do so today by passing the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, my legislation to pressure the Assad regime to stop the violence, to sit down and negotiate an end to this conflict.

It really breaks my heart that it is being held in the other body, and we are hoping, before the end of the year, that we can shake it loose. It had tremendous support in this Chamber, bipartisan support, support on both sides

of the aisle. The House passed it twice; the administration strongly supports it; and the Syrian people desperately need it. The clock is running out in the other body, with one single Member opposing it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Caesar bill and the resolution before us today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I thank my colleagues, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ENGEL; Major BRIAN MAST of Florida; as well as the leadership on both sides of the aisle, for their bipartisan work on this resolution.

The Syrian people deserve a government that respects basic human rights and a government that is free of Iranian-backed militias. As long as the Assad regime remains in power, this will not be the case.

The administration needs to develop a strategy toward a sustainable political transition in Syria and to prevent Iranian entrenchment, recognizing that Russia has not been a reliable partner in either effort.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to back this resolution to once again condemn the Assad regime, Russia, and Iran for their unspeakable crimes against the Syrian people, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1165.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE COMPLETION OF NORD STREAM II

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1035) expressing opposition to the completion of Nord Stream II, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1035

Whereas Nord Stream II is an underwater gas pipeline that, if completed, will transport natural gas from the Russian Federation through the Baltic Sea to Germany;

Whereas Russia controls the supply of nearly 40 percent of Europe's gas and 11 European countries rely on Russian gas for 75 percent or more for their annual needs;

Whereas Nord Stream II will increase Russian control over the European energy market;

Whereas Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, stated that Nord Stream II would ''not help diversification, nor would it reduce [European] dependency'' on Russian gas;

Whereas it has been longstanding United States policy to support European energy security through diversification of supplies, such as the Southern Gas Corridor which will deliver Caspian Sea energy resources to Southern and Central Europe;

Whereas the existing Ukrainian gas transit system currently has 55 billion cubic meters of spare capacity which is equal to Nord Stream II's planned capacity;

Whereas Ukraine has been a stable and reliable transit hub for energy flowing to European destinations;

Whereas Russia's geopolitical interest in Nord Stream II is not to increase European energy security, but rather to drive a wedge between countries in Europe and drastically diminish Ukraine's political leverage regarding Russia and the significant income Ukraine derives from transit fees;

Whereas according to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Diplomacy, Sandra Oudkirk, ''because [Nord Stream II] has such a potentially large impact on the national security of some of our largest partners in the world, it has an impact on our national security''; and

Whereas Members of Congress on a bipartisan basis have expressed strong opposition to Nord Stream II through statements and legislation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) finds that Nord Stream II is a drastic step backwards for European energy security and United States interests;

(2) calls upon European governments to reject the Nord Stream II project;

(3) urges the President to use all available means to support European energy security through a policy of reducing reliance on the Russia Federation; and

(4) supports the imposition of sanctions with respect to Nord Stream II under section 232 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9526).

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, for many years, Russia has conducted a campaign of armed aggression and intimidation against many neighboring countries, but especially Ukraine and Georgia. That threat now includes massive Russian military exercises along the border of our NATO allies and repeated intrusions into the air and sea space of these and other countries in Europe.

But Vladimir Putin is also employing more subtle weapons of influence. This includes leveraging energy exports, especially oil and natural gas. Many European countries, including key NATO allies, are dependent on Russian energy and, thus, are vulnerable to Moscow's pressure.

But even as the United States, its NATO allies, and other partners are seeking to impose economic costs on Russia to force it to end its aggression, a massive new pipeline known as Nord Stream II is being built. It will increase the flow of Russian gas directly to Germany and on to other countries in the heart of Europe.

Moscow's strategy is to undermine the energy security of our NATO allies, because the more dependent they are on Russian energy, the greater Moscow's influence over them will be.

Nord Stream II has another purpose, which is to strike at Ukraine. It will end Moscow's reliance on Ukraine's natural gas pipelines, thereby cutting off an important source of revenue and eliminating one of Ukraine's few means of leverage against Russian aggression.

H.R. 3364, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which I introduced and was passed overwhelmingly by Congress, authorizes the President to impose sanctions on persons assisting the construction of this and other pipelines.

This resolution recognizes the danger that Nord Stream II represents to the Atlantic alliance and urges the President to use the authority Congress has given him to prevent this pipeline from being constructed.

If Nord Stream II is completed, it will undermine U.S. interests in Europe by rendering key NATO allies more vulnerable to Russian blackmail and convincing Moscow that its policy of aggression is, in fact, succeeding.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) control the balance of my time.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CONAWAY of Texas for authoring this resolution, and, again, I thank Chairman ROYCE.

Mr. Speaker, in Europe's far eastern reaches, construction has begun on a new pipeline to move natural gas, the Nord Stream II. If this project reaches completion, it will represent much more than a way to move fuel from point A to point B. It will, in fact, be a new tool for Russia to interfere in European politics, to pit ally against ally and neighbor against neighbor, to put down deeper roots in the heart of the European Union, and to weaken efforts to confront Russia for a range of aggressive behaviors.

Russia has already shown the way it uses its gas resources as a weapon, choking off supplies to Ukraine and inflating prices. If the Nord Stream II

goes forward, this dangerous practice could increase a hundredfold.

We want to see a Europe that has access to a range of energy sources. The last thing European countries should do is become more dependent on Russian gas. There are plenty of other options, whether from the Caspian basin or from right here in the United States.

This measure calls on European governments to reject this clear threat to stability and security. It is an appeal to our allies not to allow Russia another avenue to undermine European unity and involve itself in European politics.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and the author of this measure.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I thank the ranking member for bringing forth this resolution that I cosponsored.

Mr. Speaker, Nord Stream II is an underwater gas pipeline that, if completed, will transport natural gas from the Russian Federation—Russian gas—through the Baltic Sea to Germany.

This project may seem innocent enough, but it does several very dangerous things. One, it circumvents Ukraine, and the impact it has there. Two, it further dominates the European energy supply. Three, it will threaten European security and stability. And, four, it attempts to drive a wedge between NATO allies.

This project is being sold to our European allies and partners as many things. They are being told, and we are being told, that the current routes lack transit capacity to meet the demand in Western Europe. Mr. Speaker, this is false. There is a 55 billion cubic meter surplus in transit lines existing currently through Ukraine that Nord Stream II plans to completely circumvent, which is the capacity of the Nord Stream II.

□ 1545

In other words, Mr. Speaker, Russia is working to strangle Ukraine's existing pipeline. Once Nord Stream II reaches its planned terminus in Germany, it is to move southward away from Western markets and back into existing lines.

Mr. Speaker, the impact that that will have on the Ukraine pipeline is that, if it goes empty, then it will cease to exist and cease to operate. The argument that if Russia tried to use Nord Stream II as some leverage they could revert back to using the gas going through Ukraine lines is simply false and is misleading.

We are also being told that the pipeline will reduce gas prices in Europe. This also is false. Nord Stream II circumvents market competitors and further reinforces Russia's dominance in the market, essentially creating zero incentive to lower energy prices.

We are also being told that Nord Stream II is a commercial deal with zero geopolitical impact. Compared to Nord Stream I, which is owned by a variety of stakeholders from Western Europe, Nord Stream II is 100 percent Russian owned and operated through Gazprom, which is controlled by the Russian state, i.e., Vladimir Putin, who is known to pursue political goals and whose chairman, Alexey Miller, is currently sanctioned by the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the handwriting is on the wall. It could not be clearer, and we can no longer kid ourselves what Nord Stream II is and what it is not. It will provide greater latitude for the Russians to continue defiance of global norms, sovereign borders, and international law. The project is simply another tool for Vladimir Putin to wield in Russia's ever-increasing aggressive and subversive activities against the West.

Mr. Speaker, Nord Stream II is a danger to peace as we know it. Our German and NATO colleagues should see clearly what it is. It allows Vladimir Putin to have an additional place to put his boot on the jugular of Europe.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage support for this resolution.

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

Mr. Speaker, Russia is already enough of a problem for our European friends. Putin's efforts to undermine democracy and stoke instability are a constant threat to European peace and unity. In 6 months' time, Russia could have another way to exert even more leverage on Europe, and that is if its development of the Nord Stream II pipeline goes forward. Today we are going on record to say that that is a terrible idea, and we hope our allies and partners in Europe see it the same way.

So I again thank the authors of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Nord Stream II is energy blackmail. If completed, it will make our European allies more dependent on Russian gas to meet their energy needs.

For three decades, Russia has used its abundant energy supplies to coerce European neighbors into doing its bidding. Europe, lacking natural gas reserves of its own, once had little choice in energy providers, allowing the Kremlin to block the flow of gas if Europe was opposing its interests.

In fact, I was in Ukraine in 2009 when the Russians turned off the gas in Ukraine, and it was cold. People died. It is blackmail since they are a monopoly on European natural gas. This includes forcing Europe's silence over Russia's illegal aggression in not only Ukraine, but Georgia and Crimea as well.

Today, Europe has other options, however. American natural gas is increasingly available on the global market thanks to the advances in technology. In 2019, the United States' LNG exports are expected to surge by almost 80 percent. In Texas, Mr. Speaker, we have more natural gas than we ever had and more than we need. We should use all we can, and then we should sell the rest to the Europeans.

Across Europe, more LNG terminals are coming online and allowing more American natural gas to reach the European market. Even Germany has pledged to build a new LNG terminal as a result of President Trump's push to renew the transatlantic trade relationship. With the expanding availability of U.S. natural gas, Europe can and should say ''no'' to Nord Stream II.

Vladimir Putin, the Napoleon of Siberia, cannot be trusted to be a fair trading partner. His recent aggression in Ukraine demonstrates Russia is a threat and not a friend. We must pass this resolution and send a message to our European allies that Nord Stream II is a bad idea.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Mr. CONAWAY, for bringing this resolution, and I also want to thank the ranking member and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee for their support.

And that is just the way it is.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Russia's ongoing aggression has taken many forms, from outright invasion and annexation of territory in Ukraine to cyberattacks and other assaults against the U.S. and our NATO allies.

One of the most powerful weapons in its armory is its export of energy, especially oil and gas. The Nord Stream II pipeline from Russia to Germany will hand Moscow another source of influence to wield against our NATO allies and Ukraine. The result will be to undermine Europe's energy security and perhaps the will to resist Russian aggression.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote for this resolution and urge the President to use all of the means at his disposal to prevent this pipeline from being constructed. Only then can U.S. interests in Europe, including the integrity of the NATO alliance, be made secure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1035, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1162) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to Ukraine, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1162

Whereas the United States is committed to supporting international norms and agreements governing the peaceful relations between countries;

Whereas the Russian Federation has repeatedly violated international norms and agreements by its continuing aggression against Ukraine, including directing and arming separatist forces in eastern Ukraine and forcibly occupying and illegally annexing the Ukrainian territory of Crimea;

Whereas the Russian Federation continues to foment conflict in Ukraine in order to undermine the Ukrainian Government and economy;

Whereas these actions have caused tremendous suffering for the Ukrainian people, with thousands of Ukrainians killed both in battle and in their homes, and hundreds of thousands made refugees;

Whereas the Russian Federation continues to deny any responsibility for the destruction of Malaysian Airlines flight 17 over Ukraine, which killed 298 innocent civilians;

Whereas the Russian Federation has continuously failed to meet its commitments under the Minsk II agreement;

Whereas the United States and its allies and partners around the world continue to support the Ukrainian people in their efforts to strengthen their government, economy, and military in order to bring peace and prosperity to their country and to the surrounding region;

Whereas the United States and its allies and partners around the world have imposed punitive sanctions and other measures against the Russian Federation for its continued aggression against Ukraine, including its occupation of Crimea;

Whereas the Russian Federation continues to expand its aggression against Ukraine, including militarization of the Azov Sea and blockading the Kerch Strait in contravention of international norms and agreements;

Whereas, on November 25, 2018, the Russian Federation fired upon and rammed Ukrainian vessels attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait and seized the Ukrainian vessels and their crews: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the Russian Federation's firing upon, ramming, and seizing Ukrainian vessels and crews attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait on November 25, 2018, as violations of binding international norms and agreements;

(2) calls on the Russian Federation to immediately return the Ukrainian vessels and their crews to Ukraine;

(3) calls on the Russian Federation to cease its violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and its efforts to prevent Ukrainian vessels from transiting the Kerch Strait, as is Ukraine's right under international norms and agreements;

(4) reaffirms the United States commitment to provide the people of Ukraine with political, economic, and security assistance to enable them to secure their independence, democracy, and prosperity; and

(5) encourages the President and allies and partners of the United States to hold the Russian Federation accountable for its ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and esteemed Ranking Member ENGEL for their swift action in putting this important and timely resolution together in support of the people of Ukraine.

For far too long, we have witnessed Putin's increased aggression against Ukraine, directing and arming separatist forces on Ukraine soil and forcibly occupying and annexing the Ukrainian territory of Crimea.

More recently, Russian forces were firing upon, ramming, and seizing Ukrainian vessels and crews attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait, in clear violation of international norms and agreements.

The 2014 destruction of Malaysia Airlines flight 17 that killed close to 300 people also demonstrated the threat to civilians in this conflict. Until this day, Putin continues to deny any responsibility for that heinous act. Meanwhile, thousands of Ukrainians continue to be killed fighting for their basic freedoms that we as Americans hold dear, while hundreds of thousands flee looking for a safe haven.

Mr. Speaker, Putin's actions are simply unacceptable, and the United States and our allies must stand strong against Russia. That is why this resolution is so important. We must make it clear that we truly support the people of Ukraine and their aspirations for a free and democratic society.

For that, it is crucial that the United States provides the kind of assistance—politically, militarily, and economically—that will allow Ukraine to fight Russia's increasing coercion. We must also use all of the tools at our disposal, because these are not isolated issues, to ensure that Putin and his regime pay a heavy price for Russia's aggression.

Through this resolution and other measures, we can demonstrate to Putin and the world that we are paying close attention, that we will continue to support the people of Ukraine and do what is necessary to protect Ukraine and other countries threatened by his imperial ambitions, and to ensure that they can live in peace and live in security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure to condemn Putin's despotic rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Let me start by thanking Chairman ROYCE for bringing this measure forward. He and I introduced this resolution a few weeks ago after the latest flare-up of Russian aggression in Ukraine.

I also want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida, who has always, through the years, time and time again, been standing up with us for what is right and really showing a great moral compass.

I am glad that, as we wrap up this Congress and as Chairman ROYCE wraps up a distinguished career as a Member of the House, we are again working together, working across the aisle with a bipartisan commitment to American leadership and American values. That has been the hallmark of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the 6 years Mr. ROYCE has been chairman and I have been ranking member. I am grateful that we are going out of this Congress on the same, positive, good note.

Mr. Speaker, this measure is another opportunity for the House to go on record condemning the aggressive and destructive behavior of Russia under Vladimir Putin. Russia had shredded international norms and laws with its illegal occupation of Crimea, its violent campaign in eastern Ukraine, the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight 17, and Russia's ceaseless shirking of its obligations under the Minsk II peace agreement, all at a cost of thousands of lives.

Most recently, Russia has blockaded the Kerch Strait and militarized the Sea of Azov. A few weeks ago, Russian forces fired on Ukrainian vessels attempting to pass through the strait, ultimately seizing the vessels and their crews as well.

What is remarkable about this latest action, Mr. Speaker, is just how brazen it is. Typically, Putin has always made sure that there is some veil of deniability over his dirty work so that he can say up is down and cast blame somewhere else.

But this time, Russian forces are operating out in the open. It is almost as though Putin thinks he can turn the international order on its head and there won't be any consequences. I cannot imagine where he got that idea.

My measure that we are now considering says that Russia's latest aggression cannot stand. It calls upon the

Kremlin to immediately return the captured vessels and crews and to end its violation of Ukrainian sovereignty. It reaffirms our support for Ukrainian independence, democracy, and prosperity, and it calls on the Trump administration to hold Russia accountable, to make sure there will be consequences for this sort of behavior.

We hope the administration hears us and acts accordingly, and we hope the people of Ukraine and the thugs running Russia hear us and know that Congress won't stay silent in the face of Moscow's outrageous behavior.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), who has been a Member of this House for many years and has done wonderful work.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1600

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I will start first by applauding the leadership of this committee: Mr. ROYCE, who has worked so hard, and the gentlewoman from Florida.

We went to Bosnia together some years ago, and they have worked so closely with Mr. ENGEL. I think it really demonstrates what can be done when people work together.

The Congressional Ukraine Caucus cochairs—Representatives MARCY KAPTUR, ANDY HARRIS, BRIAN FITZPATRICK, and I—issued this statement rebuking the Russian Federation's aggressive attack on Ukraine near the Kerch Strait in the Sea of Azov: ''As cochairs of the Congressional Ukraine Caucus, we strongly condemn Russia's dangerous naval assault on Ukrainian ships. This episode, as well as Russia's blockade of Ukrainian ports, is a deeply disturbing sign of continued Russian aggression in its efforts to tighten its bloody grip and illegitimate occupation of the Crimean peninsula.

''We join the international committee and our NATO allies in resolute affirmation of the fact that Crimea and its surrounding waters belong to Ukraine. We call on Russian authorities, in accordance with international law, to cease any and all interference with access to Ukrainian ports and the Azov Sea. Russia must end this bloody and unjust occupation of Ukrainian sovereign territory.''

I was in Ukraine at the time of the Russian attack. I was at meetings where the President of Ukraine spoke out clearly against the Russian action on behalf of the people of Ukraine. He also spoke out on what was the main aim of Russia's military actions: to undermine Ukraine's efforts to build democracy.

Today, there is a dangerous tilt to authoritarianism in many places around the world. This makes Ukraine's struggle to resist aggression, safeguard its independence, and develop democracy all the more important.

Ukraine has witnessed firsthand that the challenges of democracy are not easily overcome. That makes it all the more important to overcome the threats to democracy, such as injustice and corruption.

The United States must support Ukraine in its efforts. We must deepen our determination to help the fight for freedom and democracy, never making heroes out of dictators. That is what this resolution is all about. May it pass unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ENGEL and thank my pal from Florida for their work.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), who is our esteemed chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, last month's Russian attack on Ukrainian vessels attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait is a dramatic reminder of Vladimir Putin's continued aggression. This was not an isolated incident. Russia has opened a new front in the Sea of Azov, where it is attempting to choke off Ukrainian imports and exports and greatly undermine Ukraine's economy.

This is a dangerous escalation. In the past, Moscow has attempted to disguise its armed intervention in Ukraine by claiming that its troops and weapons in the eastern regions belong to the separatist entities there.

Now let me share with you, Mr. Speaker, the reality that, in the east, there is Russian armor. ELIOT ENGEL and I traveled to Dnipropetrovsk in the east, in the Russian-speaking east of Ukraine, with a delegation of four Republicans and four Democrats. We traveled in order to talk to those who were trying to deal with the fact that Russian military was rolling over provinces in Ukraine. But now Russia is openly using its own military against Ukraine in the territory of Crimea that it has illegally occupied and annexed. They are using the fleet.

The United States and its allies and partners must hold Russia accountable. Failure to do so may be interpreted by Moscow as a green light to go even further, a miscalculation that could result in a dangerous military escalation.

This resolution sends two messages. The first is to the Ukrainian people, to demonstrate that we remain committed in assisting them in their fight for freedom. The second, of course, is to Moscow, to make clear that the U.S. will oppose Russian aggression whenever it occurs.

I urge the President to ensure, by his words and actions, that Moscow understands the potential consequences of its actions and the commitment of the United States to the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am worried that Vladimir Putin is becoming emboldened because he has faced no real consequences for his ongoing violations of international law. I am glad we are considering this resolution today, saying that he should face consequences.

I wish we had more time in this Congress to work on legislation that could make those consequences real. I am committed to staying focused on this issue when we come back in January.

For now, I am glad we are sending this message, and I am glad to stand shoulder to shoulder as I have so many times over the past 6 years with my friend, ED ROYCE, as we pass this measure.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I ask all Members to support this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Ukraine remains under assault from Moscow, which is betting that the West is tiring of the struggle and that it is free now to expand its aggression. Silence on our part at this critical moment invites miscalculation and an escalation of the conflict.

We must demonstrate by our words and actions that we remain fully committed to assisting the people of Ukraine to defend their country, including by providing them with the weapons they need to defeat Russia's continuing aggression. A slap on the wrist at this point will not restrain Putin and may guarantee the expansion of hostilities that we hope to avoid.

We strongly encourage the President to use the authority that Congress has provided to impose sanctions on Russia and to take action to make clear that we remain committed to the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people and a Ukraine that is whole and free.

I want to thank my colleague from New York (Mr. ENGEL) for authoring this very important measure and, most importantly, for his consistent leadership on Ukraine. At the end of my service in this body, I thank him for the many years of friendship and cooperation as we worked together to promote the interests and the values of the American people around the world.

It has been a real joy, and I thank Mr. ENGEL for sharing that ride with me.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1162.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NICARAGUAN INVESTMENT CONDITIONALITY ACT (NICA) OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1918) to oppose loans at international financial institutions for the Government of Nicaragua unless the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps to hold free, fair, and transparent elections, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Nicaragua Human Rights and Anticorruption Act of 2018''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Sense of Congress on advancing a negotiated solution to Nicaragua's crisis.
Sec. 3. Statement of policy.
Sec. 4. Restrictions on international financial institutions relating to Nicaragua.
Sec. 5. Imposition of targeted sanctions with respect to Nicaragua.
Sec. 6. Annual certification and waiver.
Sec. 7. Report on human rights violations and corruption in Nicaragua.
Sec. 8. Civil society engagement strategy.
Sec. 9. Reform of Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission.
Sec. 10. Termination.
Sec. 11. Definitions.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON ADVANCING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO NICARAGUA'S CRISIS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) credible negotiations between the Government of Nicaragua and representatives of Nicaragua's civil society, student movement, private sector, and political opposition, mediated by the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, represent the best opportunity to reach a peaceful solution to the current political crisis that includes—

(A) a commitment to hold early elections that meet democratic standards and permit credible international electoral observation;

(B) the cessation of the violence perpetrated against civilians by the National Police of Nicaragua and by armed groups supported by the Government of Nicaragua; and

(C) independent investigations into the killings of protesters; and

(2) negotiations between the Government of Nicaragua and representatives of Nicaragua's civil society, student movement, private sector, and political opposition, mediated by the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, have not resulted in an agreement as of the date of the enactment of this Act because the Government of Nicaragua has failed to credibly participate in the process.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to support—

(1) the rule of law and an independent judiciary and electoral council in Nicaragua;

(2) democratic governance in Nicaragua;

(3) free and fair elections overseen by credible domestic and international observers in Nicaragua; and

(4) anti-corruption and transparency efforts in Nicaragua.

SEC. 4. RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS RELATING TO NICARAGUA.

(a) RESTRICTIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall—

(1) instruct the United States Executive Director at each international financial institution of the World Bank Group to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to oppose the extension by the International Finance Corporation of any loan or financial or technical assistance to the Government of Nicaragua for a project in Nicaragua;

(2) instruct the United States Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to oppose the extension by the Bank of any loan or financial or technical assistance to the Government of Nicaragua for a project in Nicaragua; and

(3) instruct the United States Executive Director of each other international financial institution, including the International Monetary Fund, to work with other key donor countries to develop a coherent policy approach to future engagements with and lending to the Government of Nicaragua, in a manner that will advance human rights, including the full restoration of the rights guaranteed to the people of Nicaragua through the commitments made by the Government of Nicaragua as a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

(b) EXCEPTIONS FOR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION.—The restrictions under paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to any loan or financial or technical assistance provided to address basic human needs or to promote democracy in Nicaragua.

(c) BRIEFING BY THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the effectiveness of international financial institutions in enforcing applicable program safeguards in Nicaragua.

SEC. 5. IMPOSITION OF TARGETED SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO NICARAGUA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (c) with respect to any foreign person, including any current or former official of the Government of Nicaragua or any person acting on behalf of that Government, that the President determines—

(1) to be responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or to have knowingly participated in, directly or indirectly, any activity described in subsection (b);

(2) to be a leader of—

(A) an entity that has, or whose members have, engaged in any activity described in subsection (b); or

(B) an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked under subsection (c)(1)(A) as a result of activities related to the tenure of the leader;

(3) to have knowingly materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of—

(A) an activity described in subsection (b); or

(B) a person whose property and interests in property are blocked under subsection (c)(1)(A); or

(4) to be owned or controlled by, or to have knowingly acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked under subsection (c)(1)(A).

(b) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—An activity described in this subsection is any of the following in or in relation to Nicaragua on or after April 18, 2018:

(1) Significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights against persons associated with the protests in Nicaragua that began on April 18, 2018.

(2) Significant actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions.

(3) Acts of significant corruption by or on behalf of the Government of Nicaragua or a current or former official of the Government of Nicaragua, including—

(A) the expropriation of private or public assets for personal gain or political purposes;

(B) corruption related to government contracts;

(C) bribery; or

(D) the facilitation or transfer of the proceeds of corruption.

(4) The arrest or prosecution of a person, including an individual or media outlet disseminating information to the public, primarily because of the legitimate exercise by such person of the freedom of speech, assembly, or the press.

(c) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(A) ASSET BLOCKING.—The exercise of all powers granted to the President by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of a person determined by the President to be subject to subsection (a) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(B) EXCLUSION FROM THE UNITED STATES AND REVOCATION OF VISA OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.—In the case of an alien determined by the President to be subject to subsection (a), denial of a visa to, and exclusion from the United States of, the alien, and revocation in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), of any visa or other documentation of the alien.

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of a measure imposed pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out paragraph (1)(A) shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(3) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—The requirement to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property under paragraph (1)(A) shall not include the authority to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(4) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(d) IMPLEMENTATION; REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

(2) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President shall issue such regulations, licenses, and orders as are necessary to carry out this section.

SEC. 6. ANNUAL CERTIFICATION AND WAIVER.

(a) CERTIFICATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report certifying whether the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps—

(1) to strengthen the rule of law and democratic governance, including the independence of the judicial system and electoral council;

(2) to combat corruption, including by investigating and prosecuting cases of public corruption;

(3) to protect civil and political rights, including the rights of freedom of the press, speech, and association, for all people of Nicaragua, including political opposition parties, journalists, trade unionists, human rights defenders, indigenous peoples, and other civil society activists;

(4) to investigate and hold accountable officials of the Government of Nicaragua and other persons responsible for the killings of individuals associated with the protests in Nicaragua that began on April 18, 2018; and

(5) to hold free and fair elections overseen by credible domestic and international observers

(b) WAIVER.—

(1) TEMPORARY GENERAL WAIVER.—If the Secretary certifies to the appropriate congressional committees under subsection (a) that the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps as described in that subsection, the President may waive the application of the restrictions under section 4 and sanctions under section 5 for a period of not more than one year beginning on the date of the certification.

(2) NATIONAL INTEREST WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of the restrictions under section 4 and sanctions under section 5 if the President—

(A) determines that such a waiver is in the national interest of the United States; and

(B) submits to the appropriate congressional committees a notice of and justification for the waiver.

(3) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the President should exercise the waiver authority provided under paragraph (1) if the Secretary of State certifies under subsection (a) that the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps as described in that subsection.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In preparing a certification required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with the appropriate congressional committees.

(d) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—The Secretary shall annually brief the appropriate congressional committees on whether the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps as described in subsection (a).

SEC. 7. REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND CORRUPTION IN NICARAGUA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, acting through the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, and in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of National Intelligence, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(1) the involvement of senior officials of the Government of Nicaragua, including members of the Supreme Electoral Council, the National Assembly, and the judicial system, in human rights violations, acts of significant corruption, and money laundering; and

(2) persons that transfer, or facilitate the transfer of, goods or technologies for use in or with respect to Nicaragua, that are used by the Government of Nicaragua to commit serious human rights violations against the people of Nicaragua.

(b) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) may be classified.

SEC. 8. CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on a strategy—

(1) for engaging relevant elements of civil society in Nicaragua, including independent media, human rights, and anti-corruption organizations, to strengthen rule of law and increase accountability for human rights abuses and corruption in Nicaragua; and

(2) setting forth measures to support the protection of human rights and anti-corruption advocates in Nicaragua.

SEC. 9. REFORM OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE DRUG POLICY COMMISSION.

Section 603(f)(1) of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–323; 130 Stat. 1938) is amended by striking ''Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall hold an initial meeting to develop and implement'' and inserting ''At the initial meeting of the Commission, the Commission shall develop and implement''.

SEC. 10. TERMINATION.

The provisions of this Act (other than section 9) shall terminate on December 31, 2023.

SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

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

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

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

(2) GOOD.—The term ''good'' means any article, natural or manmade substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(3) PERSON.—The term ''person'' means an individual or entity.

(4) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ''United States person'' means any United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States (including a foreign branch of such an entity), or any person in the United States.

Mr. ROYCE of California (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the amendment.

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

There was no objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SANCTIONING HIZBALLAH'S ILLICIT USE OF CIVILIANS AS DEFENSELESS SHIELDS ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3342) to impose sanctions on foreign persons that are responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights by reason of the use by Hizballah of civilians as human shields, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Sanctioning the Use of Civilians as Defenseless Shields Act''.

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to officially and publicly condemn the use of innocent civilians as human shields.

SEC. 3. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN PERSONS THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE USE OF CIVILIANS AS HUMAN SHIELDS.

(a) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—

(1) MANDATORY SANCTIONS.—The President shall impose sanctions described in subsection (d) with respect to each person on the list required under subsection (b).

(2) PERMISSIVE SANCTIONS.—The President may impose sanctions described in subsection (d) with respect to each person on the list described in subsection (c).

(b) MANDATORY SANCTIONS LIST.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of the following:

(1) Each foreign person that the President determines, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(A) is a member of Hizballah or is knowingly acting on behalf of Hizballah; and

(B) knowingly orders, controls, or otherwise directs the use of civilians protected as such by the law of war to shield military objectives from attack.

(2) Each foreign person that the President determines, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(A) is a member of Hamas or is knowingly acting on behalf of Hamas; and

(B) knowingly orders, controls, or otherwise directs the use of civilians protected as such by the law of war to shield military objectives from attack.

(3) Each foreign person or agency or instrumentality of a foreign state that the President determines, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, knowingly and materially supports, orders, controls, directs, or otherwise engages in—

(A) any act described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) by a person described in that paragraph; or

(B) any act described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) by a person described in that paragraph.

(c) PERMISSIVE SANCTIONS LIST.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the President should submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of each foreign person that the President determines, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, knowingly orders, controls, or otherwise directs the use of civilians protected as such by the law of war to shield military objectives from attack, excluding foreign persons included in the most recent list under subsection (b).

(d) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions to be imposed on a foreign person or an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state under this subsection are the following:

(1) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President shall exercise all of the powers granted to the President under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in property and interests in property of the foreign person or agency or instrumentality of a foreign state if such property or interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security determines is subject to sanctions under subsection (a) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—Any visa or other documentation issued to an alien who is subject to sanctions under subsection (a), regardless of when such visa or other documentation was issued, shall be revoked and such alien shall be denied admission to the United States.

(C) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS.—The sanctions under this paragraph shall not be imposed on an individual if admitting such individual to the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or with other applicable international obligations.

(e) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that knowingly violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations prescribed to carry out this section to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that knowingly commits an unlawful act described in section 206(a) of such Act.

(f) PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a finding under this section, or a prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding, is based on classified information (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified Information Procedures Act (18 U.S.C. App.)) and a court reviews the finding or the imposition of the prohibition, condition, or penalty, the President may submit such information to the court ex parte and in camera.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to confer or imply any right to judicial review of any finding under this section or any prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding.

(g) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions under this section if the President determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that such waiver is in the national security interest of the United States.

(h) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may exercise all authorities under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) for purposes of carrying out this section.

(2) ISSUANCE OF REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to implement this section.

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

(1) to limit the authorities of the President pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) or any other relevant provision of law; or

(2) to apply with respect to any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.), or to any authorized intelligence activities of the United States.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms ''admitted'' and ''alien'' have the meanings given those terms in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

(2) AGENCY OR INSTRUMENTALITY OF A FOREIGN STATE.—The term ''agency or instrumentality of a foreign state'' has the meaning given that term in section 1603(b) of title 28, United States Code.

(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

(4) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term ''foreign person'' means—

(A) any citizen or national of a foreign state, wherever located; or

(B) any entity not organized solely under the laws of the United States or existing solely in the United States.

(5) HAMAS.—The term ''Hamas'' means—

(A) the entity known as Hamas and designated by the Secretary of State as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189); or

(B) any person identified as an agent or instrumentality of Hamas on the list of specially designated nationals and blocked persons maintained by the Office of Foreign Asset Control of the Department of the Treasury, the property or interests in property of which are blocked pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(6) HIZBALLAH.—The term ''Hizballah'' means—

(A) the entity known as Hizballah and designated by the Secretary of State as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189); or

(B) any person identified as an agent or instrumentality of Hizballah on the list of specially designated nationals and blocked persons maintained by the Office of Foreign Asset Control of the Department of the Treasury, the property or interests in property of which are blocked pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(7) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ''United States person'' means any United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States (including foreign branches), or any person in the United States.

SEC. 5. SUNSET.

This Act shall cease to be effective on December 31, 2023.

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons that are responsible for using civilians as human shields, and for other purposes.''.

Mr. ROYCE of California (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the amendments.

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

There was no objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UKRAINIAN FAMINE OF 1932–1933, KNOWN AS THE HOLODOMOR, SHOULD SERVE AS A REMINDER OF REPRESSIVE SOVIET POLICIES AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H. Res. 931, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 931

Whereas 2017–2018 marks the 85th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932–1933, known as the Holodomor;

Whereas in 1932 and 1933, millions of Ukrainian people perished at the will of the totalitarian Stalinist government of the former Soviet Union, which perpetrated a premeditated famine in Ukraine in an effort to break the nation's resistance to collectivization and communist occupation;

Whereas the Soviet Government deliberately confiscated grain harvests and starved millions of Ukrainian men, women, and children by a policy of forced collectivization that sought to destroy the nationally conscious movement for independence;

Whereas Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin ordered the borders of Ukraine sealed to prevent anyone from escaping the manmade starvation and to prevent the delivery of any international food aid that would provide relief to the starving;

Whereas numerous scholars worldwide have worked to uncover the scale of the famine, including Canadian wheat expert Andrew Cairns, who visited Ukraine in 1932 and was told that there was no grain ''because the government had collected so much grain and exported it to England and Italy'', while Joseph Stalin simultaneously denied food aid to the people of Ukraine;

Whereas nearly a quarter of Ukraine's rural population perished or were forced into exile due to the induced starvation, and the entire country suffered from the consequences of the prolonged famine;

Whereas noted correspondents of the time were refuted for their courage in depicting and reporting on the forced famine in Ukraine, including Gareth Jones, William Henry Chamberlin, and Malcolm Muggeridge, who wrote, ''They (the peasants) will tell you that many have already died of famine and that many are dying every day; that thousands have been shot by the government and hundreds of thousands exiled . . .'';

Whereas title V of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1986 (Public Law 99–180; 99 Stat. 1157), signed into law on December 13, 1985, established the Commission on the Ukraine Famine to ''conduct a study of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932–1933 in order to expand the world's knowledge of the famine and provide the American public with a better understanding of the Soviet system by revealing the Soviet role'' in it;

Whereas with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, archival documents became available

that confirmed the deliberate and premeditated deadly nature of the famine, and that exposed the atrocities committed by the Soviet Government against the Ukrainian people;

Whereas Raphael Lemkin, who devoted his life to the development of legal concepts and norms for containing mass atrocities and whose tireless advocacy swayed the United Nations in 1948 to adopt the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, authored an essay in 1953 entitled ''Soviet Genocide in [the] Ukraine'', which highlighted the ''classic example of Soviet genocide'', characterizing it ''not simply a case of mass murder[, but as] a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation'';

Whereas the Government of Ukraine passed on November 28, 2006, a law numbered No: N 376–V, and entitled ''About the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine'', giving official recognition to the Ukraine Famine as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people;

Whereas President George W. Bush signed into law Public Law 109–340 on October 13, 2006, authorizing the Government of Ukraine ''to establish a memorial on Federal land in the District of Columbia to honor the victims of the Ukrainian famine-genocide of 1932–1933'', which was officially dedicated in November 2015;

Whereas the Government of Ukraine and the Ukrainian communities in the United States and worldwide continue their efforts to secure greater international awareness and understanding of the 1932–1933 tragedy; and

Whereas victims of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 will be commemorated by Ukrainian communities around the globe, and in Ukraine, through November 2018: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) solemnly remembers the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 and extends its deepest sympathies to the victims, survivors, and families of this tragedy;

(2) condemns the systematic violations of human rights, including the freedom of self-determination and freedom of speech, of the Ukrainian people by the Soviet Government;

(3) recognizes the findings of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine as submitted to Congress on April 22, 1988, including that ''Joseph Stalin and those around him committed genocide against the Ukrainians in 1932–1933'';

(4) encourages dissemination of information regarding the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in order to expand the world's knowledge of this manmade tragedy; and

(5) supports the continuing efforts of the people of Ukraine to work toward ensuring democratic principles, a free-market economy, and full respect for human rights, in order to enable Ukraine to achieve its potential as an important strategic partner of the United States in that region of the world, and to reflect the will of its people.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ROYCE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. ROYCE of California. I have an amendment to this text at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

That the House of Representatives—

(1) extends its deepest sympathies to the victims and survivors of the Holodomor of 1932–1933, and their families;

(2) condemns the systematic violations of human rights, including the freedom of self-determination and freedom of speech, of the Ukrainian people by the Soviet Government;

(3) recognizes the findings of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine as submitted to Congress on April 22, 1988, including that ''Joseph Stalin and those around him committed genocide against the Ukrainians in 1932–1933'';

(4) encourages dissemination of information regarding the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in order to expand the world's knowledge of this manmade tragedy; and

(5) supports the continuing efforts of the people of Ukraine to work toward ensuring democratic principles, a free-market economy, and full respect for human rights, in order to enable Ukraine to achieve its potential as an important strategic partner of the United States in that region of the world, and to reflect the will of its people.

Mr. ROYCE of California (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DONNA SAUERS BESKO POST OFFICE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1850) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 907 Fourth Avenue in Lake Odessa, Michigan, as the ''Donna Sauers Besko Post Office'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1850

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

SECTION 1. DONNA SAUERS BESKO POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 907 Fourth Avenue in Lake Odessa, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the ''Donna Sauers Besko Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Donna Sauers Besko Post Office''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORPORAL JEFFERY ALLEN WILLIAMS POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 4407) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3s101 Rockwell Street in Warrenville, Illinois, as the ''Corporal Jeffery Allen Williams Post Office Building'', with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

(1)On page 2, line 1, strike [Jeffery] and insert *Jeffrey*.

(2)On page 2, line 6, strike [Jeffery] and insert *Jeffrey*.

(3)On page 2, line 10, strike [Jeffery] and insert *Jeffrey*.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SERGEANT KENNETH ERIC BOSTIC POST OFFICE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5205) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 6th Street in Hawthorne, Nevada, as the ''Sergeant Kenneth Eric Bostic Post Office'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5205

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

SECTION 1. SERGEANT KENNETH ERIC BOSTIC POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 6th Street in Hawthorne, Nevada, shall be known and designated as the ''Sergeant Kenneth Eric Bostic Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Sergeant Kenneth Eric Bostic Post Office''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1615

SO2 NAVY SEAL ADAM OLIN SMITH POST OFFICE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5475) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 108 North Macon Street in Bevier, Missouri, as

the ''SO2 Navy SEAL Adam Olin Smith Post Office'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5475

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

SECTION 1. SO2 NAVY SEAL ADAM OLIN SMITH POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 108 North Macon Street in Bevier, Missouri, shall be known and designated as the ''SO2 Navy SEAL Adam Olin Smith Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''SO2 Navy SEAL Adam Olin Smith Post Office''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THOMAS P. COSTIN, JR. POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6059) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 51 Willow Street in Lynn, Massachusetts, as the ''Thomas P. Costin, Jr. Post Office Building'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6059

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

SECTION 1. THOMAS P. COSTIN, JR. POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 51 Willow Street in Lynn, Massachusetts, shall be known and designated as the ''Thomas P. Costin, Jr. Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Thomas P. Costin, Jr. Post Office Building''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JAMES WILLIAM ROBINSON JR. MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6167) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5707 South Cass Avenue in Westmont, Illinois, as the ''James William Robinson Jr. Memorial Post Office Building'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6167

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

SECTION 1. JAMES WILLIAM ROBINSON JR. MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5707 South Cass Avenue in Westmont, Illinois, shall be known and designated as the ''James William Robinson Jr. Memorial Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''James William Robinson Jr. Memorial Post Office Building''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS MEMORIAL POST OFFICE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6335) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, as the ''Veterans Memorial Post Office'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6335

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

SECTION 1. VETERANS MEMORIAL POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, shall be known and designated as the ''Veterans Memorial Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Veterans Memorial Post Office''.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MITCHELL

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. OAKVILLE VETERANS MEMORIAL POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, shall be known and designated as the ''Oakville Veterans Memorial Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Oakville Veterans Memorial Post Office''.

The amendment was agreed to.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, as the 'Oakville Veterans Memorial Post Office'''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ROSS BOUYEA POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6930) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Miller Street in Plattsburgh, New York, as the ''Ross Bouyea Post Office Building'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6930

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

SECTION 1. ROSS BOUYEA POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Miller Street in Plattsburgh, New York, shall be known and designated as the ''Ross Bouyea Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Ross Bouyea Post Office Building''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRIVATE HENRY SVEHLA POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (S. 3209) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 413 Washington Avenue in Belleville, New Jersey, as the ''Private Henry Svehla Post

Office Building'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3209

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

SECTION 1. PRIVATE HENRY SVEHLA POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 413 Washington Avenue in Belleville, New Jersey, shall be known and designated as the ''Private Henry Svehla Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Private Henry Svehla Post Office Building''.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RICHARD W. WILLIAMS, JR., CHAPTER OF THE TRIPLE NICKLES (555TH P.I.A.) POST OFFICE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (S. 3237) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 12th Street Lobby in Columbus, Georgia, as the ''Richard W. Williams, Jr., Chapter of the Triple Nickles (555th P.I.A.) Post Office'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3237

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

SECTION 1. RICHARD W. WILLIAMS, JR., CHAPTER OF THE TRIPLE NICKLES (555TH P.I.A.) POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 12th Street Lobby in Columbus, Georgia, shall be known and designated as the ''Richard W. Williams, Jr., Chapter of the Triple Nickles (555th P.I.A.) Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Richard W. Williams, Jr., Chapter of the Triple Nickles (555th P.I.A.) Post Office''.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

POSTMASTER FRAZIER B. BAKER POST OFFICE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 7230) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 226 West Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina, as the ''Postmaster Frazier B. Baker Post Office'', and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7230

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

SECTION 1. POSTMASTER FRAZIER B. BAKER POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 226 West Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina, shall be known and designated as the ''Postmaster Frazier B. Baker Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Postmaster Frazier B. Baker Post Office''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AMENDMENT TO CHANGE ADDRESS OF POSTAL FACILITY DESIGNATED BY PUBLIC LAW 115–217

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 7243) to amend Public Law 115–217 to change the address of the postal facility designated by such Public Law in honor of Sergeant First Class Alwyn Crendall Cashe, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7243

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

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO CHANGE ADDRESS OF POSTAL FACILITY DESIGNATED BY PUBLIC LAW 115–217.

In section 1(a) of Public Law 115–217, strike ''567 East Franklin Street'' and insert ''83 Geneva Drive''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT GEORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of House Resolution 1172, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1172

Whereas President George Herbert Walker Bush's lifetime record of service to the United States will continue to inspire Americans for years to come;

Whereas, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, George H.W. Bush joined the United States Naval Reserve in 1942 on his 18th birthday and became a distinguished naval aviator;

Whereas George H.W. Bush's TBM Avenger aircraft was hit with enemy fire over Chi Chi Jima, and though the engine was ablaze, he completed his mission and escaped over water, and floated on a raft for 4 hours before being rescued;

Whereas George H.W. Bush flew 58 combat missions during the Second World War, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the United States Navy Air Medal with 2 gold stars;

Whereas George H.W. Bush graduated from Yale University with a degree in economics, and moved his family to West Texas and embarked on a successful career in the energy industry;

Whereas, in 1966, George H.W. Bush was elected to represent Texas in the House of Representatives;

Whereas, from 1971 to 1973, George H.W. Bush served as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations;

Whereas, from 1974 to 1975, George H.W. Bush served as the Chief of the United States Liaison Office to the People's Republic of China;

Whereas, from 1976 to 1977, George H.W. Bush served as the Director of Central Intelligence;

Whereas, from 1981 to 1989, George H.W. Bush served as the 43rd Vice President of the United States;

Whereas, from 1989 to 1993, George H.W. Bush served as the 41st President of the United States;

Whereas President George H.W. Bush provided the steady leadership needed through the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, the peaceful end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union;

Whereas President George H.W. Bush led a coalition of 32 nations to restore Kuwait's sovereignty following its invasion by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein;

Whereas President George H.W. Bush is noted for the advancement of civil rights with the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act;

Whereas President George H.W. Bush negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement, creating the world's largest free trade zone;

Whereas, on January 6, 2000, President George H.W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Pierce Bush became the longest married Presidential couple, setting forth for the Nation an example of love and commitment;

Whereas, on January 10, 2009, the U.S.S. George H.W. Bush was commissioned as the 10th and final Nimitz-class carrier for the Navy, named in recognition of George H.W. Bush's Navy service;

Whereas, in 2011, President George H.W. Bush received the Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian award, for his life of public service and commitment to liberty;

Whereas President George H.W. Bush was a tireless advocate for volunteerism and community service, speaking in his inaugural address of ''a Thousand Points of Light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good'';

Whereas President George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush were strong supporters of the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, established in 1997 as a component of the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, to encourage future generations to live a life of service to others;

Whereas President George H.W. Bush, with Barbara Bush, had 6 children, 17 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren, and considered Houston, Texas, his home and Walker's Point in Kennebunkport, Maine, as his ''anchor to windward''; and

Whereas President George H.W. Bush's life will be remembered for civility, public service, humility, and servant leadership: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its appreciation for the profound public service of President George H.W. Bush;

(2) expresses its deep sympathy to the children of President George H.W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush: President George W. Bush, Jeb Bush, Neil Bush, Marvin Bush, and Dorothy Bush Koch, and to the entire family of the former President; and

(3) directs the Clerk of the House to transmit a copy of this resolution to the family of President George H.W. Bush.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 7217, by the yeas and nays;

S. 3029, by the yeas and nays; and

S. 825, by the yeas and nays.

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

IMPROVING MEDICAID PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7217) to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing coordinated care for children with complex medical conditions through a health home, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 400, nays 11, not voting 21, as follows:

[Roll No. 428]

YEAS—400

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Balderson
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cloud
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Hern
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (MI)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamb
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Lesko
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Morelle
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Wild
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—11

Amash
Biggs
Brooks (AL)
Gaetz
Garrett
Gosar
Harris
Hice, Jody B.
Labrador
Massie
Rooney, Francis

NOT VOTING—21

Beyer
Bishop (MI)
Buchanan
Costa
Curbelo (FL)
DeFazio
Doggett
Ellison
Hartzler
Jenkins (KS)
Jones (NC)
Keating
Knight
Noem
Peters
Pittenger
Polis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ross
Walters, Mimi
Walz

□ 1646

Messrs. JODY B. HICE of Georgia and GOSAR changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. SANFORD changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 428.

PREMATURITY RESEARCH EXPANSION AND EDUCATION FOR MOTHERS WHO DELIVER INFANTS EARLY REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3029) to revise and extend the

Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act (PREEMIE Act), on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 406, nays 3, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 429]

YEAS—406

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Balderson
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cloud
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Hern
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (MI)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamb
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Lesko
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Morelle
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Wild
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—3

Amash
Garrett
Massie

NOT VOTING—23

Beyer
Bishop (MI)
Buchanan
Costa
Curbelo (FL)
DeFazio
Ellison
Hartzler
Jenkins (KS)
Jones (NC)
Keating
Knight
McEachin
Noem
Pittenger
Polis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ross
Schweikert
Suozzi
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Yoho

□ 1657

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM LAND TRANSFER ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 825) to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium located in Sitka, Alaska, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 403, nays 3, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 430]

YEAS—403

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

Massie	Raskin	Soto
Mast	Ratcliffe	Speier
Matsui	Reed	Stefanik
McCarthy	Reichert	Stewart
McCaul	Renacci	Stivers
McClintock	Rice (NY)	Suozzi
McCollum	Rice (SC)	Swalwell (CA)
McGovern	Richmond	Takano
McHenry	Roby	Taylor
McKinley	Roe (TN)	Tenney
McMorris Rodgers	Rogers (AL)	Thompson (CA)
	Rogers (KY)	Thompson (MS)
McNerney	Rohrabacher	Thompson (PA)
McSally	Rokita	Thornberry
Meadows	Rooney, Francis	Tipton
Meeks	Ros-Lehtinen	Titus
Meng	Rosen	Tonko
Messer	Roskam	Torres
Mitchell	Rothfus	Trott
Moolenaar	Rouzer	Tsongas
Mooney (WV)	Roybal-Allard	Turner
Moore	Royce (CA)	Upton
Morelle	Ruiz	Valadao
Moulton	Ruppersberger	Vargas
Mullin	Rush	Veasey
Murphy (FL)	Russell	Vela
Nadler	Rutherford	Velázquez
Napolitano	Ryan (OH)	Visclosky
Neal	Sánchez	Wagner
Newhouse	Sanford	Walberg
Nolan	Sarbanes	Walden
Norcross	Scalise	Walker
Norman	Scanlon	Walorski
Nunes	Schiff	Wasserman Schultz
O'Halleran	Schneider	
O'Rourke	Schrader	Waters, Maxine
Olson	Schweikert	Watson Coleman
Palazzo	Scott (VA)	Weber (TX)
Pallone	Scott, Austin	Webster (FL)
Palmer	Scott, David	Welch
Panetta	Sensenbrenner	Wenstrup
Pascrell	Serrano	Westerman
Paulsen	Sessions	Wild
Payne	Sewell (AL)	Williams
Pearce	Shea-Porter	Wilson (FL)
Pelosi	Sherman	Wilson (SC)
Perlmutter	Shimkus	Wittman
Perry	Shuster	Womack
Peters	Simpson	Woodall
Peterson	Sinema	Yarmuth
Pingree	Sires	Yoder
Pocan	Smith (MO)	Yoho
Poe (TX)	Smith (NE)	Young (AK)
Poliquin	Smith (NJ)	Young (IA)
Posey	Smith (TX)	Zeldin
Price (NC)	Smith (WA)	
Quigley	Smucker	

NAYS—3

Amash	Brooks (AL)	Garrett

NOT VOTING—26

Beyer	Frelinghuysen	Noem
Bishop (MI)	Gaetz	Pittenger
Buchanan	Hartzler	Polis
Costa	Issa	Rooney, Thomas J.
Cramer	Jenkins (KS)	
Curbelo (FL)	Jones (NC)	Ross
Davis, Danny	Keating	Schakowsky
DeFazio	Knight	Walters, Mimi
Ellison	McEachin	Walz

□ 1706

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENDANGERED SALMON PREDATION PREVENTION ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (S. 3119) to allow for the taking of sea lions on the Columbia River and its tributaries to protect endangered and threatened species of salmon and other nonlisted fish species, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3119

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act''.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) preventing predation by sea lions, recovery of listed salmonid stocks, and preventing future listings of fish stocks in the Columbia River under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) is a vital priority; and

(2) the Federal Government should continue to fund lethal and nonlethal removal, and deterrence, measures for preventing such predation.

SEC. 3. TAKING OF SEA LIONS ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES TO PROTECT ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES OF SALMON AND OTHER NONLISTED FISH SPECIES.

Section 120(f) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1389(f)) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) TEMPORARY MARINE MAMMAL REMOVAL AUTHORITY ON THE WATERS OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER OR ITS TRIBUTARIES.—

''(1) REMOVAL AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Secretary may issue a permit to an eligible entity to authorize the intentional lethal taking on the waters of the Columbia River and its tributaries of individually identifiable sea lions that are part of a population or stock that is not categorized under this Act as depleted or strategic for the purpose of protecting—

''(A) species of salmon, steelhead, or eulachon that are listed as endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

''(B) species of lamprey or sturgeon that are not so listed as endangered or threatened but are listed as a species of concern.

''(2) PERMIT PROCESS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity may apply to the Secretary for a permit under this subsection.

''(B) TIMELINES AND PROCEDURES OF APPLICATION.—The timelines and procedures described in subsection (c) shall apply to applications for permits under this subsection in the same manner such timelines apply to applications under subsection (b).

''(C) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall establish procedures to coordinate issuance of permits under this subsection, including application procedures and timelines, delegation and revocation of permits to and between eligible entities, monitoring, periodic review, and geographic, seasonal take, and species-specific considerations.

''(D) DURATION OF PERMIT.—A permit under this subsection shall be effective for a period of not more than 5 years, and may be renewed by the Secretary.

''(3) LIMITATIONS ON ANNUAL TAKINGS.—The Secretary shall apply the process for determining limitations on annual take of sea lions under subsection (c) to determinations on limitations under this subsection, and the cumulative number of sea lions authorized to be taken each year under all permits in effect under this subsection shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual potential biological removal level for sea lions.

''(4) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS.—Intentional lethal takings under this subsection shall—

''(A) be humane within the meaning of such term under section 3(4);

''(B) require that capture, husbandry, transportation, and euthanasia protocols are based on standards propagated by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and that primary euthanasia be limited to humane chemical methods; and

''(C) be implemented by agencies or qualified individuals described in subsection (c)(4), or by individuals employed by the eligible entities described in paragraph (6).

''(5) SUSPENSION OF PERMITTING AUTHORITY.—If, 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act, the Secretary, after consulting with State and tribal fishery managers, determines that lethal removal authority is no longer necessary to protect salmonid and other fish species from sea lion predation, the Secretary shall suspend the issuance of permits under this subsection.

''(6) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—

''(A) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' means—

''(i) with respect to removal in the mainstem of the Columbia River, from river mile 112 to the McNary Dam and its tributaries in the State of Washington, and its tributaries in the State of Oregon above Bonneville Dam, the State of Washington, the State of Oregon, and the State of Idaho;

''(ii) with respect to removal in the mainstem Columbia River from river mile 112 to the McNary Dam and its tributaries within the State of Washington and in any of its tributaries above Bonneville Dam within the State of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation; and

''(iii) with respect to removal in the Willamette River and other tributaries of the Columbia River within the State of Oregon below Bonneville Dam, a committee recognized by the Secretary under subparagraph (D).

''(B) DELEGATION AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may allow eligible entities described in clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (A) to delegate their authority under a permit under this subsection to the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission for removal in the mainstem of the Columbia River above river mile 112 and below McNary Dam, in the Columbia River tributaries in the State of Washington, or in tributaries within the State of Oregon above Bonneville Dam and below McNary Dam.

''(C) ADDITIONAL DELEGATION AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may allow an eligible entity described in subparagraph (A)(i) to delegate its authority under a permit under this subsection to any entity described in subclause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (A) with respect to removal in the mainstem of the Columbia River above river mile 112 and below McNary Dam, in the Columbia River tributaries in the State of Washington, or in tributaries in the State of Oregon above Bonneville Dam and below McNary Dam.

''(D) COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall recognize a committee established in accordance with this subparagraph as being eligible for a permit under this subsection, for purposes of subparagraph (A)(iii).

''(ii) MEMBERSHIP.—A committee established under this subparagraph shall consist of the State of Oregon and each of the following:

''(I) The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians or the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, or both.

''(II) The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs or the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, or both.

''(iii) MAJORITY AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—A committee established under this subparagraph may take action with respect to a permit application and removal under this subsection only with majority agreement by the committee members.

''(iv) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FACA.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to a committee established under this subparagraph.

''(7) INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTION.—For purposes of this subsection, any sea lion located upstream of river mile 112 and downstream of McNary Dam, or in any tributary to the Columbia River that includes spawning habitat of threatened or endangered salmon or steelhead is deemed to be individually identifiable.

''(8) SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE IMPACT EXCEPTION.—For purposes of this subsection, any sea lion located in the mainstem of the Columbia River upstream of river mile 112 and downstream of McNary Dam, or in any tributary to the Columbia River that includes spawning habitat of threatened or endangered salmon or steelhead is deemed to be having a significant negative impact, within the meaning of subsection (b)(1).

''(9) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'Indian tribe' has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).''.

SEC. 4. TREATY RIGHTS OF FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES.

Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to enlarge, confirm, adjudicate, affect, or modify any treaty or other right of an Indian tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)).

SEC. 5. REPORT.

Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce shall study and report to Congress on the effects of deterrence and the lethal taking of sea lions on the recovery of endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead stocks in the waters of the Columbia River and the tributaries of the Columbia River subject to section 120(f) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1389(f)), as amended by this Act.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUAL TO THE COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 201(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431) and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following individual on the part of the House to the Commission on International Religious Freedom for a term ending May 14, 2020:

Ms. Anurima Bhargava, Chicago, Illinois, to succeed Mr. Daniel I. Mark

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN ''WOODY'' WOOD

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John ''Woody'' Wood, and his loving wife, Candice, or Candy, two long-time and dear friends of mine.

John, affectionately known as ''Woody'' to his friends and family, is a true inspiration to all. Woody has endured more than his share of challenges throughout his life. Woody boldly fought the status quo as a citizen and, later on, as an elected official in our community.

As a community servant, his creed was no different. He fought for the truth in government and he never compromised his integrity, and his word was worth his weight in gold. Most importantly, he made a difference for all the people that he served in our community.

Woody bravely battled liver cancer, which resulted in a liver transplant, and now, unfortunately, our dear friend Woody is fighting pancreatic cancer.

Despite the hardships Woody has faced throughout his life, he has always remained courageous in the face of every foe, including cancer. Woody's integrity, compassion, and eternal sunny outlook on life have been an inspiration to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in praying for Woody and Candice and their entire family as they fight the next battle in Woody's life.

HONORING JERSEY CITY POET LAUREATE RASHAD WRIGHT

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rashad Wright on becoming Jersey City, New Jersey's first poet laureate in more than a decade.

Rashad is a 24-year-old Poetry Slam Champion and recent graduate of New Jersey City University. Rashad has spent the past 6 years performing poetry and inspiring people throughout my district.

His poetry challenges society to improve lives. His spoken word and his written word are full of power that exceeds his 24 years of age.

In a piece of prose, titled, ''Between Lines,'' Rashad writes: ''As a poet, it feels like the souls of black folks fire through my lips.''

He speaks truth through art and helps elevate everyone who listens. I am proud to honor a man whose creativity and passion pull people into poetry.

Poet laureate Rashad Wright's story is just the beginning. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Rashad for his accomplishments.

□ 1715

HONORING WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, one of our finest holiday traditions will take place this Saturday: Wreaths Across America.

Many Americans can recall the iconic photograph of wreaths on the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery. Snow blankets the ground, red ribbons adorn the wreaths that lay on the rows of tombstones as far as the eye can see.

This annual tribute began in 1992 by a Maine wreath maker named Morrill Worcester, who donated 5,000 wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery in honor of our fallen heroes.

Today, Wreaths Across America has grown into a national organization. A total of 1.2 million wreaths were placed on markers across the country last year in more than 1,400 locations, with more than 200,000 at Arlington alone.

The mission is to remember, honor, and teach.

As we celebrate with our loved ones, let us remember all of our military men and women, especially those we have lost in service to this Nation.

Thank you to Morrill and to all the volunteers who honor their memory.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of our troops serving at home and overseas and wish them a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CONGRATULATING FLORIDA STATE'S GIRLS SOCCER

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

Mr. LAWSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to congratulate Florida State University women's soccer team for winning the NCAA national championship over the North Carolina Tar Heels.

I know we have a lot of Tar Heels here, and I would like to congratulate them for their work, too.

These extraordinary women trained day in and day out to become the champs that they are today.

Coach Mark Krikorian's work and relationship with his players speaks volumes to the work they have been able to accomplish and to develop a program that will continue to produce remarkable results in the future.

I hope these young women continue to work hard as they grow to new heights. I encourage them to carry over the same training, mind-set, and attitude into all the things that they do here in life.

I join my fellow alumni and fans from across the Nation to say congratulations, and go Noles.

CELEBRATING REVEREND DR. F.N. WILLIAMS' 90TH BIRTHDAY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor a great force in our community in Houston, Texas, in Acres Homes. This coming Sunday, he will celebrate 90 years of age, but decades in the ministry, Reverend Dr. F.N. Williams, whose father preceded him in the ministry, whose sons have gone on into the ministry.

He is a pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Acres Homes, one of the oldest churches in our State.

He is a warrior. He is a fighter for civil rights and civil justice. He was there on the front lines when the Honorable Barbara Jordan was elected and Mickey Leland. But even before that, he was one who would lead the community on addressing their rights and the right to stand against inequality.

He was a friend of President George H.W. Bush, who happened to represent Acres Homes before we had the 18th Congressional District, which I represent. They had a relationship. They fought against drugs in that community.

And, as well, he believes in education. He believes in young people. He has a church that reaches those who are in need.

So tonight, this evening, I am delighted to honor his beloved wife and his family members, but to say to him: I salute you on your 90th birthday. Reverend Dr. F.N. Williams, you are deserving and, yes, you are a great American.

COWBOY RIDES AWAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is the final showdown scene, and while there are no swinging doors or clicking of spurs, eerie signs and sounds of silence or dust swirling behind me, I stand here today in the people's House to speak probably for the last time.

If they would let me cue the soundtrack, the king of country, George Strait, would sing: ''Oh, the last goodbye's the hardest one to say. This is where the cowboy rides away.''

I gave my very first speech as a Member of Congress from Texas on February 1, 2005, after I had come back from Iraq to see their first free elections ever. I went to Iraq, along with Chris Shays, a Congressman from Connecticut. Since that first speech, some might say I haven't shut up, and, well, they are probably right, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke, I understand according to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, over 2,000 times in my 14 years serving the good people of the Second Congressional District of the State of Texas—some very well received, I might add. My staff might say, however, some not so much.

They have gotten a few calls over the years asking, ''Did your boss really say that?''—more often than not, ''What in the world was he talking about?''

I have probably spoken more about Texas and the way we do things there than anyplace else. You, Mr. Speaker, being from Louisiana, understand how important it is to love where we are from.

And I say things a little bit different than folks up here in ''Warshington.'' And, yes, that is ''Warshington'' with an R.

I am not going to relive every moment in a sad song good-bye, but there are a few things that I came here to say and do in my 14 years, and I would like to say some of those again.

First of all, thank you, thank you to the people of the State of Texas for trusting me to be their voice, their advocate here in this amazing place, the United States House of Representatives. It has been an honor of a lifetime.

I came here to advocate for issues that are important, important back home to the folks in Texas. And through the mud and the blood and the beer, I fought day and night to make sure that the interests of Texas came first. And there are a lot of them, Mr. Speaker.

I vowed that crime victims would have a voice; that those who serve and have served our great Nation in the military would receive the honors that they earn and deserve; to protect our privacy and make sure our most important right to freedom of speech was fiercely protected, protected by us in the House of Representatives.

If I look back, my order of priorities came about at an early age. I owe my career in public service to my grandmother, my mother's mother, and I can probably credit her with my outspoken opinions. She instilled in me the nonnegotiable duty to serve.

That is what life is all about: to serve, to serve others. So I have. I have always been in public service.

I was in the United States Air Force Reserves. Then I taught school. That was too hard, so I went to law school, and I became a lawyer and a prosecutor in the district attorney's office in Houston, where I was the chief felony prosecutor. I spent 22 years on the district court bench in Houston, Texas, trying criminal cases, and now I am here in the United States Congress.

My grandmother educated me in the ways of the world more than anyone in my life, but unfortunately, to her dismay, I broke her staunchest Southern belief: being a Democrat. I don't know that she ever forgave me for being a Republican. Probably, she hasn't. She is still rolling over in her grave wondering where she went wrong all those years.

I was a Reagan Republican from the first time I saw Reagan speak at the 1968 Republican Convention in Miami Beach, when I was a representative from the College Students for Reagan.

My dyed-in-the-wool Democrat grandmother couldn't stand it, and she let me know, but that is one of the things I admired most about her. Well, to put it nicely, she was bluntly truthful. I never doubted what she said. And if she had told me that it was raining in my house, I would have run home and started putting plastic over the furniture.

She taught me to say: ''And that is just the way it is.'' I think we can all agree I took that lesson pretty well.

Another person in my life who taught me a lesson or two—some hard ones growing up, I might add—was my dad, Virgil Poe. Now 93, he hasn't stopped giving me advice, and he doesn't mind giving anybody advice whether they ask for it or not. He really is the greatest man I know. A charter member of the Greatest Generation, he went off to the great World War II when he was 18. He represents everything that is good and right about our country.

He and my mom, who is also 93, have been married for 73 years. She gives me quite a bunch of advice as well. They still live in Houston, not far from where I grew up. They still go to the same church, and they set examples for our family on how to do things the right way.

They are from a generation that believed in God, country, and family, and good old-fashioned American hard work.

Although they both grew up very poor in the Depression, they never thought they were victims, but they believed that here, only here in America, could they and would they have a good life. It was from them that I learned how important it was to be an American.

We are unusual people in an unusual country, and we should be proud of that fact. Never should we apologize for who we are. We must never forget that what sets us apart from the rest of the world—it is a basic word. We use it a lot, but it has great meaning. And that word is ''freedom.''

The most important right we have as Americans is, really, the freedom of speech. It is first because it is the most important. It is the very core of who we are as people. Without the First Amendment, freedom of religion, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, the right to petition government, and the rest of the amendments really don't make a lot of sense.

Of course, the Second was written to protect the First. Some of my friends in Texas believe that the Second Amendment is more important than the First, but it is not. It is the Second Amendment because it is to protect the First.

Nowhere in the Constitution is the word ''fair'' mentioned. Speech is to be free, not necessarily fair. Fair means

different things to different folks. Fair means to some folks in Texas where you take the chickens and cattle to on the weekends, to the fair.

We have an obligation to uphold the laws as they were intended. And our forefathers didn't scribble out these amendments in a tavern in Philadelphia after drinking some demon rum many years ago. They were carefully crafted to stand the test of time and make sure that all people—all people—had the power, and not government had the power.

We have seen government grow more and more powerful and intrusive in our lives, in our businesses every year. With more and more control over our speech being handed down by the self-appointed, self-righteous speech police, they are running neck and neck with Big Brother that is digging deeper and deeper into our private lives.

The Fourth Amendment, unique to America, is sacred, and it is sacred to this country and the Founders who drafted it. Privacy, the right of privacy in the Fourth Amendment should not be forsaken on the false altar of national security.

Yes, we can have both: the right of privacy and also national security.

As a former judge, I am very concerned about the loss of our Fourth Amendment right of privacy in the United States based on, in my opinion, the unconstitutional actions of the NSA.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the government authorized a once secret program by the NSA to collect information on the bad actors, primarily terrorists and foreign agents who wished to create mayhem. They were terrorists overseas. We fought to go after them and get them. Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act was written to go after terrorists, but it is being used to go after Americans, Mr. Speaker.

When I was a judge, I signed lots of warrants when peace officers would bring me a warrant. They would swear out an affidavit of truthfulness, so I would give them a piece of paper, a warrant, to allow them to go arrest or search a premises. That is all based upon the Fourth Amendment in the Constitution. And peace officers did exactly that. But that is not the case for many American citizens anymore.

You might ask, well, who is doing this? Is it a criminal organization? Is it a private investigator? Is it Google?

No. It is not a nefarious organization operating behind closed doors, and it is not even the Russians, Mr. Speaker. It is the spying eyes of the United States Federal Government.

As the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, I agree; we should go after the terrorists with everything we have got, and our government should use techniques they have on those people who wish to destroy America and find out what those terrorists are doing.

But despite the overall intention of the law, the program has been corrupted. Not only does NSA collect information on terrorists, which they should do, but it collects data on ordinary American citizens.

What I mean by ''data'' is not just emails and text messages, but communications and conversations. This, I believe, is in violation of the Constitution.

□ 1730

The government does not use a specific Fourth Amendment warrant, a warrant based upon probable cause for a person—law enforcement—to go and search or arrest someone, but it uses it anyway under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a lesser requirement, and still issues warrants to go and search and seize information.

The Fourth Amendment says the warrantless search and seizure is unconstitutional without a probable cause warrant. I don't see any exceptions there, Mr. Speaker. Our constitutional rights are not selected. They were written to keep big brother—government—in check. The government really doesn't get to pick and choose which ones they want to follow and which ones they don't.

It sounds like a page out of George Orwell's novel ''1984'' where it says:

Always eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or bed, no escape.

We read ''1984'' years ago, Mr. Speaker, and we all thought that would never happen. But the government's ability to seize information, based upon information that is less reliable than the Fourth Amendment requires, and does so in secret I think is a violation of our rights.

It is hard to believe this is happening, but we need to wake up and remember this. Remember, Mr. Speaker, the Bill of Rights was intended to protect us from government. People have rights. Government has power. Government has no rights. It has power that they take or we give it to them. But it is the individuals in this country who have rights, including the right of privacy to be secure in our persons and our places and our homes from unlawful searches and seizures.

I think government has gotten out of the box because of this Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act allows secret courts to issue secret warrants to law enforcement to go and do things that the person who is having their information seized may know nothing about. It was intended to be used against terrorists, but now it is being used against Americans and seizing that information against Americans.

Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN and I co-founded The Fourth Amendment Caucus to protect our privacy. When I was first elected to Congress, they gave me a BlackBerry. That was new technology back then, Mr. Speaker. We could get emails on our phones. I called it a Strawberry. And I can't tell you how many of those things I have lost all over the world.

Now we have smartphones that are smarter than most of us most of the time. While technology continues to change, the Constitution does not change. The rights we have in the Constitution still apply to us today, even with technology.

It is the duty of government to balance the interest of protecting Americans, while respecting constitutional rights. So the caucus has fought to protect Americans against warrantless searches and seizures, closing privacy violating surveillance loopholes, and champion reform efforts to protect and restore Fourth Amendment rights.

The FISA abuse—the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—allowing secret courts to operate in secret and issue secret warrants against people who never know about it reminds me of the Star Chamber back in merry ole England, that operated in secret and issued secret warrants, all in the name of protecting the Crown, and that is what it seems like we have gotten to.

Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment also talks about the right to practice the religion that we wish. The First Amendment states in part that ''Congress''—of course that is us—''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.''

You notice, Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment doesn't just give us the right to believe any religion we want to, it gives us the right to practice the religion that we have: the free exercise. And Congress can make no law to prevent that.

The freedom to practice one's own religion is the reason why many of the colonists settled and founded in this great country. Modern revisionist historians don't want to talk about that, but it is true. One of the primary reasons why people left England and Europe was to seek religious freedom. That is why it is in the First Amendment along with freedom of speech.

When Thomas Jefferson, who is the author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote it, he proclaimed that God gives us our rights. He wrote ''that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;'' and that governments are instituted among men to secure those rights. We get our rights from the almighty. We don't get our rights from government or the king.

Jefferson's reference to God is echoed throughout this Nation: our currency mentions God; our government buildings have religious scenes and words on them; we pledge allegiance every day in this House Chamber to one Nation under God; we even have the great lawgiver Moses on the far wall looking down directly on the Speaker; and above the flag is the phrase, ''In God We Trust.''

Those who argue we cannot mention God or religion in public government places are looking to destroy the very freedom that our country was founded on. The mention of God in our culture is not an establishment of religion; it is a freedom. Note that the right to practice one's religion, Mr. Speaker, is a right that we have, as well as the right to believe whatever we wish when it comes to religion.

We have this concept in the Declaration of Independence that we are worth something as individuals; that we are worth something as individuals not because government gives us rights, or politicians, or the king, but the Declaration of Independence says that we are endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights.

The truth is our Constitution says that we are guaranteed freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. I believe, as many Americans do, that America is a special place, a chosen place, an exceptional place, and America is more than just another country on the globe.

Throughout our history, we have served as a beacon of light in an often dark world, and one reason is because we say and believe ''In God We Trust.'' We cannot follow this fundamental principle that sets us apart to be taken away by those who want government to be the highest power of the land.

In the end, I do not believe I will ever answer to my government for my time on this Earth, but I do believe I will answer to my God, and the freedom of that choice is what America stands for.

Mr. Speaker, as a judge, I saw every imaginable crime. In 22 years on the felony court bench, about 25,000 felony cases worked their way through the courtroom—or the palace of perjury, as I referred to it in those days—everything from stealing to killing and everything in between.

One of my first actions in Congress was to establish the bipartisan Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, along with Congressman JIM COSTA from California, to advocate on behalf of victims in our Nation's Capital. I am very proud of the work we have done for victims of crime. The consequences of devastating crimes stay with victims for the rest of their lives.

I saw victims every day at the courthouse come down there, their lives shattered because of some person committing a crime against them. Many of those victims recover and many do not recover, and they spend the last days of their lives in hopeless despair. So we started that caucus to promote the rights of victims.

One such story that affected me personally, and has made its way through my career as a prosecutor and as a judge, was a case I prosecuted a long time ago. Kevin Wanstrath was his name. He was a 14-month-old adopted baby. It was his murder, along with the murder of his mother and his father and his grandmother. Four outlaws had plotted to kill all four of them so they could collect the estate and the inheritance.

I still have that picture of Kevin Wanstrath that I had on my desk as a prosecutor, on my desk as a judge, and on my desk here in the Rayburn building. I keep it with me to remind me really kind of why we are here: to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Kevin was assassinated, shot in the back of the head, sacrificed on the alter of greed. Fortunately, after a long duration of finding out who committed the crime, the four killers were brought to justice. All were convicted by juries in Texas. Two of them have received the death penalty and have been executed.

Kevin was born the same year my son Kurt was born. It is about people. We are in the business here, as Members of Congress, to really help people, help other people in our country. Since that case changed my life, that is one reason why I have been so passionate, as others—JIM COSTA, for example—in protecting victims of crime. We are not judged by the way we treat the rich folks or important folks. We are judged by the way we treat innocent people: the weak, the unfortunate, the elderly, and the young.

Since its inception in 2005, the Victims' Rights Caucus has taken the lead to protect programs that provide critical support for victim services throughout the Nation, including the Victims of Crime Act. It is called VOCA. What a great concept this was.

President Reagan had the idea, Congress passed it, and the VOCA, Victims of Crime Act, does this. When criminals commit crimes, judges have the ability to fine those criminals, along with sending them to the Federal penitentiary, and that money goes into a fund that helps victims of crime. It is called the Victims of Crime Act, and it is a marvelous idea. It is not taxpayer money. Criminals are paying the rent on the courthouse, they are paying for the crimes that they have committed and putting that money into a fund.

But every year, Mr. Speaker, Mr. COSTA and I have to fight the bureaucrats in government to let go of that money. Right now, there is about $12 billion in the Victims of Crime Act fund and only about $800,000 of that was used this year to help victims. What happens to the rest of that money?

Well, I don't understand the math, but they use that money as an offset for other government programs, and, therefore, they don't spend it on crime victims, and I think that is wrong. Enough of the offsets. If the money goes to victims, it ought to be given to the victims. The government ought to keep its hands off of it because it doesn't belong to the government, and it doesn't belong to the taxpayers.

I hope in the future we will let go of that and that that money goes into a lockbox and it remains always for victims of crimes. Because those Federal judges, God bless them, they are nailing people who violate the law with large fines and fees, and that fund continues to grow every year.

Besides the VOCA funds, we have worked on the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA as it is called, and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

The caucus was also instrumental in the enactment of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act in 2006. That bill had to do with the abduction of children and then those children were sexually assaulted throughout the United States. It protects them and makes sure that we keep up with those child predators who roam the streets and byways of our Nation. So we have reauthorized that act this year.

We have also passed the Cruise Vessel Safety and Security Act, the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, the SAFER Act of 2013, and the Victims of Child Abuse Reauthorization Act. All this was bipartisan, Mr. Speaker. All of it was bipartisan.

May I ask of the Speaker how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 43 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are in the midst of a situation in the United States, and throughout the world, where slavery has crept back into our environment and into our communities, and it is the slave trade of women and children for sexual assault. People don't want to talk about it, but it is taking place. Unfortunately, my hometown of Houston used to be one of the hubs in the United States. What I am talking about is the buying and selling of people, primarily women and children, on the marketplace of sex slavery.

□ 1745

A lot of Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle worked on this very issue to try to get a grip on what is taking place in our country. We had 11 bills in the House that had to do with helping stop this scourge.

I was glad to work with CAROLYN MALONEY from New York. I mean, that is about as bipartisan as you can get, CAROLYN MALONEY, a New York Democrat, and TED POE, a Texas Republican. We are separated by common language, but I worked with her, and that is about as bipartisan as you can get.

We passed those 11 pieces of legislation. Members of Congress had sponsored several pieces of those. It passed the House overwhelmingly. It went to the Senate, and they combined those 11 pieces into two, sent it back. We passed it, and it became law. President Obama signed it.

What it does, this legislation goes after the trafficker, the person who buys and sells women and children, and makes sure that our law punishes those people to the fullest extent.

That is why we build prisons, our Federal prisons and our State prisons,

for people like that. But what it also does, it takes the victims and treats them like victims instead of treating them like criminals.

Children are not prostitutes when they are forced into sex slavery. Children can't be prostitutes. They are victims of crime. So it rescues them and treats them with the dignity they deserve.

But it also goes after the buyers, the people who buy those women and children on the marketplace of sex slavery. We make sure that the law goes after those people and punishes them to almost the extent of the trafficker as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the progress we have made as a Nation to support victims of crime and crack down on those outlaws that run our streets.

There is one piece of legislation that I hope we see passed before I leave Congress on January 2. Megan Rondini was a student. She was from Austin, Texas, and she went off to the University of Alabama. She met a person there at a bar, and they went to his place. He lived in a big mansion, and he sexually assaulted her. She jumped out the window to get away, and she went to the hospital.

She wasn't treated right at the hospital. They botched the sexual exam. The sexual assault kit was botched.

She went to the police department—the sheriff's department, to be specific—and when they found out who the alleged perpetrator was, they backed off and told her that they weren't going to prosecute him, file charges on him.

She went to the university, and the university offered her counseling, but the counselor knew the people involved, the defendant's family, so the counselor said: I can't help you. It is a conflict of interest.

But no other counselor was provided. She went into deep depression. She withdrew from the University of Alabama, and she went back to Texas and went to SMU for the next semester.

She wasn't at SMU very long at all before she took her own life because the criminal justice system wasn't justice for her. It failed her.

As a result, we have offered bipartisan legislation, Representative JAYAPAL and others, Representative SEWELL. We have offered legislation, the Megan Rondini Sexual Assault Victims Protection Act, which is to make sure that a sexual assault forensic examiner or a sexual assault forensic nurse is available for people like Megan when they show up at a hospital, that universities make sure that they have the right medical exam. Otherwise, we end up with people like Megan who take their own life.

That piece of legislation is pending, and I know the Ways and Means Committee and Energy and Commerce Committee are working on that. Hopefully, we can get it to the House floor next week before we recess.

Topics like human trafficking, sexual abuse, and domestic violence are topics that we need to discuss to make sure that we can get a grip on it and stop that. Counseling, resources, and shelters are much more readily available to victims of crime than ever before in our history.

Human traffickers and those caught buying human trafficking victims can no longer escape the long arm of the law, and that is one of the things I like about the long arm of the law. It can go after those individuals.

Of course, our system is not perfect because it is run by people, but it is still the best that we have. The men and women who pledge to protect and serve as our first responders overwhelmingly do so with honor throughout our country. Those who pin the badge over their heart and go out there every day to protect and serve the rest of us always deserve our utmost recognition and respect.

As a prosecutor and a judge, I worked with some of Houston's finest police, as I call them. During my time in Congress, I had the privilege of getting to know the Texas sheriffs along the Texas-Mexico border. They are a special breed of law officers.

I have visited every county along the southern border, from El Paso to the mouth of the Boca Chica at the Gulf of Mexico. It is 1,254 miles from New Orleans to Washington, D.C. That is about the distance of the Texas-Mexico border.

I have held field hearings, flown the Rio Grande with the Texas Air National Guard. I think I may have walked all of those 1,254 miles, including much of it that goes to California from El Paso.

I have made several dozen trips down there, and I have traveled the Rio Grande River with our peace officers, in particular, the Texas Department of Public Safety in their fast boats.

Down on the border, I have seen the good; I have seen the bad; and I have seen a lot of the ugly. I have met a lot of people on both sides of the border.

No matter what our position is on the issue of immigration, our total disregard for border enforcement has cost our State and our Nation tremendously, from the lives lost to the communities on both sides of the border. It has been destroyed by the cartel violence.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the cartels control the southern border. They control the border with Mexico on the southern side. They control what takes place. And they control the violence.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the real issues because it is eroding our national security. Border towns on both sides of the border are unique, and the Texas border towns have their own personalities like no others. For some people, they are the lyrics in country songs and stories of college days.

Long before a Houston billionaire added the Cadillac Bar to his restaurant empire, it was an institution in Nuevo Laredo that generations of Texans and Mexican families enjoyed together. But now, Nuevo Laredo, across the river from Laredo, is a ghost town, like many other border towns that we share, because the drug cartels control the environment.

It seems to me that we haven't done enough, and border security and immigration must go hand in hand. We must do both, but they are not the same. It is not, nor will it ever be, an either-or option. We have tried to do all we can in my office to cut the red tape and send more money and boots to the border, and tell the hard, unpopular truth about what is going on in our southern border.

Obviously, our Nation needs to secure the border. We are debating that very issue these last 2 weeks we are in session, about whether or not to secure the border. Well, I would think that we should. We cannot afford anything less. A country without borders will cease to be a country at all.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why we secure the borders of other countries but we don't secure our own. I have been to Afghanistan, and we are protecting their border against the bad guys coming in from Pakistan. We have American troops protecting the border of the Koreas and all over the world. We are protecting the borders of a lot of countries, but we don't protect our own, and I don't understand why.

As a veteran and a son of a World War II veteran, as I mentioned, I think the United States has the greatest military that has ever existed. I have been in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places to see our military. They are the best in the world, no question about it. Second place isn't even close. We must recognize our military's contributions, both during service and after our troops come back home.

I am proud to represent southeast Texas. I think that is the most patriotic place on the planet. People where I come from, we love the military. We even have parades when the military is on Active Duty and the National Guard or the Reserves come back home. They march down the street. Can you believe that? It is still happening in parts of the country down in southeast Texas.

I host a lot of veteran events. My staff, of course, does all the work. One of my favorite events is our annual honor-our-heroes event. We pick a day that nothing else is going to go on, and it is usually in the summer. We invite veterans and Active Duty military to come to the event. It is a pep rally for our military.

We let each one of them come up to the microphone and tell us about their career in the military and try to do it in 60 seconds or less.

It is a great honor for them to tell other people about what they did, whether it is World War II or Korea or last week when they got off Active Duty in Afghanistan.

The final event that we had just a few months ago was marked by a surprise visitor. Vice President PENCE just

showed up, walked into the room. Everybody was whooping and hollering when he showed up, showing support for our military.

I say all of that to say that we have to continue to support the military, those on Active Duty and those who have served in the past.

Some of the legislation I am proud that we have accomplished: EMANUEL CLEAVER and I worked on bipartisan legislation to establish a commission to build a memorial in Washington, D.C., for all the World War I veterans. There is no memorial for all of the World War I veterans. Here we are, 100 years after the war was over, and there is no memorial.

We have one for World War II, as we should. We have one for Vietnam. We have one for Korea. But we don't have one for the Great War of World War I.

We have been working on that for several years. We finally got that passed, and groundbreaking has taken place, and they will build it. It will not take another 100 years before we see it, Mr. Speaker. It will be done soon.

My only regret was that my friend, and the last American doughboy, Frank Buckles, Jr., didn't get to see that happen. Corporal Buckles came up to Washington and went around the House and the Senate, talking about getting that memorial built. He died before the legislation passed. He died at the age of 110.

He lied to get into the Army in World War I. He said he was 15. He was probably 14 when he got in and served in World War I. In World War II, he was captured by the Japanese, because he was in the Philippines and he spent 3 years in a prisoner-of-war camp. He was a great American.

So we owe it to people like that. All of them have died and gone away. Get that memorial built.

I thanked Mr. CLEAVER, Congressman CLEAVER—preacher, as I call him—for his support in getting that legislation passed. We have to remember him, Mr. Speaker, because the greatest casualty of war is to be forgotten.

I could fill hours talking about the tremendous men and women who serve our country, but I know that you are watching the clock, Mr. Speaker, and I won't do that.

I have also spoken about the Greatest Generation as much as any other topic. I have lamented for those who fought in Vietnam—that is the war of my generation—because of the way they were treated when they came back home.

Finally, America is getting to understand that we should honor those men and women who served and welcome them back home as well. There are no words that can come close to express how we should change our opinion of those individuals.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 22 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee. My district stretches—or used to stretch—all the way to the Texas-Louisiana border, where the Speaker is from. Some say that is why I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee, because the Texas border has that other international border with Louisiana. Be that as it may, I am glad that I have been able to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

But during that service, I have been able to see our men and women in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Europe, the Philippines, and other places throughout the world, and I am impressed with their duty of service. As we know, they are all volunteers. Every one of them is a volunteer.

□ 1800

When men and women join our military now, they know that they are probably going to be in combat somewhere in the world, but yet they continue to volunteer.

I can always spot the Texans, though. When I was in Fallujah right after the Marines went in and eliminated Fallujah, I saw a Texas flag flying on the back of a Humvee as it was speeding down one of those streets. Somebody had written on the side of a bombed-out building: ''Don't mess with Texas.''

I don't know who did that, but we do have that proud attitude of Texans who serve in the military.

The enemy we fight today is not the enemy of the Greatest Generation. Our country is under threat from volatile, nuclear-armed rogue nations like we have never seen. We have leaders of foreign nations who are not only untrustworthy, they are outright treacherous, and they want to cause harm in the world.

We have little Kim of North Korea, and we have the little man in the sand in Iran. These rulers pose an increasing threat to not only our security, but to everybody throughout the world. They are determined to cause trouble. They are determined to cause terror in the world.

As the chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs' Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee, it has been my goal to bring attention to some of the most pressing international threats to our country and global stability. Many of my bills, including legislation that targeted Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iran's proxies—the North Korean regime and incitement taught to kids in Saudi Arabia through Saudi Arabian textbooks—have all been shared security interests of the United States and our besieged Israeli allies.

I have authored lots of pieces of legislation, and I am glad to see that many of them have been passed and signed into law.

I do believe in America, Mr. Speaker, and I don't apologize for it. It is the beacon of light for other peoples everywhere.

I do believe that all Members of Congress on both sides want what is best for the country. We just disagree sometimes on how to get there. I am convinced of that. One of my greatest honors in being in the House of Representatives is to serve with people from all over the country who are passionate about making sure we make the right decisions on all types of legislation. We do have the freedom to disagree.

People ask me what I am going to do when I retire. I don't know what I am going to do. I haven't decided. I just know that I am leaving Washington. I have often joked that D.C. stands for the Devil's city. But I will miss being here, Mr. Speaker. I will miss representing Texas.

Since I was elected in 2004, our four kids, Kim, Kara, Kurt, and Kellee, were all single or just recently married. Now, in those 14 years, I have 12 grandkids: Barrett Houston, Shaelyn, Elizabeth, Jackson, Brooklyn, Payton, Hallie, Olivia, Levi, Presley, Rosalyn, and Ivy. Of course, they all have names, Mr. Speaker, but I call them by their birth number, 1 through 12. I just say, ''Twelve or Three, get over here. Six, leave Seven alone.''

I call them by their birth numbers. You might try that, Mr. Speaker, when you get a little older and have grandkids.

I am looking forward to being back in Texas where we have sweet tea. We have bluebonnets that bloom. And football under Friday night lights is the greatest. We have sunsets that are burnt orange. Sorry, Aggies, it is not maroon.

For people to understand what I am saying—and people understand mostly what I am saying—there isn't any doubt in anyone's mind that Texas is the end all and be all for me, personally. I have had the time of my life sharing the stories of Texas on this floor.

I have been through six hurricanes as a Member of Congress: Katrina, Rita, Humberto, Gustav, Ike, and Harvey.

I will miss being around Members of Congress. It is an honor to serve the people of Texas in the people's House, and there are many Members that I could thank. I want to thank them all for working with me.

I have told a lot of stories about where I am from, Texas, including my hero William Barret Travis, Sam Houston, remembering the Alamo, and taking you all on our fight of independence in the marshy banks of the San Jacinto where we had folks from Louisiana come and help us out to win the independence of Texas. We are saving, currently, the Battleship Texas, the oldest dreadnought in the world, making sure that it maintains its dignity in the Houston Ship Channel.

I have spent a lot of time talking about Judge Roy Bean. It is not true that Judge Roy Bean was my grandfather. Some said that at the courthouse, but he was not.

Of course, my favorite law enforcement group in the whole world is the Texas Rangers.

Above all, it has been an honor to recognize servicemembers from the Second Congressional District who gave their lives for our country while I have been in Congress. In my office here and my office in Texas, we have the photographs, 8-by-10s, of the 40 men and women from my congressional district, of all races and all branches of the service, who have been killed in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in other places in the world. I am grateful that the incoming Member of Congress, Congressman Crenshaw, is going to keep those 8-by-10s, all 40 of them, on our wall here in Washington, D.C., so that we can remember those men and women who served and gave their lives for the rest of us.

I have had the honor to represent people in southeast Texas from Beaumont to Port Arthur, Sabine Pass, Dayton, China, Liberty, Hull-Daisetta, Baytown, Ames, Nome, Highlands, Kingwood, Humble, Porter, Mont Belvieu, Tarleton, Cleveland, Champions, Spring, Klein, Spring Branch, Memorial, parts of Houston, and where I am from, Atascocita. I see so many wonderful people along the way.

I have a staff that I would put up against any staff. I have the best staff in Congress. I always have. It is fortunate for me, and it is fortunate for the folks in our congressional district. Of my four chiefs of staff, Heather Ramsey-Cook was my first one. She was my chief of staff when I was a judge. She was my chief of staff when I started here, and she is now my current chief of staff. Others were Janet Diaz-Brown, who has since moved off to Seattle, Washington, with her family, and Gina Santucci who is now Gina Foote. My latest was Tim Tarpley, and now Heather Ramsey-Cook again. My chiefs of staff have been excellent, and I think all of us owe a lot of our success in getting things done to the people who work for us.

My caseworkers in Texas are great. Viviana and Amy are both veterans: one from Afghanistan, one from Iraq. One of them is a wounded warrior. They deal with the casework. They get it. They understand veterans' issues. One of the major things we do as Members of Congress is casework for our veterans.

But all of my staff have been excellent, and I want to thank them for their proud work that they have done, especially in constituent services.

So I don't know what is next, Mr. Speaker. I do know that it is time to dance with the one that brung you and pack up my old 1998 Jeep and head on home. By the way, my gaudy Jeep left a mark here in Washington as well. Aside from being the only '98 Jeep with a lift kit and lights across the top—you never know when you will see deer up here, Mr. Speaker—there is a special oil stain on the White House front drive that President Bush didn't take too kindly to. It is fitting, leaving a little Texas oil on the driveway of the White House when you leave town.

So this is where the cowboy rides away, Mr. Speaker. Also, at the end, there is really no better good-bye than the words of Davy Crockett when he left Congress, when he said, affectionately: ''You may all go to hell, I am going to Texas.''

And that is just the way it is.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2) ''An Act to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes.''.

IS AMERICA FIRST?

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, following the gruesome murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi ordered by the Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the world raised its voice in condemnation. Noticeably quiet was the leader of the free world, our own President. A closer look at President Trump's deeply troubling financial connections and conflicts of interest likely explain why.

In August 2015, the President himself said on the campaign trail: ''Saudi Arabia, I get along with all of them. They buy apartments from me. They spend $40 million, $50 million. . . . I like them very much.''

That same month, The Trump Organization registered eight separate companies to do business in Saudi Arabia.

Indeed, The Hill newspaper reported that a 5-day stay from the Saudi crown prince at the Trump Hotel caused a 13 percent surge in revenue in the first quarter of this year. How about that?

Mr. President, the American people wonder, is it America first, or is America for sale to foreign interests?

Given the President's clear conflicting interests, Congress must assert its power to limit the ability of corrupt regimes to influence our politics. Our colleagues on both sides of the aisle must reaffirm America's values of liberty, justice, and equality, and restore America's faith in our politics.

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

HEALTHCARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity. There are so many things that we need to consider.

Today, the President announced that he is going to do his best to shut down the Government of the United States, and he wants to call it the Trump shutdown.

I wonder if he really understands what that means to Americans. The Department of Homeland Security—about which there is so much discussion as to the security of the border, the Coast Guard, all of the ICE agents and so forth—presumably would stand down. I guess that is what a shutdown means, that we would have no border security.

So I am curious exactly what the President has in mind when he says it will be the Trump shutdown.

We don't really want to do that. I have been there before in the mid-1990s, when Speaker Gingrich decided to shut down the government. I was over at the Department of the Interior as the Deputy Secretary, and I think that the Department of National Parks and the Bureau of Land Management and on and on simply shut down. The National Parks shut down, the Washington Monument.

So the Department of the Interior would apparently shut down—not apparently, would definitely shut down—under a Trump shutdown. I suppose the Washington Monument, the memorial to World War I, World War II memorials, Yosemite—that would be a problem actually. We usually go to Yosemite on the 18th of December. That is my anniversary.

So, Mr. President, do you have any idea what you are going to cause here in America? The Department of Agriculture would shut down. Food safety, presumably, would shut down. It goes on and on, and all of that over a border wall that nobody other than the President thinks would be useful.

We do need border security, no doubt about it. We just heard our colleague from Texas talk about this a little bit. Yes, we do need border security. But nobody thinks a big, massive, beautiful wall from here to there, from the Caribbean to the Pacific Coast, would solve the issue of border security.

By the way, if you shut down the government, it is the Coast Guard that shuts down, and the Coast Guard has confiscated 10 times more drugs than the Border Patrol. So I guess we will have the President shut down that part of border security also.

Nobody says a wall is the answer. They said use technology. Use observation devices of various kinds that sense and watch remotely, drones and unmanned aerial vehicles and things of that sort.

By the way, why don't we beef up and provide the kind of security and the

kind of access that our ports of entry really need, whether those ports of entry are along the Mexican border or the ports?

We really are justifiably concerned about port security. I mean ocean port security.

So, come on, Mr. President. Realistically, you don't have the votes here in the House of Representatives for your $5 billion border wall, which now you would say Mexico is going to pay for.

□ 1815

Show me the money. We can negotiate this out. And Democrats—the leader of the House and of the minority in the Senate, Ms. PELOSI and Senator SCHUMER, went over and said: We put more than $1 billion—I think it was about $1.3, $1.4 billion from last year's appropriations—and you have only spent 6 percent of that for border security. So you have got that billion or so available now. And now you want $5 billion. How do you want to spend it?

No plans on how to spend the money. It is just fulfilling a campaign promise, which now, apparently, Mexico is going to pay for. We will see.

I wasn't really going to talk about that. What I wanted to talk about is what Americans are really concerned about, which is healthcare. That was an issue in the campaign. I know from the Democratic Party side, we made healthcare a major central issue of our campaign for the people: affordable healthcare for the people. That is what we campaigned on. That is what we promised.

On January 3, when the Democrats take control of this House of Representatives, we will put forth solutions to the healthcare crisis.

The Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010, and it brought more than 22 million Americans into the insurance market and gave them a quality insurance product. They had to pay for it. It wasn't all free. The price varied. It created exchanges, a marketplace in which individuals and families can go and select policies from various insurance companies. Unfortunately, the public option was not adopted, but nonetheless, there was an opportunity for 22 million Americans.

No sooner did that bill pass than the Republicans used that Affordable Care Act, with what they then called ''ObamaCare,'' to beat up the Democrats. They did a very, very good job at it. They took control of the House of Representatives in the 2010 election, and in 2011, they began a process of eviscerating the Affordable Care Act.

More than 60 times on this floor our Republican colleagues voted to eviscerate, gut, kill, terminate, but never to replace, just to eliminate that, with 22 million Americans losing their insurance. The expansion of the Medicaid program across this Nation is gone, reduced, gutted.

So we go into the 2018 campaign, and we said: No. No. Healthcare is a fundamental issue, a fundamental right. The wealthiest country in the world ought to be able to provide healthcare to all its citizens.

That was our campaign. So we are going to move forward on this. One of the things we want to take up right away is why we want to do it.

Those of you who follow my occasional 1-hour Special Orders here on the floor have seen this. This is kind of to center me, to center what it is we want to accomplish, why we want to do these things.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said it very, very well back in the late 1930s. He said: ''The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.''

That is where I am coming from, and I think that is where my Democratic colleagues are coming from.

The wealthy are doing quite well. They certainly are. The tax bill that was passed by the Republicans without one Democratic vote last year in December 2017 ripped nearly $2 trillion out of the Federal Treasury and gave 85 percent of that $2 trillion to the wealthy American corporations and to the top 10 percent of the wealthy Americans.

So we come back to values. We are not here to make the rich richer—although they certainly would like that, and they certainly did get that in the tax bill, or scam, I think is what we would call it—but, rather, for people who really need help, the men and women and families of America who go to their kitchen table, are unable to figure out how they are going to get healthcare, how they are going to get a job.

There is talk there is a tax break, but that tax break was eaten up by inflation for the working men and women of America.

So let's go to the healthcare issue. One of the things we spent a lot of time talking about and intend to deal with is the cost of prescription drugs. Let's spend some time on that.

This little chart is a comparison of prescription drugs versus generic drugs. Ninety percent of the prescriptions are filled with generic drugs and 23 percent of the prescriptions are filled with other, nongeneric drugs. Seventy-seven percent of the total cost of drugs is on the nongeneric side; and on the generic side down here, it is about 10 percent.

So one solution here is to advance the availability of generic drugs. Clearly, a generic drug is significantly cheaper than a prescription drug. You may ask: Why is that?

The pharmaceutical industry will say: The reason is, we have got to do all this research, and we have got to do all this marketing.

They certainly do a lot of marketing. You turn the television on; they are marketing like crazy one drug or another. That is a prescription drug. They are not marketing the generic drugs.

So there you have it: Generics, 90 percent of the prescriptions are generic, and 70 percent of the cost is on 23 percent, the prescription drugs.

What has happened to the cost of prescription drugs?

Well, if you take the average price of the specialty drugs, these are prescriptions, they have tripled over the last—2006 to 2015, that is what?—10 years. So the prescription drugs, the specialty prescription drugs, same drugs, over a 10-year period, the cost has tripled.

You might ask: Well, why? Is it suddenly more expensive to make the same drug that you made before?

Well, possibly. But maybe it has to do with market power. If your prescription drug has a patent or many, many patents, then the generic drug cannot be made. So you control the market for that particular drug. That particular drug might be rather important.

Now, for those of you who watch television, you may actually have heard of a couple of these drugs. Let's just take a look here at key metrics for the three major brand drugs: Humira, Revlimid, and Lantus. I don't take them, so I really don't know how to pronounce them that well.

But let's take a look here at Humira: the number of patents, 247; the price change since 2006, 144 percent—using patents to protect the drug from competition, allowing a 144 percent price increase—years blocking competition, 39 years before there will be any competition for the most expensive and most used drug, Humira.

This one for multiple myeloma; I think that is a cancer: number of patent applications, 106; number of patents pending, 96; price increase since 2012, 79 percent price increase; years blocking competition, if you happen to have this particular cancer, there is one drug that seems to work really, really well, but it will be 40 years before there is competition, in other words, a generic that could be used, similarly with the other drug.

So what is happening here is the pharmaceutical industry is using multiple patents and not a brand-new drug, but just a little minor tweaking of the existing drug, giving an opportunity to extend way beyond whatever the patent law originally intended, in some cases 30, 40 years before a generic drug can come onto the market and replace what is going on.

How can we deal with that?

Well, let's take another example. Here is one. You have heard of insulin. I bet you have. Insulin prices have tripled over the last 15 years. One of the most expensive insulin products in Medicare part D, only one out of the six most expensive insulin products faces competition. So, in the absence of competition, now the cost per year is $2,300.

Another example is using patents on a drug to deal with diabetes. Let's take a look at this one.

As if the patent policies and the ability of the drug companies to tweak

their product to use multiple patents over time, one after another, to gain market domination and to eliminate competitors for these very essential drugs, as if it is not bad enough now, our good President recently, I think about 10 days ago, sat down with the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada and signed a new really big, wonderful trade deal to somehow replace NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Act.

Well, way down in the guts of that agreement was a little clause, subsection C, measures relating to pharmaceutical products, biologicals, et cetera, extended by 10 years the existing patent law for biologicals. This is the hot new area of pharmaceutical drugs: biologicals.

So, in the patent law, as if the patent law wasn't already being abused sufficiently to drive up the price of medical costs in the United States, the President goes out with his team of negotiators and adds an additional 10 years to the existing patents for this particular type of pharmaceutical product.

Together with the ability to tweak small, little changes in the processing or in the drug itself, using that to gain control of that particular solution to a very serious health problem that Americans face, the President decides to add 10 years to the foundation patent.

So, what does it mean to Americans?

Well, it means you are going to pay a whole, whole lot of money for your drug prices.

There are solutions. I assure you that we are already, on the Democratic side of this coin, looking at solutions, first and foremost, to allow the Federal Government, which is the single biggest purchaser, payer for these drugs, to negotiate the price, that is, to use the purchasing power of government to overcome the patent lock that the drug companies have been able to secure using patents and other technologies and techniques.

□ 1830

That is the first thing, to allow the Federal Government to negotiate.

So, you remember when Medicare part D was installed back in 2003? The pharmaceutical industry weaseled into that law—that is, the prescription drug benefit in Medicare—a provision that said the Federal Government could not negotiate for the prices of drugs. So taxpayers and those who have a deductible or a copay, you are being harmed.

Now, generics, yes; generics are an answer. But just to complete this system of harming Americans by charging more than necessary for drugs using the patents, as we just discussed, the savior to the problem, which many would say is the generics, well, there is a little problem there too. And the problem was laid out in a recent article in The Washington Post.

You have heard of antitrust laws, which basically say that competitors in an economic sector cannot conspire to control the price. Antitrust. It turns out that the generic, according to The Washington Post and to 47 State attorneys general around the Nation and a whole lot of—CVS, I believe, and a few others who buy drugs and sell them—retailers have launched an antitrust complaint against a cabal of generic drug companies who are alleged to have conspired to control the cost of the generic drugs—that is, to maintain a higher cost—and to divide up the market.

A generic drugmaker decides: I am going to make drug A, starts making it, controls 100 percent of the generic market for that drug. Good. Generic drugmaker B comes along, says: I can make that drug, and I can probably make it a little bit cheaper, so I am going to compete with company A.

Company A said: Whoa, wait a minute. We can make this good for both of us. It can be a win-win. You take 25, 30 percent of the market; I'll take 75, 60 percent of the market; and we will both be doing very well. That is the allegation.

So this is something we need to deal with also. We need to encourage the Department of Justice, the State departments, to use the antitrust laws to make sure that these kinds of conspiracies are not happening.

Clearly, if the generic drugmakers are engaged in a conspiracy to control the cost or to divide up the market for their drugs, it is illegal. There are serious penalties associated with that.

These cases, as reported by The Washington Post, are proceeding. Wonderful.

What we need to do is to make sure that the Department of Justice, the Federal Department of Justice as well as the State departments of justice and the Commerce Department and others who are responsible for enforcing the antitrust laws are doing so.

So, with regard to pharmaceuticals, with regard to drugs, I want you to know that the Democratic Congress is going to attack this problem, first by making certain that the United States Government can use its market power to break the monopoly that the drug companies presently have as a result of their ability to hold their specific drug forever, at least 30 to 40 years, under the patent schemes that they are now doing.

There are other things that I would like to take up, and I will do so quickly.

We said that we would also want to deal with the issues of preexisting conditions. Now, in the Affordable Care Act there was a requirement that insurance companies do not discriminate in the sale of insurance and the pricing of insurance based upon preexisting conditions.

Now, what is a preexisting condition? Well, we just had one example up here: diabetes, childhood diabetes, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, other childhood illnesses.

I was the insurance commissioner in California twice, in the early '90s, '91 to '95, and again from 2003 to 2007.

This issue of insurance companies discriminating based upon preexisting conditions was rampant in California, despite our efforts to try to pass a law in California to prohibit the insurance companies from discriminating based upon preexisting conditions. We were unsuccessful.

What we did find is that in the application process for insurance there was a form, and it listed every conceivable thing that a human being could be afflicted with—headaches, colds, sinus problems, sore throats, on and on and on—a list of maybe 20 or 30, and you had to check off each and every one of those.

If you checked them off, they would go: Ah, you have got a preexisting condition. We will insure you, but we are going to charge you 10 times more than a person that didn't have that condition. And they would then provide the insurance.

If you went through and you said: No, I don't have a sinus problem; no, I don't have a sore throat; blah, blah; and then you come down with a sore throat, they say: Ah, you didn't honestly fill out the form, and therefore we are not going to cover you for that illness.

This was a common problem. So when the Affordable Care Act passed, in that law was a provision that said the insurance companies could not do that, they could not discriminate either in the cost of it or not providing insurance at all. Couldn't do it.

However, in legislation that passed the House of Representatives, passed the Senate, and was signed into law—not a healthcare bill, but an addition to a must-pass piece of legislation—the Republicans, without Democratic support here, passed legislation that wiped out that portion of the Affordable Care Act, basically putting Americans at risk once again to insurance discrimination, health insurance discrimination.

And suddenly America woke up and goes: Whoa, wait a minute. You mean to tell me that if I have diabetes I can't get insurance or I am going to have to pay 10, 20, 30 times more than somebody else? Even to the point of a woman being discriminated against because she is a woman and she might have a baby. Anyway, America woke up and goes: Whoa, wait. We don't like that.

So, yes, we made that an issue. We made it a really big issue in the campaign: No discrimination based upon preexisting conditions. Can't do it. We are going to eliminate that problem for America.

It wasn't too long before my Republican colleagues go: Oops, we had better get on board that ship.

And I want my Republican colleagues and the President to know they are going to have an opportunity to be on that ship. We are going to put that bill

before the House of Representatives in the early days of the 116th Congress in 2019. We are going to do that.

We will see if they are willing to stay with the promises that they made—most of them unsuccessful, but nonetheless the promises they made—to deal with the problem of insurance discrimination.

So those are two things that are on the agenda right up front. There are many other things that we intend to do with healthcare because we believe that healthcare is a right. In the richest country in the world, you ought to be able to have quality healthcare available to you. That is our pledge. That is what we intend to do.

A final point. A week ago I was here talking about climate change with my colleagues, and we were talking about the Federal Government's report on climate changes that are occurring. It was an eye-opener. It basically said we are—by ''we,'' not my generation, but the next generation out, 10, 20 years out—going to face a monumental problem of sea level rise, massive storms, massive fires, the epidemic of tropical diseases moving into the Northern Hemisphere in through the countries that have not experienced tropical illnesses.

All of those things were in that report, and we spoke about it here. We called upon our government, our President, and our colleagues here—Democrat and Republican—to aggressively attack this problem by reducing carbon emissions, by moving away from a carbon-based energy system. We can do that.

As I said during that debate here on the floor, in 1978 I authored a law in California, the first in the Nation, to provide a tax credit for wind, solar, and conservation. And those kind of laws have been in place forever, and we have proved that we can do it. Over the years, significant efforts have succeeded in bringing on board clean green power.

So, a week goes by, and in the newspapers yesterday and today are two articles that deserve our attention, and actually a third that just came up this afternoon.

The first article was that the carbon emissions over the last year have grown substantially. For the United States it is around, I think, a 2½ percent increase in carbon emissions; and in China and India, the other two large emitters of carbon, significant growth.

In other words, the world is falling backwards in addressing the carbon pollution that is creating climate change. Oh, my goodness, a wake-up call.

We have the report that these bad things are going to happen unless we change the direction we are going. And then a week later we find out the direction we are going is not downward but, rather, upward.

Article one: Today in the newspapers, even in the fake newspapers, is an article that the President's emissaries to a conference in Europe on climate change are advocating—advocating—for the burning of more coal and oil.

This wasn't a coal conference. This was a conference on how does the world go to green, non-carbon energy sources. And so the United States, leading away from solving the problem.

Yes, that is what our President sent those folks over to Europe to do, not to solve the problem but to make the problem worse. It was an O-M-G moment. You have got to be kidding. The least you could have done is keep your mouth shut. But oh, no, advocating for more coal, advocating for more oil, and pushing aside all of those technologies—solar, wind, biomass, biofuel, all of those things—pushing them aside. No, no, no, we have got to have more coal.

It is reprehensible and an absolute dereliction of duty and responsibility to this generation here and now and to future generations to come.

□ 1845

What would you expect from the man who wants to shut down government? I would expect better. We just want A Better Deal. We want A Better Deal for the American people.

The rich and wealthy, they got one big beautiful deal in the tax cut. Working men and women and families, we have got our work cut out for us.

A Better Deal for the people—that is what we want to do. Many different ways to do it. We are going to work at it. We ask you to work with us.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, tonight it is a privilege that I have to yield to somebody who has become a good friend and an excellent colleague, who has served with me, at my side, at the House Financial Services Committee, who will be leaving us at the end of this Congress. Her voice of common sense and her voice to really promote economic growth among all Americans will be missed; but in her short tenure, she has made her mark in our committee and made her mark in Congress, and I am pleased to yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY).

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, it was certainly an honor and a privilege to serve in the prestigious Financial Services Committee as a Member of the 115th Congress. It was a distinct privilege to be selected to serve on that committee by our chairman, JEB HENSARLING, who recognized the urgent need to reignite our economy and to give small businesses like ours and millions like our family business around the Nation a chance to thrive again against the oppressive weight of government overregulation.

As a small manufacturing business owner and as an attorney to small community banks and credit unions in my community, I am acutely aware of the challenges that small businesses and families face concerning Big Government overreach in the financial realm.

Families were not able to save for their future, small businesses were laying off employees instead of hiring, and community banks were closing at a record pace. The policies we championed and the incredible work we have done on the Financial Services Committee this year under the leadership of Chairman JEB HENSARLING has turned all of that around. For the first time in over a decade, I am witnessing growth and renewed enthusiasm in our economy, thanks to the work of our committee.

The jurisdiction of the Financial Services Committee may seem esoteric to some; however, the work that we do is vitally important to this Nation. We have the power, of course, if used correctly, to open up markets, to unleash free enterprise, and to give citizens the opportunity to pursue the American Dream.

In May, President Trump signed S. 2155, the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, into law after House passage. Our committee, through numerous hearings and markups, originated most of this legislation. The ultimate work product, S. 2155, made much-needed reforms to Dodd-Frank that directly impact the ability of small community institutions to conduct business and to drive the economy in a positive direction.

As a freshman member, I was honored to be one of the only members to have two bipartisan bills included in this package: the first, the Small Bank Exam Cycle Improvement Act, and, the second, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act. These bills are vitally important because community banks are the lifeblood of New York's upstate economy.

Community institutions provide access to capital for entrepreneurs starting or growing their small businesses, for families and farmers acquiring new equipment or assets, for loans to new car buyers, and for mortgages to families purchasing a home, especially for the first time.

In rural areas like the 22nd District in New York, consumers and small businesses often rely on lending with local institutions in order to gain access to capital. These reforms ensure that small community institutions like Tioga National Bank, the Bank of Utica—my personal bank—Adirondack Bank—another bank that I use—and many others throughout the country can keep their doors open and continue to lend to people in our communities.

I am grateful to Chairman HENSARLING and the expert and professional staff on the committee who worked with our office and leaders in

the financial services community in our region to ensure that we had the opportunity to pass meaningful legislation that will benefit the constituents of New York's 22nd Congressional District for many years to come.

I thank Chairman HENSARLING for his unparalleled integrity, tremendous leadership, sage advice, and deep friendship. I am so honored and privileged to have played a small role in Chairman HENSARLING's noble mission of empowering all Americans through freedom and economic opportunity.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her very, very kind words. And, again, she will be very much missed from this institution, but I will treasure our service together. I will treasure our friendship forever as well, and I thank her for coming to the floor tonight.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I will issue the remainder of my remarks from the House well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today for what I expect to be my final speech on the House floor. After 8 terms, I have chosen to go home to Texas, the land of my forefathers, with the hope of being a better father and a better husband myself.

I am also going home because I believe America is best served by the Jeffersonian model of American democracy, and that is a citizen legislature. I fear too many wish to become members of the permanent ruling class. I am not among them.

I also know that this congressional seat, Mr. Speaker, never belonged to me. It belonged to the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Texas. It has always belonged to them. They allowed me—they allowed me to hold it in trust. It was a sacred trust, Mr. Speaker, a sacred trust to be the guardian of their freedoms and their opportunities, and I will always, always be grateful for that privilege.

So, come January 3, I reverently return their seat back to them, and I wish my successor, Lance Gooden of Kaufman County, Texas, all the best—all the best.

Mr. Speaker, 16 years ago, I went to these very same people in the Fifth Congressional District of Texas and I told them: I believe I know what the genius of America is. It is faith; it is family; it is free enterprise; and, yes, it is freedom.

And it does indeed all start with faith because, Mr. Speaker, over your chair right there is emblazoned our national motto, ''In God We Trust.'' And it is my firm prayer that, for our Nation, may it always be so. And I firmly believe we cannot be a virtuous nation unless we are first a godly nation.

People come to America for many reasons. They come here for political freedom, economic freedom, but, also, most profoundly, for religious freedom. May we never forget Jefferson's prophetic words enshrined: ''Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of people that these liberties are the gift of God?''

Mr. Speaker, as vital as faith is, so are our families. And the family that made me in College Station, Texas, all those years ago was blessed with two wonderful parents, Chase and Ann. My father was a poultry farmer; my mother was a stay-at-home mom; but together, they taught me and my siblings invaluable lessons about hard work, fairness, faith, discipline, and honesty—in a word, Mr. Speaker, values. They lovingly led by example, which is what my wife and I attempt to do today with our two children.

We now have, over so many different years of history, showing that it is our families—it is our families—that can best perpetuate our values, raise our children, and care for our elderly.

Now, let me turn to free enterprise.

1776 wasn't just a revolutionary year for America. It was a revolutionary year for free enterprise, for American capitalism, free market capitalism, as well, because it was in that year that Scottish moral philosopher Adam Smith penned its intellectual foundation in his opus magnum, ''The Wealth of Nations.'' Prosperity would never, never be the same.

We now have over 200 years of history in this country proving that free market capitalism produces the greatest wealth for the greatest number of people. Yes, free enterprise is about wealth creation, but this is not to be confused with materialism.

Yes, free enterprise does produce Porsches, it produces Jacuzzis, and it produces vacations to Paris; but, more importantly, it empowers a factory worker in my district in Mesquite, Texas, to start her own business. It helps a family in Jacksonville, Texas, send their first kid to college. It puts ample, nutritious food on the kitchen table. And that kitchen table is found in a home that some hardworking family in Forney, Texas, never dreamed they could own but they have because of American free enterprise.

But even perhaps more profound than wealth creation, free market capitalism is really about the pursuit of happiness. It is about the freedom to use your God-given talents to create, to innovate, and to produce, to take pride and joy that can only arise from what American Enterprise Institute scholar Arthur Brooks terms ''earned success.'' As is written in the book of Isaiah, chapter 65, verse 22: My chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.

And finally, freedom, Mr. Speaker, the inalienable right to liberty endowed by our creator. Never in the vast expanse of time, history, and space have the blessings of liberty been enjoyed in greater abundance than they have here in the United States of America. Only in America are you only limited by the size of your dreams. As my friend and mentor, former Senator Phil Gramm, is fond of saying: Only in America can ordinary people achieve extraordinary results.

Mr. Speaker, generations—generations—of our forefathers have taken up arms in defense of liberty and found it worthy of the very sacrifice of their lives. There is no greater foundational principle to the American people than liberty: personal liberty, political liberty, religious liberty, and economic liberty. May we, in this body, always fight to preserve it.

Now, in the Federal city, political calculus changes by the moment. Policies come and go, but principles endure, and there are no more enduring or foundational principles in America than faith, family, free enterprise, and freedom. I believed it 16 years ago when I came to this body. I believe it even more fervently today, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have learned a couple of things in my 16 years of service in Congress. One thing I learned is that, when one announces their retirement, two things happen:

One, people begin to say nice things about you. Had I known about this phenomena earlier, perhaps I would have retired years ago.

Second of all, reporters ask you about your so-called legacy. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to laugh because I am not sure there is anything as soon forgotten in the Federal city as a former Member of Congress. So I don't really think in terms of legacy. I, frankly, don't know if I have changed Washington. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know Washington didn't change me.

I do take solace, though, and I take a measure of pride knowing that, along with a handful of other conservatives in this body, I fought steadfastly against the forces of what I view crony capitalism, and that be either by earmark set-asides, subsidies, tax preferences, or trade protectionism, particularly now as the specter of socialism once again rears its ugly head in our Nation.

We can never let our fellow countrymen somehow confuse free market capitalism with crony capitalism. In the one, your success depends upon how hard and how smart you work on Main Street. In the other, it depends on who you know in Washington.

The latter is a threat to the former, and the Republican Party will lose its moral authority to prevent a social welfare state if we ever acquiesce in a corporate welfare state. This we cannot allow to happen.

□ 1900

Mr. Speaker, you know personally, as does the previous speaker, the gentlewoman from New York, how much pride I take in the work of the great men and women of the House Financial Services Committee.

Most Americans today are seeing the best economy they have ever seen in their lifetimes, and that is in no small measure to the work of the men and women of the House Financial Services committee.

Now, I am not going to argue that our work was on the same order of magnitude as tax reform. It wasn't. But the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act signed by President Trump was the most pro-growth banking bill in a generation, and has certainly done more to grow our economy than any other legislation passed by the House besides tax reform.

Now, Mr. Speaker, economic growth cannot solve all of America's problems, but it lifts the downtrodden from poverty; it empowers middle-income America; and it enables tens of millions to achieve their version of the American Dream. It has, indeed, for 16 years of my service, been worth fighting for.

As I prepare to leave office, Mr. Speaker, I leave with many, many hopes. But, Mr. Speaker, I leave with a few fears as well that I believe my fellow countrymen should pay close attention to.

First, I am concerned about the state of America's entrepreneurial spirit. I wonder how long we will have robust economic growth if the government continues a regulatory onslaught against American business to attempt to render all risk out of our financial system.

From its earliest beginnings, America has always been the land of the entrepreneur, the land of the dreamer, and the risk-taker and, yes, that includes the risk of failure.

Several of the colonies, such as Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Virginia, were founded, not by the Crown of England but, rather, by profit-seeking corporations that were willing to take risk.

You know, someone who clearly understood something about risk was Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple; I believe still the largest company in the world today. In an interview, Jobs was once asked how he thought about himself. He said: ''I look at myself as sort of a trapeze artist.''

And then the reporter asked: ''With or without a net?'' He didn't bat an eyelash, he said: ''Without.'' Steve Jobs was a risk-taker and because he took a risk, Apple again became the most valuable company in the world whose innovations have revolutionized our lives.

And what is important is not the amount of money that Steve Jobs made, but what he was able to do with it, and that is create a successful company, to employ and serve millions who collectively have exercised their God-given rights at the pursuit of happiness.

Fewer entrepreneurs taking fewer risks means fewer jobs, Mr. Speaker. It is that simple. And so one day, if we lose our ability to fail in America, we will soon lose our ability to succeed. There are simply too many burdensome regulations that crush the entrepreneurial spirit. This must cease.

Another fear I have, Mr. Speaker, is that I fear we are drifting away from our constitutional moorings as I witness the rise of the administrative state, because we need to appreciate our birthright, the sheer genius of the Constitution which, unfortunately, today is threatened. Our Constitution's framework of checks and balances, limited government, co-equal branches of government, that has secured our fundamental rights and given us the freest, most prosperous society the world has ever known.

But we are witnessing now a century-long liberal expansion of unconstitutional government that has unleashed the modern regulatory state as we know it, extremely powerful, exceedingly intrusive, imperiously opaque, bafflingly bureaucratic, and alarmingly unaccountable.

Instead of being governed by the rule of law, increasingly, citizens are being ruled by the rule of rulers; specifically, the rules promulgated by legions of unaccountable, unelected bureaucrats.

The result? It is OSHA now, not Congress, that governs over workplace safety. It is the EPA now, not Congress, that governs over our air quality. It is HHS, not Congress, that now governs over our healthcare.

Today, the citizen's right to carefully deliberate proposed legislation through their chosen elected representatives in Congress is now reduced to nothing more than a little ''notice and comment'' period where the citizens are permitted to lodge complaints and suggestions, all of which the unelected bureaucrats are free to ignore, and which they may actually use to retaliate against the citizen.

Madison, in Federalist 47, warned us of this phenomena when he wrote,

> The combination of all power, legislative, executive, and judiciary in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.

It is time for Congress, Mr. Speaker, to reclaim its constitutional powers of the purse, to no longer allow these economically significant rules to pass without congressional approval, and to outlaw the Chevron Doctrine that has tilted the scales of justice toward the state. This must change.

The next fear I have as I get ready to leave Congress, Mr. Speaker, is one that has really come about fairly recently in our State of the Union, and that is the tenor and tone of the national debate; in other words, what is happening in our public square.

Now, on the one hand, for those who believe that we are on the precipice of something truly catastrophic, I remind them, we have survived a bloody Civil War. We survived the turbulent 60s of my youth.

Politics has rhetorically always been a full contact sport. And if you read biographies of the founders like Jefferson, and Adams, and Hamilton, you will discover just how coarse and vile ad hominem attacks could be at the dawn of American politics.

But with the exception of the notorious Alien and Sedition Acts, I don't recall ever there being a greater effort in our Nation's history to actually silence dissent.

The cry for civility in political discourse, welcome as it is, is somewhat misplaced. The threat to democracy does not come from incivility but, instead, from those who are committed to preventing; preventing the debate, as opposed to winning the debate. That is where the true threat comes.

Democratic self-governance relies upon a free flow of differing ideas within the public square to fully inform all opinions and challenge all accepted orthodoxies and ideologies.

There was a time in America's history that the American ethos was encapsulated by the words that have been attributed to Patrick Henry: ''I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.''

Regrettably, I can hear all over the Nation today people saying something along the lines of: ''I disapprove of what you say, and I am going to harass and intimidate you and your family, defame your character, and attempt to take away your livelihood until you simply shut up and withdraw.''

Those who do not respect the rights of others to be heard in the public square may be little better than book burners and represent a clear and present danger to American democracy.

It is time for every citizen who cares about the destiny of their Nation, it is time for courage, but it is a time also for goodwill and mutual respect among our citizens. It is time to re-secure our democratic values in the public square.

Mr. Speaker, my greatest fear for my Nation, though, is our national debt. When I first came to Congress the national debt was $6.7 trillion. Today it has tripled. Tripled.

My greatest regret in public office is my inability to convince more of my colleagues and more of my fellow citizens of the peril of this national debt. We are experiencing debt-to-GDP ratios that haven't been seen since World War II, but in World War II they were episodic and temporary. Today's debt is structural and permanent.

As a veteran of the so-called super committee, the Simpson-Bowles Deficit Reduction Committee, and now chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, my iPad is awash in reports saying that our national debt is simply unsustainable. Yet, denial, justification, and obstruction continue to rule the day.

We should all be troubled and sobered by the fact that if one carefully reviews history, you will find few examples of republics that have existed beyond 200 years, and most of those republics met their demise through some type of fiscal crisis. There is so much at stake.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my heart, and in my head, I don't really believe America one day will wake up and become Greece, but I do believe that we are on the path, within a generation, to

being a second-rate economic power, a second-rate military power and, frankly, a second-rate moral authority as we become the first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

It is beyond time for both a spending limit amendment to the United States Constitution and fundamental reforms of our current entitlement programs for future generations. It is not too late to take America off the road to national bankruptcy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have spent the last few minutes speaking about my fears, but please know I have far, far more hope than I have fear as I come to the House floor for the last time to give a speech.

Most Americans, as I observe, are enjoying the greatest economy in their lifetimes. Oh, what a difference that has made in the lives of millions of Americans and, indeed, to borrow a phrase from the past: ''It is morning in America again.''

Opportunity abounds like few periods in our Nation's history. And our military might that had been hollowed out in the last presidential administration is being rebuilt and it is respected and feared around the globe again.

As we look at our Nation's history, we cannot but conclude that we live in a time of relative peace, relative security, and we should always, always be grateful.

But the main reason I come to this floor tonight, so hopeful, so hopeful for the future, is because of the people I have met in the Fifth District of Texas that I have had this privilege to represent. I have met great entrepreneurs, like Sam Bistrian of Lake Highlands. He immigrated to this country as a 12-year-old boy from Romania. He didn't even speak the language.

A few years later, he managed to get a job at one of the local retailers, Neiman Marcus. He got a job starting at the bottom; I think it was stocking shelves. And with hard work and vision, he ended up one day launching his own line of designer rain boots called Roma, and now he heads up a multimillion dollar enterprise. And oh, by the way, he gives his boots away to poor people all over the world.

Another entrepreneur I met is Rick Carmona from Terrell, Texas. As a kid, he used to visit a local Tex-Mex restaurant and, after going there a few times he said, you know what? My mom cooks better food than this.

So after saving his money from a number of jobs, he finally took the great leap. He invested his money; took out a small loan; started his own restaurant.

He seated the customers; he bussed the tables. His mom did the cooking. His office consisted of a back table and a pencil behind his ear. And a couple of decades later, he runs one the most successful restaurants in the entire county because of his entrepreneurial vision.

I also have hope because I met great patriots, patriots like Doc Collins from Van Zandt County, who is a real conservative leader from that county.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, he has bone cancer that he continues to battle. But during a recent election, he got chemotherapy in the morning for his bone cancer, and he was working the polling places in the afternoon because he felt that strongly about his cause and his country.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is Howard Banks of Kaufman, Texas. I wish everybody could meet this wonderful patriot. He is legally blind. He is a World War II veteran. He flies Old Glory every day. Every day.

One day, some no-account vandal decided he would take Mr. Banks' flag, and Mr. Banks fought him. He fought him. He is age 92 and he still decided that he would fight for and he was willing to die for his American flag and the country it represents.

These patriots inspire me, Mr. Speaker.

And then there are the social entrepreneurs that I have met in the Fifth District of Texas; people like Morgan Jones of Athens, Texas, who owns a pawnshop. Every single year, what he will do is he will take himself and all of his managers on mercy ships to Africa in order to deliver care and gifts. This is something he does at his expense.

There are so many people, I wish I had time to mention, in the Fifth District of Texas who represent the best of America. I don't have all that time, Mr. Speaker, so let me mention one more.

Kenn Waterston of Terrell, Texas. I mean, he is a bulldog of a Marine veteran.

□ 1915

He opened the Veterans Resource Center not a block, maybe two blocks away from the Dallas VA hospital. And now if homeless veterans will go to the VA Hospital to get their healthcare, as soon as they come out, they can get clean clothes; they can get showers; they can get counseling; they can get access to computers and people to help them find a job in society.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I see patriots and entrepreneurs and Good Samaritans who are stepping up every day in the Fifth District of Texas, I know America has a very bright future, a very bright future ahead.

So let me simply conclude where I began.

For me, it is time for me to go home. It is time to go home to my family. It is time to go home to Texas. All things must pass, including our congressional service.

I continue to have so many blessings in my life, but, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I will ever have a greater privilege than fighting for freedom and opportunity in the people's House, the House of Representatives.

My heart is just full of gratitude, full of gratitude to my staff, whose work empowered me; full of gratitude to my constituents, whose encouragement and prayers supported me; and most of all to my family, so much gratitude to Melissa, Claire, and Travis, whose support, love, and grace have sustained me all those 16 years. They are my rock.

So here is what I know after 16 years, Mr. Speaker:

I know if we will continue to trust in God, I know if we will continue to revere freedom, I know if we will keep faith with our Founders' vision, our children will have brighter futures and our Republic will be forever preserved.

May God continue to shed his grace on this great country.

And, Mr. Speaker, for the final time on the House floor, I yield back the balance of my time.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) for 30 minutes.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, before Congressman HENSARLING leaves, I just want to commend him for his service and tell him what a privilege it has been for me to serve with him and to know him as a friend. We are both retiring, and we are both, so far as I know, going to move home to Texas. And if we don't see each other anyplace else, we will see each other at some Texas A&M football games. So I thank my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, in January of 1985, at the ripe old age of 34, I stood right here in the well of the House with my 2-year-old daughter, Kristin, in my left arm, held up my right hand, and took the oath to defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic, to the best of my ability. I was one of 43, I believe, of that year's freshmen. I think we had a little over 30 Republicans and a dozen or more Democrats.

As soon as I took the oath, I walked over to the hopper—and, yes, there really is a little wooden hopper here in the well of the House, as I look out, on the right-hand side, as the audience looks in, on the left-hand side—and I dropped the Barton Tax Limitation/Balanced Budget Amendment into the hopper.

That constitutional amendment in 1995 was the number one item in the Contract with America, which, when the Republicans took over the House majority for the first time since 1954, we voted on this same floor the first day that we were in session in January of 1995 on my amendment. It failed. It didn't get the two-thirds vote necessary.

We stripped out the tax limitation requirement and brought it back up for a vote, and it did pass by a two-thirds margin. That amendment went to the Senate, and it failed by one vote in the Senate.

Since that day in January, Mr. Speaker, in 1985, as I stand here on the

House floor tonight, I have voted over 19,700 times on behalf of the people of the Sixth District of Texas. I have an attendance record of 94 percent. I have had a large number of bills that I sponsored become law. I will talk about some of those in a minute.

In this current House, in the 115th Congress, I am number eight in seniority. There are four Republicans ahead of me and, I guess, three Democrats. In the all-time history of the House of Representatives, the House historian is not sure where I stand seniority-wise, but I am in the top 100.

In the Texas delegation, we have had about 250 Congressmen represent the great State of Texas, and I am tied for eighth place in seniority in Texas. The folks ahead of me are an all-star list of former Congressmen: Sam Rayburn, who was Speaker of the House; Wright Patman, who was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; George Mahon, who was chairman of the Appropriations Committee; Bob Poage, who was chairman of the Agriculture Committee; Jack Brooks, who chaired the Judiciary Committee; Henry Gonzalez, who chaired the Banking Committee; and Jim Wright, who was majority leader and Speaker of the House. That is not bad company, Mr. Speaker, for service from Texas.

Some of the bills that I am proud of that have become law that I was the leader on or the chief sponsor of, we started with the Tax Limitation/Balanced Budget Amendment. That did not become law, but it did pass the House. It did go to the Senate, and it did fail in the Senate by one vote.

I sponsored a bill that reformed the National Institutes of Health. That was the last bill that passed the House and Senate in December of 2006. In January of 2007, the Democrats took the House back, and Congresswoman PELOSI of California became Speaker. Then-Speaker Denny Hastert kept the House floor open until, I believe, 3 o'clock in the morning so that my NIH bill could clear the Senate and come back.

That NIH bill created a common fund that has been utilized to form some of the cutting-edge research that is now bearing fruit. The immune cell therapy that is helping in some cases cure cancer is one result of that. Some of the stem cell research that is going on is another. I am very proud of that NIH bill.

We passed an FDA reform bill that, again, has helped reduce time to bring new drugs to market. It has cut some of the red tape in getting new drugs and medical devices approved by the FDA.

In the energy sector, as a young Congressman, I sponsored a bill to decontrol wellhead prices of natural gas. That bill was signed into law as a part of a larger bill signed into law by President George H.W. Bush, who just passed away.

In 2005, I was chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and I led the effort to pass what was called the Energy Policy Act of 2005. That bill included a reform in the review of import-export facilities, which we are now using to permit LNG facilities to export our natural gas overseas.

That bill also had a number of authorizations for renewable fuels and alternatives that have led to wind energy becoming a significant factor in this country and solar power becoming a significant factor in this country.

It authorized some subsidies and protections for corn-grown ethanol, and that has led to the ethanol industry becoming a significant factor in some parts of the country.

It also protected hydraulic fracturing from Federal EPA jurisdiction except in a few limited circumstances. That one thing, if we hadn't done anything else, has led to the boon in oil and natural gas production in this country that is the envy of the world.

Three years ago, with Congressman HENRY CUELLAR, my good Democratic friend from Laredo, we sponsored and passed the bill that led to the repeal of the ban on crude oil exports, Mr. Speaker.

At the time, people kind of poohpoohed that bill, but as I stand here on the House floor this evening in this month of December 2018, there are going to be days this month that we export more crude oil than we import, and that is a huge, huge accomplishment, and we are doing it based on market principles.

The U.S. is now the number one producer of crude oil in the world, surpassing Saudi Arabia and Russia. We are producing in the neighborhood of 12 million barrels of oil per day, and that number is going to go up. Literally, the sky is the limit.

The Lord has blessed the United States of America with great natural resources, and with the energy legislation that I have helped to lead the fight on and helped to get passed, we have the human resources and the capital resources and the natural resources so that the United States is going to be the leader in energy production and energy innovation for the foreseeable future, for the next 40, 50, 60 years, and I am very proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

So I could talk for quite some time, Mr. Speaker, about my legislative accomplishments, but you really don't run for Congress just to legislate. This is the people's House. You are expected to be an ombudsman for the people you represent, in my case, the Sixth District of Texas, which has changed because of redistricting three times since I have been elected, but the core is kind of south central Texas: Ellis County, Navarro County, Tarrant County, and at various times we have gone as far south as Montgomery County. I have gone up into Tarrant and Parker County to the west, and Hood County and Hill County. As it is currently configured, there are a little over 600,000 people.

When you run for Congress, Mr. Speaker, you really run because you want to help people. You want to be their spokesperson on the House floor, but also with the bureaucracy, with the executive branch, and in some cases with the private sector to make sure that they get a fair shake.

In any given year, we have over 1,000 pending cases in the district and a success rate of around 80 percent, but some of these cases stand out more than others, and I want to give you a few.

As a young Congressman back in the late 1980s, we still got a lot of what I call real-mail letters, handwritten letters from people. One night I was in my office in Longworth going through the mail and jotting down responses or looking at draft responses that my staff had prepared, I came across a letter from an 11-year-old boy, Mr. Speaker, in Burleson, Texas. His name was Garrett Roper—Garrett Roper, 11 years old.

□ 1930

I am going to paraphrase his letter, but it was:

Dear Congressman BARTON: My name is Garrett Roper. I am 11 years old. I live in Burleson, Texas. I had a good friend, Adam Settle, who was also 11. He was riding a three-wheel ATV on his grandparents' farm, and it flipped over, crushed his chest, and killed him. What are you going to do about that, Congressman? What can you do?

I thought about it and I thought, I don't know that I can do anything about it. But he had a phone number in his letter. Every Congressman has a phone on his desk, and I picked up the phone on my desk and dialed the number in Burleson, Texas. It was probably about 9 o'clock at night.

In any event, the little boy's mother answered the phone. I said: I am Congressman JOE BARTON. I am calling from Washington, D.C. Could I talk to Garrett Roper?

And she said: You are who?

And I said: I am Congressman JOE BARTON.

And she said: Are you sure?

And I said: Yes, ma'am. This isn't a joke.

She said: Well, he is in the bathtub.

I said: Well, I hate to bother him, but could you ask him to come out of the tub and talk to me?

And she did. He came on the phone. I identified myself and I said: Did you write me a letter?

And he said: Oh, yes, I did.

And I said: Well, I am here to tell you that I have read it. I am not sure what I am going to do, but I am going to try. What do you want me to do?

He said: Those three-wheelers are unsafe. It killed my friend. And, if you can, I want you to prevent them from being used, so that other little boys and adults don't get hurt or killed.

And I said: Well, that is a pretty big order, but let me see.

To make a long story short, Mr. Speaker, I started the work. That issue was in the jurisdiction of the Energy

and Commerce Committee. I was the junior member of the minority party. The chairman was the great John Dingell of Michigan, one of my very best friends to this day. But, at that time, he was the powerful chairman, and I was the junior member of the minority.

The ranking Republican on the committee then, I think, was Norm Lent of New York. So I went to Mr. Lent, and I went to Mr. Dingell. They decided that it needed to be investigated.

We did an investigation. We had a number of hearings that the Justice Department came to, and the ATV industry and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The little boy who had been killed, his mother, Anne Settle, who today is one of my best friends and still lives in Burleson in the same house, she came and testified.

Over a 3-year period—I believe it was 3 years—a consent agreement was formed among the Justice Department, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the ATV industry, and the Congress. That consent agreement was signed and ratified, and three-wheeler ATVs, Mr. Speaker, were taken off the U.S. market.

It was a 10-year agreement. When it expired, I don't know if the agreement was renegotiated. But, in any event, the three-wheelers did not come back, and the industry really moved to four-wheelers, which are much safer and not nearly as dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, that one letter from that one little boy, who was 11 years old, to his Congressman made a huge difference. It saved hundreds of lives per year, thousands of injuries, hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars, and it made the country safer. It took that little boy writing that letter to his Congressman, and then that Congressman, who in this case was me, doing something about it, picking up the phone, calling the little boy, then calling a Congressman. And people in the executive branch and people in the industry made a difference.

I will give you another case of a young woman, I believe she lived in Waxahachie, Texas, named Robin Benton. She was a nurse. Her mother became ill. She quit her job and moved, I think down to Houston, to take care of her. She took out insurance on an individual basis instead of a group basis where she had worked. She moved back after her mother improved, and Robin developed breast cancer—double. She had cancer in both breasts.

The insurance company that she had been covered by dropped her coverage, returned her premiums, and told her that they wouldn't cover her. Her doctor said she needed a double mastectomy, and she needed it immediately.

She didn't write a letter. She called my congressional office in Arlington and asked for help. My staff looked into it, touched base with the insurance company, and got the answer that the insurance company had checked their files and they didn't believe that they had made a mistake, that they had the right to cancel her coverage.

My staff brought the file to me. This was a desperate situation, Mr. Speaker, so I checked with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in Dallas and got their take on it.

Then I picked up the phone, and I called the president of that insurance company. I explained the situation to him. I said: It is my opinion that your internal review has made a mistake. I think this woman should be insured by your company, and I think her surgery should be covered. I would sure like for you to take a look at it. If I am not factually correct, then I won't pursue it. But if I am, if what I say is factually correct, I would ask that you reinstitute her coverage.

To his credit, the president of that insurance company checked his facts and checked the case file. He called me back and said: You are right, Congressman. We should cover her.

They did. She had the surgery. And to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, she is alive today.

That is the power of the Congress, the power of the people, the power of an individual asking their Congressman for help, and the Congressman trying to help, and, in this case, the private sector checking the facts out and agreeing that the facts dictate that the woman should have been insured.

I will give you one more example. When I was chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, we got jurisdiction over the internet. We had an investigation in the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of child pornography in America, Mr. Speaker. We had a number of witnesses in and a number of hearings.

The FBI had set up a special task force on child pornography. We had asked if they could send someone, one of their agents who was involved with that task force, to testify. The FBI said their policy was that their agents didn't testify before Congress.

We went back and forth, the staff to the FBI staff, without any resolution. Then I saw that the particular individual from the FBI who we wanted to testify, Mr. Speaker, did an interview on a national news show. When I saw that, I said, well, if that agent can appear on national TV, that agent ought to be able to appear before Congress and testify.

I picked up the phone on my desk, and I put in a phone call to the FBI Director. I was told that the FBI Director was unavailable. So I called back and I said: Well, where is the Director?

''Well, the Director is on travel, and he is out West.''

And I said: Well, I need this agent to testify. I checked with the ranking member, Mr. Dingell, and if he is not willing to testify voluntarily, I am willing to issue a subpoena that the minority will support to compel testimony from the FBI.

I got an agitated phone call that you couldn't do that, that it wasn't proper. The President at the time was my good friend President George W. Bush. So we said: Well, just check with the President of the United States and then let us know whether you are going to send your agent or not.

Well, sure enough, later that afternoon, I got a phone call from the FBI Director. He was very cordial, what could he do to help, that there would be no problem. I said: Well, I really appreciate that. I am just curious why the change of attitude.

He said: Well, we called over to the White House, and the President said that Congressman BARTON was a good man, meant business, and, if it was not totally impossible, the FBI should cooperate.

The agent came the next day. We had good testimony, and that hearing led to a renewal of purpose in terms of the task force against child pornography. The FBI went on and did some really good work, and we passed some legislation that has tightened the law and the laws against child pornography on the internet.

Mr. Speaker, what is the point of all that? The point of those stories is that any Member of Congress who is given the privilege to have the voting card has a great opportunity. There are 435 phones on the desks of offices in the Rayburn, the Longworth, and the Cannon office buildings, and every Member has the potential to pick up that phone and call to help somebody in their district or their country or the world: the power of the people in the United States of America through the Constitution, delegated to the Congress, delegated to the House and Senate, delegated to individual House districts, given to Members who win elections.

And every Member who walks on this floor, Mr. Speaker, comes because they have won an election, not because they have been appointed by the President or the Speaker or the Governor, but because they have won a free and fair election in the congressional district they wish to represent, and a majority of those voting have said: You are the person. You are the man, you are the woman, to come to Washington.

So we are allowed to come up here and take the oath, be sworn in. Then we represent for a 2-year term, Mr. Speaker, our constituents, and we have an opportunity to help people.

In the 34 years that I have served here, I have done some great things legislatively. But the thing, Mr. Speaker, that I will miss the most, that I will really miss, is, every now and then, when I see something that is injurious to a person in my congressional district that I represent, I will not have the ability any longer to pick up that phone and call on behalf of that person. I will miss that. It is not an entitlement. It is a privilege won by being freely and fairly elected.

I have stood for office 17 times. I have won 17 primaries, one primary runoff, 17 general elections. I had the privilege to serve the people of the Sixth District for 34 years. As I said, I

think, earlier, in the history of the House, we are not sure where I stand in lifetime seniority, but it is in the top 100. I am tied for eighth in terms of senior service from the great State of Texas.

I have had the privilege to meet great people. John Dingell, the dean of the House, who served longer than any other person in the history of the House, is a role model for what a Congressman should be. Newt Gingrich, who was a backbencher bomb-thrower from the Conservative Opportunity Society and rose to be Speaker of the House, is probably the most brilliant person I have met who served in the House: inspirational, innovative, and a visionary. It has been a real privilege to get to know him and call him a friend.

□ 1945

Phil Gramm, who was the Congressman before me for the Sixth District, got elected to the Senate and represented the great State of Texas in the Senate until his retirement a number of years ago. He is another absolutely brilliant man who really has been a role model and a mentor for me.

In the current House, our current Speaker, PAUL RYAN, I think has done yeoman's work to move this country in the right direction.

The incoming probable Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, we have different views philosophically, but she and I, when she was a junior Member and I was a junior Member, we worked together to pass the Chinese Student Asylum Act that let all of the Chinese students who were here in the country when Tiananmen Square happened, they were allowed to stay in this country legally until it was safe for them to go back to China.

Most of them did eventually return home, but some of them did choose to stay here. That is a bill that I worked on, and I am proud that she and I were able to get it passed.

The current chairman of my committee, GREG WALDEN, I think he is doing a great job as chairman. I had the privilege to meet wonderful people, like the immediate past chairman, FRED UPTON; senior Members like JOHN SHIMKUS of Illinois, who has worked so hard on Yucca Mountain.

On the other side of the aisle, BOBBY RUSH from Chicago, a former Black Panther, and I have a bill that passed the House and is standing in the Senate, to reform the strategic petroleum reserve.

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, on this floor, Congresswoman KATHY CASTOR from Florida and I passed a bill called the IMPROVE Act, but within it are the ACE Kids Act. That bill passed the House 400–11. And if the Senate can pass it this week or next week—and I think they will—that bill will transform the way we provide healthcare for the poorest of the poor children who are already Medicaid eligible.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a privilege to serve the House of Representatives for the great people of Texas in the Sixth District for the last 34 years.

I consider it the highest honor of my life to have had the title of United States Representative, and I yield back the balance of my time.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2005

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 8 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–1074) on the resolution (H. Res. 1176) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. JONES of North Carolina (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and the balance of the year on account of illness.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 315. An act 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.

H.R. 3946. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Statesboro, Georgia, the Ray Hendrix Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 12, 2018, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

7123. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy, Defense Pricing and Contraction, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Sunset of Provision Relating to the Procurement of Certain Goods (DFARS Case 2018-D007) [Docket DARS-2018-0028] (RIN: 0750-AJ71) received December 3, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

7124. A letter from the Program Specialist, LRAD, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Liquidity Coverage Ratio Rule: Treatment of Certain Municipal Obligations as High-Quality Liquid Assets [Docket ID: OCC-2018-0013] (RIN: 1557-AE36) received November 28, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

7125. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Transferred OTS Regulations Regarding Fiduciary Powers of State Savings Associations and Consent Requirements for the Exercise of Trust Powers (RIN: 3064-AE23) received December 3, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

7126. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Miscellaneous Federal Home Loan Bank Operations and Authorities-Financing Corporation Assessments (RIN: 2590-AA99) received December 3, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

7127. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — 340B Drug Pricing Program Ceiling Price and Manufacturer Civil Monetary Penalties Regulation (RIN: 0906-AB19) received November 29, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

7128. A letter from the Correspondence and Regulation Specialist, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Elimination of Internal Agency Process for Implementation of the Federally-facilitated User Fee Adjustment [CMS-9917-F] (RIN: 0938-AT93) received December 3, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

7129. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to serious human rights abuse or corruption that was declared in Executive Order 13818 of December 20, 2017, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

7130. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting reports concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

7131. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's semiannual report from the Office of Inspector General for the period ending September 30, 2018, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-452), as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

7132. A letter from the Director, Human Resources Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting two (2) notifications, one of a vacancy, and one of a nomination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

7133. A letter from the Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting the Board's annual Performance and Accountability Report for FY 2018, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a)(1); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 107-289, Sec. 2(a)); (116 Stat. 2049); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

7134. A letter from the Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's Semiannual Report to Congress, of the Office of Inspector General, covering the period from April 1, 2018, through September 30, 2018, pursuant to Public Law 95-452, of the Inspector General Act of 1978; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

7135. A letter from the Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's Semiannual Report to Congress, of the Office of Inspector General, covering the period from April 1, 2018, through September 30, 2018, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-452), as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

7136. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Rules of Practice and Procedure (RIN: 3064-AE75) received December 3, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

7137. A letter from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Per Diem Paid to States for Care of Eligible Veterans in State Homes (RIN: 2900-AO88) received December 3, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

7138. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2018 Required Amendments List for Qualified Retirement Plans [Notice 2018-91] received November 29, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WALDEN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 350. A bill to exclude vehicles used solely for competition from certain provisions of the Clean Air Act, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–1073). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. NEWHOUSE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1176. Resolution providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–1074). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BRADY of Texas (for himself and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H.R. 7247. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to clarify the authority of MA organizations to provide waivers from Medicare Advantage plans' prior authorization requirements; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MARCHANT (for himself and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama):

H.R. 7248. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to direct the Secretary of Human Services to solicit information from providers and suppliers of services on ways to reduce administrative and regulatory burdens under the Medicare program, to provide for transparency and public feedback for evaluating a post-acute care prospective payment system under such title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 7249. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for certain prior authorization notifications by Medicare Advantage organizations; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. GUTHRIE):

H.R. 7250. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study and submit to Congress a report on the feasibility of using certain technologies to facilitate the administration of prior authorization requirements under part C of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FLORES:

H.R. 7251. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to prevent the inter partes review process for challenging patents from diminishing competition in the pharmaceutical industry and with respect to drug innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 7252. A bill to direct the Attorney General to enter into an agreement with the National Academies to conduct a study to develop guidelines, best practices, and examples for congressional redistricting; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 7253. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to minimize costs and burdens under the Medicare program by providing for consideration of the removal of certain measures applicable to inpatient hospitals and post-acute care inpatient providers and providing for meaningful measures; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HECK:

H.R. 7254. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the deduction of moving expenses of Federal employees; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GALLAGHER (for himself and Mr. GALLEGO):

H.R. 7255. A bill to direct the President to impose penalties pursuant to denial orders with respect to certain Chinese telecommunications companies that are in violation of the export control or sanctions laws of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 7256. A bill to implement recommendations related to the safety of amphibious passenger vessels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 7257. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require $1 coins issued during 2019 to honor President George H.W. Bush and to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to issue bullion coins during 2019 in honor of Barbara Bush; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. BUSTOS (for herself, Mr. GIANFORTE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. KEATING):

H.R. 7258. A bill to recognize and honor the service of individuals who served in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 7259. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income certain Federally-subsidized loan repayments for dental school faculty; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FASO (for himself, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. STEFANIK):

H.R. 7260. A bill to allow for safety regulation of vehicles that are modified to increase seating capacity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 7261. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to permit individuals to select a monthly benefit payment date; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RICHMOND (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. LEE, and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 7262. A bill to make housing more affordable, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, the Judiciary, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 7263. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide notice in the case of certain ski area closures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCEACHIN (for himself, Ms. JAYAPAL, and Ms. BARRAGÁN):

H.J. Res. 144. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States respecting the right to clean air, pure water, and the sustainable preservation of the ecological integrity, and aesthetic, scenic, and historical values of the natural environment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MATSUI (for herself and Mr. GUTHRIE):

H. Res. 1175. A resolution supporting increased awareness of sepsis and the importance of early diagnosis and appropriate intervention; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCCAUL (for himself, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Ms. MCCOLLUM):

H. Res. 1177. A resolution recognizing the need for China to maintain its ban on rhinoceros and tiger parts; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TURNER (for himself, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. MEEKS):

H. Res. 1178. A resolution celebrating the centennial of Romania's Great Union of 1918 and reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Romania; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

268. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Alaska, relative to House Joint Resolution 19, commending the Arctic Waterways Safety Committee; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

269. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Alaska, relative to House Joint Resolution 4, urging the United States Congress to pass legislation providing for the exemption of legally acquired walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory from laws that ban the sale, use, and possession of ivory; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

270. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Alaska, relative to House Joint Resolution 33, urging the Alaska delegation in Congress to pursue the establishment of a U.S. Coast Guard port in the Arctic region; supporting the increase in defensive capabilities in the Arctic region; and encouraging the development of critical Arctic infrastructure; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 7247.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

United States Constitution Article I Section 8

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 7248.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 7249.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 7250.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. FLORES:

H.R. 7251.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution. The Congress shall have power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

and,

Article I, Section 8, Clause 8, of the United States Constitution. The Congress shall have power to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 7252.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 7253.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. HECK:

H.R. 7254.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. GALLAGHER:

H.R. 7255.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, specifically ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 7256.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 7257.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

''Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution which enumerates the power of Congress: To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;''

By Mrs. BUSTOS:

H.R. 7258.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 7259.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and it subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. FASO:

H.R. 7260.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 7261.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution, to ''provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H.R. 7262.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is introduced pursuant to the powers granted to Congress under the General Welfare Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 1), the Commerce Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 3), and the Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 18).

Further, this statement of constitutional authority is made for the sole purpose of compliance with clause 7 of Rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and shall have no bearing on judicial review of the accompanying bill.

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 7263.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Artivle IV, Section 3, Clause 2: The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. MCEACHIN:

H.J. Res. 144.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 1318: Mr. COLE and Mr. BURGESS.
H.R. 2315: Mr. LAHOOD.
H.R. 2472: Mr. MORELLE.
H.R. 3485: Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 3692: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3767: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 3875: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 4022: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 4256: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 4485: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 4732: Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. HANABUSA, and Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 5222: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 5694: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 5697: Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 6043: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 6071: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 6086: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 6387: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 6543: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 6637: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 6654: Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BASS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 6713: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 6764: Ms. NORTON and Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 6824: Mr. NORMAN.
H.R. 6850: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 6927: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 6956: Miss RICE of New York.
H.R. 7050: Mr. CARBAJAL and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 7059: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 7062: Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 7079: Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 7102: Mr. CRIST.
H.R. 7146: Ms. WILD.
H.R. 7228: Mr. PETERS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H. Con. Res. 81: Mr. POLIS.
H. Con. Res. 138: Mr. POLIS.
H. Con. Res. 142: Mr. POLIS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H. Con. Res. 145: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H. Res. 69: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. CLAY.
H. Res. 757: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H. Res. 1031: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H. Res. 1034: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. HURD, Mr. BURGESS, and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H. Res. 1087: Mrs. MURPHY of Florida.
H. Res. 1165: Mr. ENGEL and Mr. DEUTCH.
H. Res. 1169: Mr. SOTO.
H. Res. 1172: Mr. BOST, Mr. PETERS, and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H. Res. 1174: Mrs. TORRES and Ms. MENG.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018 *No. 195*

Senate

The Senate met at 10:03 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, who has stretched out the heavens and marches on the waves of the sea, Your great works are too marvelous to understand. Thank You for the glory of the sunrise and the majesty of the sunset, for Your miracles that are without number and for Your providence that sustains us.

Strengthen our lawmakers. Empower them this day to mount up on wings like eagles, running without weariness and walking without fainting. May their consistent communion with You be expressed in their thoughts, words, and actions. Lord, make them one in the common cause of justice, righteousness, and truth.

We pray in Your loving 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, December 11, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I think it is time the Senate subject itself to a bit of a reality check. Today is December 11. Here are just some of the things the Senate needs to accomplish before this Congress adjourns:

We need to confirm more of the President's nominees for the judiciary and for the executive branch, such as the well-qualified nominee to be Deputy Secretary at the Department of Treasury, whom we are currently considering.

We need to reach an agreement to fund the remaining one-fourth of the Federal Government that was not covered by regular appropriations.

We need to make a substantial new investment in the integrity of our borders and the security of American families.

We need to take up and pass the conference report for the farm bill to honor our commitments to our Nation's growers and producers.

This week alone, we need to dispense with the debate pertaining to the situation in Yemen and an attempt by some of our Democratic colleagues to undo reforms that protect Americans' private, personal information as they exercise their First Amendment rights.

In addition, at the request of the President and following improvements to the legislation that have been secured by several Members, the Senate will take up the recently revised criminal justice bill this month. I intend to turn to the new text as early as the end of this week.

As a result of this additional legislative business, Members should now be prepared to work between Christmas and New Year's if necessary in order to complete our work. Let me say that again. Unless we approach all this work in a highly collaborative, productive way and take real advantage of unanimous consent to expedite proceedings, it is virtually certain that the Senate will need to be in session between Christmas and New Year's in order to complete this work.

The Senate is a consent-based institution. Expediting this work would require an extraordinary degree of collaboration from everyone. So Members should either prepare to cooperate and work together or prepare for a very, very long month.

In just a few hours from now, we will receive an indication of whether that cooperation will begin to take shape. My friend the Democratic leader and his counterpart in the House are scheduled to meet with President Trump at the White House later today.

For the Nation's sake, I hope my Democratic friends are prepared to have a serious discussion and reach an accommodation with the President on funding for border security. Otherwise, circumstances are beginning to resemble a movie we have seen before. It was only this past January when Democrats chose to manufacture a government funding lapse over the issue of illegal immigration. It didn't work out very well.

The reality is that the President's request is entirely reasonable. And before today's partisan considerations set in, I bet it might have looked reasonable to many of the majority of the Senate Democrats who joined in support of physical border security legislation back in 2006—some 12 years ago.

Printed on recycled paper.

Senate Republicans are working with the President and his homeland security team on $5.02 billion of targeted funding to bolster security measures in specific places where the Department of Homeland Security determines it is most needed. And make no mistake—the need is great. In fiscal year 2018, Customs and Border Patrol reported a 30-percent increase in apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border. Looking further back, the monthly apprehension total this past October reached its highest level in 4 years—4 years. CBP has observed over the past year a 50-percent increase in apprehensions of known gang members and a 115-percent increase in seizures of fentanyl narcotics.

Clearly, delivering border security funding must be a priority. That is because the men and women of the Border Patrol deserve to be a priority. American communities deserve to be a priority as they face down the threat of gang violence. American families deserve to be a priority as the flow of lethal drugs fuels an epidemic of addiction.

This is the right investment in the right place at the right time. There is no reason why the Democratic leader and the House Democratic leader should put the demands of far-left special interests ahead of the safety of American families. There is no reason for my Democratic friends to end this year the way they began it—with a government shutdown. It would be truly bizarre for them to decide they would prefer a partial government shutdown to reasonable funding for national security. It would signal that their party is more committed to political spite for the President than to the public interest.

I will be watching eagerly this morning to see if the Democratic leaders approach these negotiations with the productive and good-faith spirit they deserve.

LEGALIZING HEMP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, as I mentioned a moment ago, one key piece of our unfinished business is the farm bill. Last night, I used my very own hemp pen to sign the conference report, clearing the way for the House and Senate to pass legislation and send it to the President's desk. I am proud that the bill includes my provision to legalize the production of industrial hemp. It is a victory for farmers and consumers throughout our country.

Fighting for Kentucky hemp has been a long struggle. My State was once the national leader in the growing and production of industrial hemp, but then, for decades, a Federal ban halted that progress and shut American farmers out of the hemp field. Don't get me wrong—Hemp could still be found all over our country in all kinds of products. The problem is that it is all being grown somewhere else and imported into America. It is time to let American growers get back in business with this versatile crop once again.

The farmers, processors, and manufacturers in my State and across the country are ready for the hemp comeback. It began in 2014 when I secured the establishment of a hemp pilot program with the help of then-agricultural commissioner Jamie Comer. States like Kentucky got the chance to explore the plant's potential and show us just what hemp could do, and the results have been nothing short of extraordinary. Now, American-grown hemp can be found in your food, your clothes, and even in your car dashboard. The results mean jobs, economic growth, and new opportunity. Last year alone, hemp products contributed more than $16 million to Kentucky's economy, and that was just from the pilot program—just from the pilot program.

At a time when farm income is down and our growers are struggling, industrial hemp is a bright spot of agriculture's future.

My provision in the farm bill will not only legalize domestic hemp, but it will also allow State departments of agriculture to be responsible for its oversight. In Kentucky, that means that Commissioner Ryan Quarles—another champion of hemp—will be able to help farmers thrive. And I know the occupant of the Chair is familiar with Commissioner Quarles.

When the Senate votes on this legislation in the coming days, we will also be voting to give farmers throughout the country the chance to tap into hemp's potential and take part in its future. I have been proud to work with my colleagues in Congress, such as Senator RON WYDEN, and with hemp advocates in Kentucky to get to this point. Obviously, I will be proudly voting for this bill.

PRIVACY REFORM

Madam President, now on a final matter, the Senate will soon vote on an attempt by some of our Democratic colleagues to unwind an important privacy reform the Treasury Department enacted earlier this year.

We need to stand up for privacy, stand up for the First Amendment, and reject the Democrats' resolution.

The question at hand is whether the IRS should have special power to demand that certain nonprofit organizations hand over the list of their contributors.

This raises the question: Why should the IRS have this private information? Is it for accounting purposes? No. The regulation requires tax-exempt nonprofits to maintain books, but individual donations are not tax deductible so there aren't accounting reasons why the IRS would need to track donors.

Is it for transparency purposes? No. The personal information in question is not part of any public inspection requirement. In fact, the IRS is required to redact this information when releasing a nonprofit's public tax filings. The guidance does nothing to affect the information that is publicly available.

So why does the IRS need to stockpile this information? For safekeeping? Hardly.

Several years ago, the IRS had to settle a lawsuit. A worker broke the law and leaked an unredacted copy of a group's confidential forms. Of course, that information ended up in a leftwing organization on the opposite side of the issue.

A few years before that, California, which had begun demanding its own copy of this private information, accidentally published the private information of donors to over 1,000 nonprofits registered with that State.

These aren't isolated incidents. They are part of a disturbingly hostile climate for certain kinds of political expression and for the free exchange of ideas.

We have seen angry activist mobs deal out personal harassment and professional sabotage to individuals with whom they have a disagreement. We have seen the last administration's IRS focus hostile treatment on certain organizations whose political views ran afoul of the bureaucrat's own opinions.

This is the backdrop which makes Secretary Mnuchin's pro-privacy decision so important. The Democrats want to overrule Secretary Mnuchin's guidance. They want the IRS to resume packing filing cabinets full of the names of Americans who support different causes—even though they can't say why.

That is today. What about tomorrow? Forty-five Senate Democrats are already signed on to a more sweeping piece of legislation known as the DISCLOSE Act, which would amplify and expand this chilling effect in numerous other ways.

For one thing, this bill would cut out the middle man of the leaky IRS and enable direct ideological harassment, increasing disclosure of this private information straight to the public. That is just one example. It would also give the FEC more power to regulate Americas' speech about important issues and many public officials.

So get ready to hear a lot of lofty rhetoric about restoring democracy from the Democratic leader in the House and her allies here in the Senate, but underneath that rhetoric, get ready for legislation that will do more to undermine our constitutional freedoms and chill their exercise than any other bill I can think of in recent memory.

Let's not walk down this road. Let's not chill Americans' exercise of the First Amendment. Let's defend these freedoms today and stay vigilant tomorrow.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote

scheduled for 11:30 a.m. this morning occur at 11 a.m. this morning.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Justin George Muzinich, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

HEALTHCARE COSTS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 30 minutes.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, today I am asking experts at the American Enterprise Institute and Brookings Institute, as well as other leading experts, for specific ideas about how Congress and the President can work together to reduce the cost of healthcare in the United States. Here is why.

Last July, at the Senate HELP Committee's second in a series of five hearings on reducing healthcare costs, Dr. Brent James, a member of the National Academy of Medicine, testified that 30 percent—and perhaps as much as 50 percent—of all the money spent in this country on healthcare is unnecessary. That startled me, and I hope it startles you.

So I asked another witness, Dr. David Lansky from the Pacific Business Group on Health, if he agreed with Dr. James' estimate that 50 percent of all the money spent on healthcare is unnecessary. Dr. Lansky said yes.

Then, in our next hearing on reducing healthcare costs, not one witness on our distinguished panel disagreed with Dr. James. That means we are spending as much as half of all we spend on healthcare on unnecessary treatment, tests, and administrative costs.

As a country, we spend a huge amount on healthcare—$3.5 trillion in 2017, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. When we use Dr. James' estimates, that means we spent roughly $1 to $1.8 trillion on unnecessary healthcare in 2017. That is more money than the gross domestic product of every country in the world except nine. That is three times as much as the Federal Government spends on all of our national defense, 60 times as much as it spends on Pell grants for college students, and about 550 times as much as the Federal Government spends on national parks.

For the last 8 years, most of the debate about healthcare has not been about this extraordinary fact that we may be spending up to half of what we spend on healthcare unnecessarily. Instead, we have been arguing about health insurance. In fact, really, we have been arguing about 6 percent of the health insurance market—the individual insurance market.

The truth is, we will never have lower cost health insurance until we have lower cost healthcare. Instead of continuing to argue over a small percentage of the insurance market, what we should be discussing is the high cost of healthcare that affects virtually every American.

Here is something we ought to be able to agree on. We are spending too much on healthcare, and too much of what we spend is unnecessary. The five hearings we held reminded us of something else we should be able to agree on. One major reason for the unnecessarily high cost of healthcare is that the healthcare system does not operate with the discipline and cost saving benefits of a real market.

Too many barriers to innovation drive up costs, and most Americans have no earthly idea of the true price of healthcare services they buy, which also drives up costs. Let me repeat that. One major reason for the unnecessarily high cost of healthcare is, the healthcare system does not operate with the discipline and the cost-saving benefits of a real market.

Too many barriers to innovation drive up costs, and most Americans have no earthly idea of the price of the healthcare services they buy, so that also drives up costs. As a country—American families, American Federal and State governments, and private companies—we spent $3.5 trillion on healthcare in 2017, according to CMS, almost as much as we spent on the entire Federal Government in 2017, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

High healthcare costs impact everyone; first, the taxpayer because the Federal Government spends about one-third of all Federal dollars on healthcare. According to the Congressional Budget Office, of the $3.98 trillion the government spent in 2017, $1.1 trillion of that was mandatory spending for Medicare, Medicaid, and other healthcare programs.

This Federal Government runaway spending is the principal cause of the national debt. The principal cause of the national debt is not national defense, national parks, and the National Institutes of Health. The principle cause of the national debt is the runaway government spending on healthcare, which is squeezing the budget for national parks, national defense, and basic biomedical research.

Healthcare costs also impact States, all of which have to balance their budgets. When I was Governor of Tennessee a few years ago, Medicaid was about 8 percent of our State budget. That was in the 1980s. Today, it is 30 percent of Tennessee's State budget. That means States have less to spend on fixing roads, educating children, and helping adults and high school graduates get better job skills.

Second, healthcare spending adds to the cost of doing business in the United States. Warren Buffett has called the ballooning cost of healthcare ''a hungry tapeworm on the American economy.''

Third and most important, the rising cost of healthcare is squeezing the budgets of American families. According to the Gallup poll, 80 percent of registered voters before this midterm election rated healthcare as ''extremely'' or ''very important'' to their vote—a higher percentage than every other issue polled, including the economy, immigration, and taxes.

I imagine every Senator has heard stories from their constituents about struggling to stretch paychecks to afford prescriptions or to cover a surprise medical bill.

Any one of us who has received a medical bill in the mail has wondered, what am I actually paying for?

Here is a story I heard recently. Todd is a Knoxville father who recently took his son to the emergency room after a bicycle accident. His son was treated. Todd paid a $150 copay because the emergency room was ''in network'' for his health insurance, and they headed home. So Todd was surprised when he received a bill in the mail for $1,800 because, even though the emergency room was in network, the doctor who treated his son was not.

Todd wrote his Senator—me—trying to figure out why it is so hard to understand what healthcare prices really are. ''If I am expected to be a conscientious consumer of my own healthcare needs,'' he wrote, ''I need a little more help.''

The issue of surprise billing is a widely recognized problem. It was highlighted in a report from the White House on healthcare costs just this last Monday.

We want Americans like Todd and his son to be able to access quality care they can afford. So earlier this year, our Senate committee set out, in a bipartisan way, to see what we could find out about lowering healthcare costs. We held five hearings over 6 months.

In June, at our first hearing, we set out to better understand how much healthcare actually costs in the United

States to see if we could get some agreement on the numbers.

At our second hearing in July, we heard from Dr. James, who told us that up to half of what we spend on healthcare is unnecessary.

At our third hearing later in July, we looked at administrative tasks imposed by the Federal Government and how those burdens lead to doctors spending more time on paperwork, less time on treating patients, and all of this also increases costs.

In September, we looked at why, when you check reviews and prices before buying everything from a coffeemaker to a car, the cost or the price of your healthcare has remained hidden in a black box.

This is something even the Federal Government's top healthcare official knows personally. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar recently told a story of how his doctor ordered him to have a routine echo cardio stress test. He was sent down the street and admitted to the hospital, where, after a considerable effort on his part, he learned the test would cost him $3,500. After using a website that compiled typical prices for medical care, Secretary Azar learned the same test would have cost just $550 in a doctor's office. Secretary Azar said consumers are so in the dark, they often feel ''powerless.''

In an age where you can compare different prices and check a dozen reviews when you are buying a barbecue grill, you should be able to more easily understand what you are paying for healthcare.

Last month, at our fifth hearing, we heard about steps the private sector is taking to disrupt the healthcare system and what kinds of Federal barriers are preventing private companies from lowering costs. As we held our five hearings, two conclusions became clear.

The first is that we spend more on healthcare than does any other country, but we don't spend it well.

Again, Dr. James told us that 30 percent—maybe as much as 50 percent—of all of the money we spend on healthcare is unnecessary. That is really astonishing. It echoes what Dr. Ashish Jha said, who was a witness from our first hearing and is the Director of the Harvard Global Health Institute. He said this:

> The popular belief has been that the reason we spend so much more on healthcare than other countries is that we just use too much healthcare. Well, it turns out when you look at the data . . . we are not using more healthcare. Why is it we are spending twice as much? There are two reasons. One is administrative complexity, [and second], every time we use healthcare in America, we pay a lot more than any other country in the world.''

That was Dr. Ashish from the Harvard Global Health Institute.

Second, while it would be convenient to have a moonshot to reduce healthcare costs, this will require people other than the Federal Government.

First, as the largest purchasers of health insurance, employers are really leading the way in the effort to reduce costs. For example, let's take International Paper, which is based in Memphis. It uses a service called Best Doctors. Employees can use it for second opinions on healthcare. Best Doctors reviews an employee's records, and then it either reaffirms the treatment that has been recommended by a doctor or it recommends a different course, such as physical therapy. The use of this voluntary program saved International Paper over $500,000 in 2017 by preventing unnecessary treatments.

Another way employers reduce healthcare costs is through wellness programs, which encourage employees to lead healthier lives. There is probably no greater consensus in healthcare than that wellness—lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier and stopping smoking—can prevent serious illness and reduce healthcare costs. It is hard to think of a better way to make a bigger impact on the health of millions of Americans than to connect the consensus about wellness and reducing health costs to the health insurance that 181 million people get on the job. About 60 percent of insured Americans get our health insurance on the job.

Second, States are taking an active role in the cost of healthcare.

In 2017, the State of Maine required health insurers to split the savings with a patient if the patient shops around and chooses a doctor who costs less than the average price the insurer pays. In Oregon, the State compiles data on insured residents and uses this information to run a tool that allows patients to compare the costs of procedures at different hospitals.

Third, private companies are creating innovative tools to reduce healthcare costs. For example, Healthcare Bluebook, a Nashville company and a witness at one of our hearings, provides a tool that helps patients find the best prices for the highest quality care in their areas by using their employer-sponsored insurance, which, as I said, 60 percent of insured Americans have. This is useful in lowering costs because, for example, the amount a patient pays for cataract surgery in Memphis can range from as little as $2,000 to more than $8,000.

Fourth, hospitals, doctors, and other healthcare providers have the potential to make a large impact on the cost of healthcare.

On a smaller scale, one of our witnesses, Dr. Gross from Florida, runs a practice under what is called the direct primary care model. Dr. Gross charges a flat membership rate of $60, in cash, per patient for adults under the age of 65, $25 for one child, and $10 for each additional child. His practice does not bill anything to an insurance company for direct primary care members—not to ObamaCare, not to Medicaid, not to Medicare. In return for this membership fee, members receive an annual wellness exam, 25 office visits per year, including same-day appointments, and some in-office testing and chronic disease management without having to pay anything additional out of pocket. This gives patients access to a defined level of healthcare at a predictable price, which ranges from about $1,000 to $1,200 a year.

On a larger scale, HCA Healthcare, which also testified—it has 178 hospitals and 119 freestanding surgery centers that are located in the United States and the United Kingdom—is implementing new techniques to reduce the spread of MRSA, which is a drug-resistant bacterial infection that occurs in intensive care units.

These new techniques have reduced cases of MRSA by 37 percent in HCA facilities and have been so effective that the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have added them to best practices. According to HCA, this reduction in MRSA infections saves $170,000 for every 1,000 patients. These savings are shared among the hospitals, insurers, and patients.

Finally, information needs to be easily available so that patients, consumers, can find out the prices of their care and take an active role in choosing their healthcare and in planning for medical expenses whenever they can.

There is also a role for the Federal Government to play. The Federal Government spent, as I said earlier, $1.1 trillion on Medicare, Medicaid, and other healthcare programs in 2017. About one-third of all healthcare spending in America is by the Federal Government, so how we spend those Federal dollars will obviously make a big difference to the healthcare system. There may also be things Washington can do or is doing to increase healthcare costs or to prevent private companies from taking steps to lower those healthcare costs.

I want to find out what concrete, specific steps the Federal Government can take to reduce unnecessary healthcare spending or to at least stop making the problem worse. For example, after our committee heard about gag clauses, which prohibit pharmacists from telling patients their prescriptions would be cheaper if they paid in cash instead of through their insurance, Congress was able to act and ban those gag clauses earlier this year. In August, the CMS began to require hospitals to post online the amounts they charge for services and to keep that information up to date. These are the types of specific recommendations I am looking for.

In working with experts, I have had some success in asking them for recommendations in priority order and then turning those recommendations into legislation.

In 2005, I was a member of the Budget Committee, and I had become concerned about the rapid increase in the

Federal debt and how it was squeezing out some of the essential programs that make our country competitive. So I stopped by a meeting of the National Academy of Sciences on American competitiveness, and I said to them: Most ideas fail in Washington, DC, for there being the lack of an idea. If you, the academy, will give Congress 10 specific ideas in priority order to improve American competitiveness, I believe Congress will enact those ideas.''

The academy immediately got busy and recruited Norm Augustine and then put together a task force of American leaders, called the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century. Under Norm's leadership, they produced a National Academies report entitled ''Rising Above the Gathering Storm.'' They came up with 20 ideas, not just 10, and they were specific, such as doubling the funding for basic science research and creating an energy agency to be modeled after the Department of Defense's highly successful DARPA agency, which would invest in the high-potential, high-impact energy technologies—what we now call ARPA-E.

Congress used most of those ideas and put together a bill that we called America COMPETES. We passed it in 2007 and reauthorized it in 2010. It was introduced by the majority and minority leaders and had a large number of Republican and Democratic sponsors.

That is an example of what can happen when experts give us specific recommendations toward an important public goal and give them to us in a way that we can actually implement them.

That is what I am looking for in the letter that I am sending to experts today at the American Enterprise Institute and at the Brookings Institution—specific recommendations, preferably in priority order, about what Congress and the President can do to reduce the staggering healthcare costs, which is a problem in America. Our witnesses from the National Academy of Sciences and all across the board tell us that nearly half of everything we spend on healthcare is unnecessary.

I also want input from other leading policy experts, including economists, doctors, nurses, patients, hospital administrators, State regulators, legislators, governors, employers, insurers, and healthcare innovators. I am asking, in writing, for as many specific legislative, regulatory, or sub-regulatory solutions as possible by March 1, 2019.

I am especially interested in policies that bring to the healthcare system the discipline and lower cost benefits of a real, functioning market. One way to do that is to remove the barriers that discourage innovators from coming up with new ways to reduce healthcare costs. A second way is to make it easier for the consumers of healthcare to know the true price of what they are buying.

I welcome suggestions of how those policy ideas could be implemented—what law to amend, what regulation to change—and any potential downsides to the policy recommendations. I will share the recommendations with Senator PATTY MURRAY, who is the ranking Democratic member of the Senate's HELP Committee, and with all of the members of our committee. I will share the recommendations with Senator GRASSLEY and Senator WYDEN, who are expected to be the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee. Our HELP Committee and the Finance Committee have shared jurisdiction over healthcare costs. It sometimes gets in the way of solutions, but there is no reason it should. We should all be able to work together in a bipartisan way to address this startling phenomenon that the experts tell us is true, which is that we are spending nearly half the money—wasting it unnecessarily on healthcare. Now we need the experts to tell us exactly what to do about it.

The Federal Government is not going to lower the cost of healthcare overnight, but I believe there are steps we can take to make a real difference to American families. It might be two or three big steps, or it might be a dozen smaller steps, but we shouldn't let this opportunity to make progress pass us by.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter I have written and am mailing today to experts at the American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution, as well as to other leading healthcare experts, be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

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

DECEMBER 11, 2018.

JAMES C. CAPRETTA,
Resident Fellow and Milton Friedman Chair, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC.

PAUL B. GINSBURG, PH.D.,
Director, Center for Health Policy, Brookings, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CAPRETTA AND DR. GINSBURG: I am writing to ask for your specific recommendations to help address America's rising health care costs. The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) I chair has held five hearings on the cost of health care and heard from Americans from across the country—from Alaska to Tennessee—that health care costs are a growing burden on taxpayers, employers, and family budgets.

At a hearing in July, we heard a startling estimate from our witness, Dr. Brent James, a member of the National Academy of Medicine, who said that 30 percent, and probably over 50 percent, of all health care spending in America is unnecessary. That means that American taxpayers, patients, and businesses are wasting as much as $1.8 trillion a year. A number of witnesses corroborated Dr. James' estimate, pointing to causes such as excessive and duplicative federal reporting requirements on doctors and hospitals and a lack of accessible information on health care costs and quality.

I am sending this request to additional experts including economists, doctors, nurses, patients, hospital administrators, state lawmakers, governors, employers, insurers, and health care innovators, on what steps the next Congress should take to address America's rising health care costs as well as any steps we can recommend that the Trump Administration or state governments should take.

For the last eight years, Republicans and Democrats have been locked in a stalemate over the cost of insurance in the individual health insurance market, where six percent of all Americans with health care purchase their insurance. This is an important part of the discussion, but it puts the spotlight in the wrong place. The hard truth is that we will never get the cost of health insurance down until we get the cost of health care down.

This is why the HELP Committee has been holding hearings on how to reduce administrative burdens; how to reduce what we spend on unnecessary health care tests, services, procedures, and prescription drugs; how to reduce the prices of health care goods and services; how to make available more information on the cost and quality of care; and how the private and public sectors have been able to lower health care costs.

I am especially interested in trying to bring to the health care system the discipline and cost saving benefits of a real market. Too many barriers to innovation drive up costs. And most Americans have no idea of the true price of the health care services they buy—which also drives up costs.

I request that you provide written responses to the below questions by email to LowerHealthCareCosts@help.senate.gov by March 1, 2019:

1. What specific steps can Congress take to lower health care costs, incentivize care that improves the health and outcomes of patients, and increase the ability for patients to access information about their care to make informed decisions?

2. What does Congress or the administration need to do to implement those steps? Operationally, how would these recommendations work?

3. Once implemented, what are the potential shortcomings of those steps, and why are they worthy of consideration despite the shortcomings?

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman.

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, we are faced today with an escalating crisis on our southwest border. We all know it. We see news of it every day, and it is very real.

As the chairman of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Homeland Security, I would like to present some facts to the Senate that make the case for increased investment in our border security.

In the fiscal year 2018, Border Patrol apprehensions at the southwest border were up more than 30 percent compared with fiscal year 2017. In real numbers, over 396,000 people were apprehended.

It is getting worse because, if you look at October of 2018 compared to October of 2017, apprehensions were up 88 percent. The numbers are going up.

The facts I have laid out don't tell the entire story. Border Patrol estimates that it could be catching as little as half of the traffic that is illegally crossing our southwest border between the ports of entry, so we really don't know who we are catching, and we don't know what they are carrying.

Border Patrol apprehensions of gang members is up 50 percent from fiscal year 2017 to fiscal year 2018. Mexico is a primary source for narcotics entering the United States. This is extremely important to me as a representative from the State of West Virginia. Fentanyl seizures by Border Patrol were up 115 percent over the past year, from 2017 to 2018.

We know that a significant portion of opioids enter our country through ports of entry, but we cannot ignore the fact that we are seeing opioid smuggling between the ports of entry increase at alarming rates as well.

Similarly, methamphetamine seizures by Border Patrol have increased 75 percent since the year 2015. In more populated areas along the border, aliens and smugglers are crossing the border unimpeded and quickly vanishing into our neighborhoods, into our commercial areas, and onto highways, headed to places like Mississippi and West Virginia.

A single load of fentanyl, walked across our land border in an unassuming backpack, could threaten the lives of several thousand Americans. Failure to better secure our border will have consequences for all American communities.

I am very sad to say that my home State is an acutely affected area. In the year 2017, drug overdoses were responsible for more deaths per capita in West Virginia than in any other State. Listen to this. This is so sad. Overdoses tragically took the life of 1 out of every 1,700 West Virginians and 1 out of 46 Americans in this country. We saw a 500-percent increase in meth overdoses in West Virginia from the years 2013 to 2017. What I have learned about this is that we have gone from prescription drugs to heroin, to heroin laced with fentanyl, and now it is synthetic methamphetamines that are the threat. This is occurring while we are seeing an uptick in meth that is mass produced in places like Mexico, trafficked across our border, and then distributed across the United States. Even more troubling, these types of meth are also being laced with the synthetic and dangerous opioid, fentanyl.

In this current debate, it is easy to forget that just over a decade ago, on a bipartisan basis, Congress—and I was over in the House of Representatives at the time—was making significant investments in our border security infrastructure. What we have seen from these past investments is that physical barriers actually work at the border. The statistics show that.

In the 1990s and 2000s, we built physical barriers in four sectors: the San Diego sector, the El Paso sector, the Tucson sector, and the Yuma sector. In each of these places, the number of apprehensions dropped by more than 90 percent after the infrastructure was installed. In these areas, investment in border security has enhanced the safety and the security on both sides of the border.

Neighborhoods that were once overrun with illegal activity are vibrant. Commercial areas that were once considered dangerous and unprofitable are now flourishing with economic development. Nature preserves that were once trashed and trampled are again full of our native plants and animals.

The cartels on the other side of the border profit in places where we haven't invested. Criminals aren't going to stop smuggling humans and narcotics into the United States because we have invested in certain key places; they have simply changed their routes and shifted their tactics to areas where we haven't yet built infrastructure.

If we fail to better secure our border, we are inviting vulnerable migrant populations, many of whom may be fleeing danger in their own home communities, to subject themselves to dangerous journeys through rugged terrain. They are often doing so under the thumb of cartels who profit from the illegal human trafficking, just as they profit from drug trafficking.

We need to secure our borders and encourage these migrants to instead seek entry legally at the designated ports of entry.

This past summer, I traveled for several days to the southwest border, both in California and in Texas. I witnessed the needs that we have there firsthand. I saw the open pathways across the border and into our communities. I saw the gaps in our border security. I also saw communities that have become safer because we have provided border security. I didn't just see those things; I heard from the men and women who patrol our border each and every day. It is a tough job. It is a tough job. They expressed the need for and the value of the investments I am talking about here today.

While the need for additional investment in border infrastructure may be obvious to some, Congress has recognized that we need to be strategic in these investments. It was said on the Senate floor last week that there is no plan for these investments. I am here to tell you that is not the actual, true story.

In fact, the bipartisan fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill required Customs and Border Protection to provide us with a comprehensive border security plan, an improvement plan, to ensure that we get it right. This plan was developed sector by sector by agents in the field, and it was weighted by illegal activities that are occurring in those sectors. It was written from the bottom up by career law enforcement professionals who walk the line every day, sometimes on boats on the Rio Grande—we did that too—and know where new infrastructure is needed most.

The plan was delivered in January of 2018 and provided us with a 10-year roadmap for border security investment based on operational requirements. Here is what we learned from this plan.

As traffic slowed in San Diego, in Arizona, and in El Paso, we have seen it shift to South Texas, to the Rio Grande Valley sector. This sector covers just 17 percent of the mileage of the entire border, but it now sees 40 percent of the illegal border traffic. This sector also accounts for an outsized number of narcotic seizures and a significant portion of the assaults on our Border Patrol agents.

Through the fiscal year 2018 appropriations bill enacted in March, Congress provided a downpayment of nearly $1.4 billion toward this plan, this improvement plan.

Despite claims on the Senate floor last week to the contrary, Customs and Border Protection is executing this funding at an astounding rate. About one-third of it is already under contract. Another third will be under contract in the next several weeks, and the entirety of this funding will be under contract within a year of enactment of this legislation. They are spending it where it is needed most and as fast as we can get it to them.

In June, the Appropriations Committee, led by my subcommittee, produced a bill that recommended border security funding in line with this plan. Specifically, the bill recommended significant funding for new physical barriers along the southwest border. This is a very good bill, but over the summer and over the fall, this crisis on the southwest border has escalated.

I believe we in Congress must demonstrate that we are flexible enough to respond when the situation calls for it. The statistics I cited certainly make a compelling case.

Providing additional resources in fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020 for border security infrastructure would be consistent with the border security improvement plan when viewed through the lens of an escalating crisis. This funding would go straight to the places in South Texas where we are seeing the most illegal traffic.

It is important to note that providing an appropriate level of funding is possible without exceeding any of our budget caps and without shortchanging any of our other very important programs, as long as we get serious about finding a bipartisan way forward.

I will take a time out here to recognize that Senator SCHUMER and rising Speaker PELOSI are going to be meeting with the President on this very issue today, so I urge them to reach a bipartisan way forward.

I urge my colleagues here in the Senate to take a long, hard look at the undisputable facts, which demonstrate that the crisis on the border is escalating. Our law enforcement personnel have provided us with a plan to work toward improving and solving that problem, so let's work together and get this done.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF JONATHAN A. KOBES

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the floor today to oppose Jonathan Kobes' nomination to serve on the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. People across the country know how important it is that we fight back against extreme and extremely unqualified judicial nominees.

Earlier this year, during Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation, we saw just how far President Trump and Senate Republicans are willing to go to jam through extreme judges who will work to strip away women's rights.

But that wasn't all we saw. We saw millions of women and men across the country inspired to stand up and fight back against his nomination. We saw people speak out and share their own personal stories about what was at stake, about sexual assault, and how important it is that we believe survivors, and about the right to safe legal abortions, what it means for women and their families, and about what kind of country we want to live in.

We saw, without question, that people across the country want us to stop President Trump from swinging our courts far right by packing them with ideological judges—judges like Mr. Kobes, who will continue the Trump-Pence agenda of rolling back women's rights and access to healthcare.

Making sure families know exactly what Mr. Kobes would mean for women if he is seated is what I am here to do today. It means weaker rights and less access to healthcare.

He is like many of President Trump's nominees before him. Mr. Kobes lacks almost any real experience to qualify him for a seat on the Eighth Circuit Court. He has little trial experience, little appellate experience, and no record of legal scholarship to speak of.

I am not the only one concerned by that. The American Bar Association has rated him unqualified. That makes Mr. Kobes the sixth judicial nominee from President Trump who is opposed by his professional colleagues.

But the thin record he does have is disqualifying because it shows he will put extreme rightwing ideology ahead of women and science. Mr. Kobes is an outspoken advocate for fake women's healthcare centers, sometimes called crisis pregnancy centers, that seek out women looking for information about their healthcare needs and reproductive rights and then use misleading—even blatantly false—propaganda to scare and pressure them. Mr. Kobes even went out of his way to represent some of these fake clinics free of charge.

He voluntarily defended a law requiring providers to give a lecture full of ideological propaganda and fearmongering to women seeking safe, legal abortions. The required lecture in this case actually went so far as to demand that providers lie to women and claim abortion increases their risk of suicide. It does not.

Think about that. He argued for a law that directly interfered with the relationship between a patient and her healthcare provider—a law that said women making their own decisions about their own bodies and seeking healthcare, which is their constitutional right, should be lied to, should be frightened out of a decision with fake information, including fake information about suicide. That is utterly wrong and disqualifying for any judicial nominee.

Mr. Kobes hasn't merely represented these fake clinics. He served on the board of an organization that aimed to deceive and frighten women out of getting abortions. It is clear he wasn't chosen for his bona fides in the legal field. He doesn't have them.

Women and men across the country are paying attention. They know what is at stake. Hours before the final vote on Kavanaugh, I came here to speak about how angry I was when the Senate failed Anita Hill in 1991 and confirmed Justice Thomas, how I decided to run for the Senate after that so I could fight to change things, and how I hoped everyone who was angry about Judge Kavanaugh would stay angry and keep fighting for change. I also promised right here that whatever happened, I was going to get up the next day and keep fighting, too, and I meant it.

I am going to keep standing up, speaking out, and making clear just how harmful the President's ideological nominees are.

I strongly oppose Mr. Kobes' nomination. I hope all of our colleagues will do the same.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Muzinich nomination?

Mrs. CAPITO. 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.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Nelson
Blumenthal	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Capito	Hoeven	Roberts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Coons	Isakson	Sasse
Corker	Johnson	Scott
Cornyn	Jones	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	King	Thune
Cruz	Kyl	Toomey
Daines	Lankford	Wicker
Enzi	Lee	Young
Ernst	McConnell	
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Heitkamp	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUNT. I further ask that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each; further, that at 2:15 the Senate vote on the Kobes nomination as under the previous order; finally, if the nomination is confirmed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I know that we have a number of things scheduled here, including some farewell speeches from some of our colleagues. I was scheduled to speak, and I do want to speak, and I will try not to take too much advantage of the time.

I wanted to speak today and this week about the importance of treating mental health and the importance of

the role that law enforcement plays in the way we treat mental health in this country. For too long, law enforcement and emergency room personnel have been, in effect, the de facto mental health delivery system for the country.

The National Institutes of Health says that one in five Americans has a mental health or behavioral health issue and that one in nine adult Americans has a behavioral health issue that impacts how they live every single day.

Two Congresses ago, in the 113th Congress, Senator STABENOW and I worked to pass legislation—the Excellence in Mental Health Act. What that did was to create eight State demonstration projects that would last for 2 years each to see what would happen if we treated mental health like all other health concerns—something that everybody knows I believe we should have been doing and something that in eight States we are doing.

The good news was that 24 States applied, a number that exceeded every discussion that anybody had about how many States would step forward and say: We would like to be the States that try to do this first. Twenty-four States applied. I was certainly proud that Missouri was one of the eight States chosen to be in the demonstration project.

We are about halfway through the 2-year project, and in our State and in the seven other States, people have access to mental health services they didn't have before. Most Missourians are within a relatively short drive of a facility that will treat their mental health problem like it was any other health problem, and as we begin to do that, I think we are going to see the kind of impact on law enforcement and the kind of help that law enforcement needs as well.

Just a couple of years ago, I rode with both the crisis intervention teams in Kansas City and in my hometown in Springfield. In Springfield what I saw there were officers dealing with a 24/7 linkup to the Burrell mental health clinic, the local and regional mental health provider.

Sixteen officers, at that time, had, in effect, iPads that linked them up to a mental health professional. It didn't take too long—and I think this would be indicative of what most law enforcement officials see almost every day—before we came on someone huddled in the alcove of a building that was vacant who clearly had a behavioral health problem. It wasn't at that point a drug problem or an alcohol problem. They were where they were because they had a mental health problem.

The officer was able to Skype back immediately with a mental health professional. What I was really most interested in is that even with a well-trained officer who knew exactly what they were doing and how to do it—even with that officer there—as that officer linked the person up with someone—in effect, a telemedicine linkup with a mental health professional—you could tell that that person was more comfortable talking to the iPad and communicating that way than he was with the officer that was right there with him, and it wasn't because the officer was in any way intimidating or unprofessional. It was just because of what it was—a linkup with someone at another site, but someone who clearly was well prepared to deal with those kinds of issues.

So we are going to see that this benefitted the kinds of things that the mental health community can do to provide more resources to the law enforcement community. The Excellence in Mental Health Act is providing a service and, I think, producing real results.

I would also say, as I conclude my remarks on this topic, that what we hope to see is a significant number of people. Remember, I said NIH said that one out of five adult Americans has a behavioral health issue. What happens when you deal with that behavioral health issue in terms of how you deal with all of the other health issues that that individual or that community will be dealing with? What happens if somebody is feeling better about themselves—taking their medicine, eating better, sleeping better, showing up for the doctor's appointments, showing up for the dialysis appointment, doing what they ought to be doing?

I believe what we are going to find and what has been found in earlier big county studies of this kind is that actually doing the right thing winds up saving money, not costing money. But also doing the right thing for police officers, for people in emergency rooms and providing the kinds of connections and alternatives needed make a big difference.

For all of the healthcare providers and the law enforcement individuals involved, I am grateful for what they do, and I think we are seeing some real results from the bill that this body passed, President Obama signed into law, and is producing great results.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as it takes me to finish this. I promise I will not keep you here until midnight.

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Ms. HEITKAMP. In 2003, I was diagnosed with stage III breast cancer. After treatment, my oncologist told me I had a 28-percent chance of living more than 10 years. Think about that.

I knew right away that I had a chance to use whatever time God gave me for good and noble purposes—to try and do the things I have always thought needed to be done in this country.

It is an important lesson for all of you. The greatest gift you have is not your bank account. The greatest gift you have is the amount of time you have left on this Earth and what you do with that time. I chose, for good or bad, to come to the Senate.

I think when we have a world of options and we make this choice, it is so important that we come here with purpose—not just to be named a Senator, not just for the trappings of office, but with purpose.

The truth is, I am not supposed to be here. I am from Mantador, ND. It is a town of 90 people. When I was growing up, my family was one-tenth of the population. I just had to say that.

My dad was a World War II veteran who loved education. He read the paper every day. He believed in this country. But he was never given a chance to go to high school. My family struggled to get by, and when you look at it, you think about this; you think about a country where somebody from my background could actually become a U.S. Senator.

I am a Democrat from a very conservative State, but against all odds—in fact, the prediction was it was only 8 percent—I got elected to the Senate. The fact that I got to serve in the Senate for 6 years is an incredible American story. People always ask me: At what point did you think, wow, you came to the Senate?

I have said that I was so busy after I got elected because no one thought I would ever get elected, so people who never wanted to see me during my campaign wanted to see me. I was busy taking meetings and busy putting together the office.

I remember the day I came to that Chair and the pastor came and he gaveled in, and then I turned around to say the Pledge of Allegiance. I thought: Here I am from Mantador, ND, a girl, middle-aged, a pudgy Democrat from North Dakota, and I am standing in the well of the Senate where not even 2,000 people have come before.

This is a great and good and noble country with great purpose, with great opportunity. I want every child out there to understand it doesn't matter. We represent a cross section of this great country, but we also aren't that special. We are not.

Sometimes I think the American public think if you took 100 random people and put them in the chairs, they could do better than we could do. But the truth is, you all came here with that same noble purpose. You all came here to change America, to do the right thing. I don't care if you sit across there; I don't care if you sit here. You all came here for the right purpose.

The fact that I got to serve in the Senate is part of a great American story, and that story happens only in this country. Don't ever forget that. If we lose that opportunity, we will become diminished as to who we are.

Today, I want to offer a few comments. I hope they are not too preachy, but I want everyone to understand, especially my colleagues, that this has

been the opportunity of a lifetime. Think about what we did to get here. This process we go through is brutal and, quite honestly, obscene. It is obscene what we do to get here.

Having done all of that work, having taken those steps and walked that gauntlet of a campaign, we have an opportunity not just to achieve the title but to do great and good things for this country. My job here—the work I have done—has always been to remember who we are standing in this well for.

Throughout the past 6 years, I have stood here for North Dakota, for the incredible people I serve. I have stood here for the families of disabled children who were terrified they would lose their healthcare. When I took that vote on the Affordable Care Act, in that vote, I remembered their faces; I remembered their tears. I have stood here for the men and women of our Armed Forces and our veterans in North Dakota, who believe they did a great thing and deserve to be treated respectfully, honorably, and, yes, get the benefits they have earned. Too often they are denied. Veterans should not have to come to a congressional office to get the benefits they have earned, yet too many have to.

I have stood here for retirees whose pensions were threatened. I have asked a simple question: If we can spend billions bailing out the failed Wall Street bankers, can't we pay attention to the working men and women who are struggling, who are in crisis? Literally, the heartbreak of their stories, if heard across this Chamber—the reaction would be overwhelming. Many of them are veterans. Many of them worked hard and now are broken in the work they have done.

I have stood here for farmers in rural communities, and I have stood here for Native people. Many times, as you know, I have tried to do my best to educate all of you on the challenges of our first Americans, our Native Americans.

Mostly, I hope I have stood here for the children of America because, in spite of how we behave, they truly are our future. They are the people who make a difference for our future, and if we do not start respecting the challenge that we have to create a better world—a better world with more opportunity—we will not fix the problems of American long term.

These are the people who drive me every day. They are whom we serve—not a party, not an ideology. We serve Americans. I have spent my time standing and fighting for them, and, for me, that work will never stop.

With all of that said, I stand here proud of what we have accomplished.

When you look at the time and the opportunity to rise above partisanship and rancor, I have found so much common ground with so many Members of this body. I am incredibly proud of what we have been able to accomplish.

I have advocated for Native American communities, and my bill to stand up for Native American children, which I did with Senator MURKOWSKI, was the first bill I introduced. It was symbolic for me because we have to do better. I found great partnerships with Senator MURKOWSKI, not just on this but on other issues. I know her heart, and I know that she cares. When you find people who care the way you care, you can do amazing things.

My legislation with our colleague John McCain to create an Amber Alert in Indian Country became law.

We are on our way to passing Savanna's Act, which is going to recognize for the first time the challenge and the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women. All of this so important.

We have bipartisan legislation to help crack down on human trafficking online. We shut down backpage. We shut down people who were, in fact, selling children for sex. Think about that. That is a noble act.

The challenge continues. Congress passed my bill to give first responders more training and resources to keep our communities strong and safe.

I led a successful effort, again, with my colleague from Alaska, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, to lift the age-old ban on exporting oil and pair it with renewables, which we did with my other colleagues on this side of the aisle when we looked at enhancing renewable energy. It was a flaming success on both sides. We are exporting, literally, millions of barrels of oil, resulting in energy independence and helping our allies, but we also are growing our renewable energy industry because of that effort. It didn't happen without colleagues working together.

I secured a vet center in Grand Forks and a CBOC in Devils Lake. It might be small to this body, but it is huge to the veterans it serves.

I got needed funds for flood protection across North Dakota—projects we need—by working with Senator HOEVEN.

I passed my bill to secure the northern border by working with Kelly Ayotte, who is no longer here but a great friend.

I helped write legislation to provide relief to community banks with Senator CRAPO, Senator DONNELLY, Senator TESTER, and Senator WARNER, recognizing the challenges of small lenders and how we needed to address those challenges. No one thought we could get that done, but we did because we believed we could. Think about that.

I worked with Republicans and Democrats—probably the crowning achievement together in terms of bipartisanship—to deal with carbon capture. It was the first major piece of carbon legislation that has been passed since I have been here.

I can't speak to other pieces, but how did that happen? It happened when Senator BARRASSO, Senator CAPITO, and I, and by the way, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE collaborated. We said: We can't agree on climate, but we will agree on development of technology that will change outcomes. This technology is absolutely essential to tackling the problems of carbon emissions in this country.

Don't say it can't be done. If you can get SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and MITCH MCCONNELL on a bill that involves carbon and the coal industry, that is a good day here. That is a really good day here.

I worked to help address the detrimental impact exposure to trauma can have on children and families. This is an issue I hope you all will become better educated on—childhood trauma and the effect that it has on so many of our children. I worked with great colleagues. DICK DURBIN actually let me take the ball and run with it, for which I will always be grateful.

I worked with CORY BOOKER from New Jersey doing incredible things for children.

It is pivotal, if we are going to change outcomes for American families, that we begin to address why it is that we do everything we have always done and we expect a different result. We have to think differently about these issues.

I helped to negotiate and pass two farm bills.

Thank you, PAT, and thank you, DEBBIE, for believing in bipartisanship and believing in rural America.

I have worked with incredible folks. I thank JOHN BOOZMAN, from Arkansas, and have a great story.

A little known fact in the farm bill that we are all going to pass is that this is, maybe, the first piece of major legislation involving Cuba. In order to enhance export opportunities to the island of Cuba, we have lifted the ban of using the USDA programs. It is the first time we will have addressed Cuba in any piece of major legislation.

I don't know if Senator CARPER is here, but I care about the post office.

You guys ought to, too, as we have ignored it for way too long.

I am going to give you a shout-out, TOM, and get everybody else interested because I am not going to be your partner anymore on the post office.

For those of you who care about politics, I want you to understand that when I made a post called ''Fix My Mail'' and thought I would get 20, 30 hits in the little State of North Dakota, I got over 500 complaints about what was happening with the rural postal delivery.

If we can't run the post office, how can we run the country? You all need to ask yourselves that question.

I am also incredibly proud of the stuff that I have done every day for North Dakotans. In 6 years, I have held over 3,500 meetings with North Dakotans both in Washington and in North Dakota. My office has provided responses to over 205,000 North Dakotans who have reached out to me about various issues, and my office has helped over 18,000 North Dakotans who have had issues with Federal agencies—getting their VA benefits, fixing issues

with Social Security, helping to resolve immigration, and much, much more.

People always ask me: What is your greatest achievement in the Senate?

I can go through all of the things I just talked about, but I would like to talk about a Native American who is from Spirit Lake Nation. He is a pipe maker, which is a very ceremonial and honorable position within his culture. He is also a Korean war vet and was one of the first people on the peninsula. He was injured and captured, but he literally saved lives during what was called the Tiger Death March. He ended up serving in a prison camp for the entire Korean war.

When he got out, no one knew who he was. There was no documentation of the fact that he had been in the prisoner of war camp, and there was no documentation that he had been injured. Senator Dorgan was able to get him his POW Medal. Guess what. He also didn't get his Purple Heart. That bothered him because he had served and had done incredible things during that service.

In scouring the Earth, we were able to find someone in Texas who would sign an affidavit—who said: Yes, he had been injured. When we presented that Purple Heart to this veteran, who was 86 years old, he got out of his wheelchair, saluted the flag, and hugged his medal.

You all have the power to do that. You all have the power to make just one little difference. Do that. It is a great thing even though it is not big legislation. In knowing that we are doing the work of the people and in knowing that so many North Dakotans have met with me and told me about the incredible challenges they have had and the incredible obstacles they have faced, you can make a difference. You can help put food on their tables. You can help them to remain as families. You can help to get them healthcare. You can do big things, but the little things matter, too—the little things that affect each one of their lives.

Despite all of the progress we have made during some difficult times, we aren't done. Every day, I come to the floor and fight for rural America. There is a huge gap in productivity and a huge gap in economic viability. There is a huge gap. As we see the retreat of rural America, we become less in this country. As we see more and more wealth moving to urban areas, we have to address this issue. There are big clouds, I think, on the horizon that face this country and rural America. If Congress doesn't tackle them head-on, our children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences.

This is an urgency that takes center stage for me. I wake up every morning and think: What am I going to do about rural America today? Do you know why? I am one of the few people here who does that, and it is because I represent a State that is still very rural. Even if you live in Fargo—it is not a big city to some, but it is a pretty big place to those of us in North Dakota—you are just one generation from Hillsboro or you are just one generation from Cooperstown.

I also want to say that we cannot sustain a record debt and deficit. This is a bipartisan challenge. This is a challenge of historic proportion. We are the only generation in America and in our history that has inherited from the ''greatest generation''—our parents—and that is borrowing from our kids. Shame on us. Shame on what we are doing right now. The Congressional Budget Office has said that our country's debt is headed to its highest level since World War II. These actions will have serious consequences, including increasing the chances of there being a fiscal crisis, which we will not be able to ignore.

I urge you to put fact before fantasy. Open your eyes. See this challenge.

Several months ago, when I voted against the tax bill that has greatly contributed, I think, to the record deficits we now face, I ran into an older man after I had given a speech at the Veterans Day service. He came up to me—it was actually before the vote—and said: Senator HEITKAMP.

I said: Yes, sir.

He said: I want a tax break.

I said: I hear that a lot.

He said: But not at the expense of my kids.

He is still a patriot, that Vietnam veteran. He still knows what it means to sacrifice for the next generation. So the Federal Government needs to be responsible as to how it spends its money.

I am grateful that my friend JAMES LANKFORD is here because we toiled away at government efficiency. Many times, we toiled away in spite of our ideological differences. In spite of our world views on issues, we still believed that this government needed to be efficient, that it needed to be effective, and that it needed to spend money in the right way. We marveled that no one seemed to care about it any more than just to show up for an occasional meeting.

That work can't stop. I hope you will find an equal and willing partner in your work, Senator LANKFORD. I know your heart, and I know that, for you, this is a moral imperative—to spend every dollar that gets sent here in the right way, in the most efficient way, and to do things right so that we can tell the American public that we are spending their dollars responsibly and that we are making the right choices. We will have many, many more options, and we will grow the reputation of not only the U.S. Government but of the U.S. Senate.

Income disparity is at a crisis as more individuals and families get left behind. The top 1 percent of families in America make more than 25 times what families who are in the bottom 99 percent make. Think about that. Let me repeat that—more than 25 times what families in the bottom 99 percent make. Much of the recent economic prosperity we have seen in this country has been concentrated on the coasts, but it has left much of rural America behind.

The administration's trade war is not something I have been shy in talking about, for it is causing an emergency in rural America, but I think it is going to cascade into a challenge and is going to domino into there being economic peril for this country. I am not saying that we don't need to address disparities and inequities in trade agreements. I am saying that you don't need a 17th century solution, which is called tariff, to deal with a 21st century problem.

You all have to take responsibility. Think about this. Think about the White House's unilateral ability to impose a tax on the American people and then, even more remarkably, to create a system over at the Department of Commerce that, basically, waives those taxes. How many of you would let the President decide who he is going to tax if it were income taxes and then for whom they will be waived? None of you would. Take responsibility. Congress needs to take back responsibility for tariffs before it is too late. These markets took years to develop for agriculture. They are not going to come back at the snap of a finger. When you look at the net farm income, it will be 13 percent lower in 2018 with there being no promise of an increase in net farm income in the future, and this will cascade through rural America.

I also want to sound the alarm and go to Senator BLUNT, who, I think, did a wonderful job, and I couldn't agree with him more in my being the wife of a family physician who tells me every day that if he could only get his patients to be compliant with their hypertension and compliant with their diabetes. The single biggest factor is behavioral and mental health. That leads to challenges, and that challenge leads to despair, and that despair leads to a record rate of suicides.

I don't know how many of you saw that the Economist magazine did a big story on suicides throughout the world, but in only one country of the developed nations is it increasing—the United States of America. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of death by suicide jumped by 58 percent in North Dakota between 1999 and 2016.

That is why, in my office, we have made it a priority to address the underpinning causes of death by suicide and the challenges that we confront in various pockets of our population whether it is of our veterans, whether it is of Native Americans, or whether it is of young people. Now there is a growing rate of suicide among the elderly. Congress has to take steps. There is bipartisan support for addressing mental and behavioral health and for looking at the comprehensive crisis of addiction.

As long as I have this soap box and you are all listening to me, can we just quit talking about opioids? Can we start talking about methamphetamines? Can we start talking about alcohol? Can we start talking about a culture of addiction and not just focus on the opioid addiction? It is the bright, shiny object that we always run to, but it is the cover story for a much bigger problem that we are not addressing in this country. So, please, please, face the addiction challenge head-on and in a broader context.

It also would not be like me if I didn't talk about Indian Country, which faces dire challenges with poverty, abuse, and addiction. Far too few Americans fully understand the challenges in Indian Country or the importance of Tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and cultural heritage. I, along with my colleague Lisa, have worked to educate many in this Chamber about those challenges. With my colleague SUSAN COLLINS, I have also talked about the challenges of runaway and missing people. She has been a great partner on so many things that I have done.

I think that when we find people of like heart and like commitment, we can do amazing and good things for the American public, but we all need to understand that the first people—our first Americans—should not be the last Americans. They should not be ignored when you have a unique position here given that your government, the U.S. Government, signs treaties on sovereignty rights. So, when you look at the disparities, you can't believe that we have done right by the treaties.

Finally, I want to talk about the crisis of childhood trauma, which I have already addressed, but this will be just to give you some numbers. These may be things that you haven't thought about.

According to a Justice Department study, 58 percent of all American children had witnessed or had been crime victims in 2014. Traumatic experiences like abuse, neglect, witnessing a crime, and parental conflict can lead to ongoing, severe mental and behavioral health complications. For Native American children, these health risks are that much more prevalent.

When we look at the challenges ahead, there will be larger issues for Congress to confront. Members of Congress cannot just look for a quick win to talk about in their States without their taking into account the long-term consequences of their actions. We need to look up, and we need to look bigger so that Congress will be creating a solid future for our children and our grandchildren. If we do nothing else in this Chamber, that would be an important first step.

All in Congress make their own decisions about how they want to use their time, which can come down to a few simple questions: Do you want to solve problems or not? Do you want to do right by your children and your grandchildren? That means all of our children and our grandchildren. Do you want to win a reelection no matter what the cost? Do you want to be able to look yourself in the mirror and say, ''I did good today''?

I implore those who are still serving and all of those who are about to join this Chamber to seriously examine those questions. I hope that you will take up this mantle of the important, needed priorities. For many of you, all of those priorities are the same.

In fact, I thought we should do an experiment. On one Tuesday—I challenge you—you should have the Democratic caucus, at its lunch, give a list of the 10 problems Americans confront that they want to solve. Then have the Republican conference do the same thing. I would bet that if you would match those two lists, they would look pretty similar. In fact, they would probably be identical. When the American public sees that you know the problems but that you can't find the will to solve the problems, then they become understandably discouraged. So my work isn't done. I will just continue to do this work from a different vantage point.

As you soon start your work in the next Congress, with all of these challenges, please consider a few things. The Senate only works if we enable it to. That means each of us needs to do our job. We may not always agree, but I know Senators can work together—as I have—to get results. I know that gridlock and partisanship do not have to rule the day. I have seen it firsthand.

I will ad-lib a little here. I also think that you, as Senators, need to take power back from leadership. Too often, leadership determines the agenda. We should determine the agenda. I have seen it firsthand. I have seen that we can come together and solve problems, such as when climate change advocates and climate deniers come together on a carbon bill. If that isn't an indicator that Congress can function, I don't know what is, but it took political courage on both sides, particularly from my colleague from Rhode Island.

I don't believe this country or the caucus is as divided as it seems. All of us—those serving in Congress and across the country—want our people to get a good education. They want affordable, quality healthcare. They want a good job that puts food on the table and retirement security. They want all those things that build an economy. Our economy is the foundation and the bedrock of the might of this country. People will point to the military, but the military cannot exist without the economic strength of this country.

I think that too often politicians create and profit from issues that divide us. It is the only profession where people are rewarded for blocking things from getting done. Think about that. It is no wonder the American public has such little faith.

I had a novel idea since I joined this Chamber. I have been determined to get results and to put my State first, above political party. There are many around here, on both sides of the aisle, who know how to get results, too, and I encourage them to speak loudly, work clearly, seek compromise, and continue to do great and good works. I hope more Senators will join them.

We also need more political courage in Congress. We need Members of Congress who are willing to take tough votes because it is the right thing to do, even if it puts their reelection in jeopardy. We need more Members who are not too scared to stand up when someone in their party uses fear and lies to win support.

There is a fine line between representing those you serve and being representative of them. They don't always align. It is why we need to use facts and judgment—not polls—to make our decisions. Then it is up to each of us to explain those decisions. Simply put, sometimes leaders are needed to move public opinion to the right side of history. Remember that the decisions you are making, especially on big policy, will have consequences well beyond today.

I want to tell you about a Native American principle. It is called ''seven generations.'' It urges decision making in any way to look at how the current decisions that are made in this generation will affect seven generations—the next seven—and to think about how you can look to a much broader purpose.

I had a thing that I did in my office. When people would come in and they would have the issue of the day, I would say: Look up. What is on the horizon? Debt and deficit, a looming retirement crisis, a crisis in education, a crisis in addiction. Look up. What are we supposed to do? There is a crisis in infrastructure, in healthcare. Look up. What do we need to do today that seven generations later people will look back at? Don't worry about a public opinion poll because you are making decisions not just for those people today. You are making decisions for the next seven generations, and they have to be the right decisions.

All of you know that you are better than the outcomes of Congress. You are nobler than the petty rhetoric that is bantered about here every day. Importantly, your reputation is tied to the reputation of every other Member because we have no power independent of each other. The greatest power that we have is the collective power of the U.S. Senate. The success of your colleagues is your success. When great and hard things are done, you share in the satisfaction of a job well done.

It has been a true honor and a privilege to serve as a Member of this Chamber and to contribute to helping North Dakota and our country. I am grateful for that wonderful opportunity.

Over the last 6 years, I have made amazing friendships with all of you

that I can't talk about right now because it is too hard, but I want you to keep fighting for those shared dreams, for those dreams you shared with me, for those ideas that you had that will move this country forward. I want you to continue to dream and to continue to believe.

When I came here, I once came to a Member, and I said: I have this really great idea. I told him about it, and he said: Yes, that is a really good idea.

I said: Let's work on it.

He said: It will never happen.

I said: It is a good idea, right?

Yes, it is a really good idea, but it will never happen.

I said: We have to get out of the shared culture of failure, believing it can't happen. It can happen. We can do really big and great things when we believe we can, when we refuse to accept failure, and when we refuse to believe that we are somehow limited. No one is tying you. No one is limiting you. You are a U.S. Senator, and, collectively, you will make a difference.

I want to also thank other people. The first is the Capitol Police. Jokingly—only it is not a joke—some of my best friends here are Capitol Police. Some of the nicest people you are going to meet serve you in the dining room. Some of the greatest people are painting the walls out there here. Say hello. Don't just walk by them. They serve you, and they are proud. They are proud of the work they do. They are wonderful people, and I want to thank them for their friendship.

I want to thank so many more people who cared about this place.

I also want to thank my staff, who are all here. Many of them are amazing people, and they are going to go on to do amazing things.

When I sign things, I say: Go do great and good things.

You can do great things, but they may not be good things. We have seen that throughout history.

I say: Go do great and good things.

And they will. They are amazing. They have given so much.

I know you all think you have the best staff. Unfortunately, I do. A lot of them are available, I just want to say. I want them to take what they have learned into their future endeavors. I want to make sure that the legacy that we leave is a legacy of service, of whom we serve and whom we stand for.

Finally, I want to thank my family: my husband Darwin, who is toiling in the clinic as we speak; my daughter Alethea, my son Nathan, and my six brothers and sisters, who are fairly famous all across North Dakota. I would like to just say that they have been my rock.

Finally, I want to thank my mom and dad because they taught me and my siblings to stand up for what is right, to have our voices heard. I know they are watching me from above, and I want to thank them for raising a rowdy, boisterous, and determined crew who remain each other's best friends. My mother and my father made us strong, and I hope I have made them proud.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

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

TRIBUTE TO HEIDI HEITKAMP

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for comments on behalf of my friend from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of Senator HEITKAMP and to thank her for her service on behalf of the people of North Dakota, as well as the people of this great Nation.

We have served together for the past 6 years, not only in the Senate but also on the Agriculture Committee, the Indian Affairs Committee, and the Homeland Security Committee.

We have been able to work together on a variety of issues important to our home State, and we have been able to make progress on behalf of the people of North Dakota, as well as the country.

Ag is still North Dakota's top industry. As members of the Ag Committee, we have had the opportunity to craft good, long-term foreign policy that will make a difference not only for hard-working farmers and ranchers in North Dakota but across the Nation. In fact, we have just released the conference report with our Ag Committee leadership, Senator ROBERTS and Senator STABENOW. I commend them for their hard work as well.

Good farm policy benefits every American, every day with the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world. Certainly, as a fellow ''aggie,'' Senator HEITKAMP understands that.

I think it is really important that we continue to point out that a good farm bill isn't just about farmers and ranchers. As I said, the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world, thanks to our farmers and ranchers, benefits every single American every single day.

I know Senator HEITKAMP will continue to work, along with our entire delegation, to get the farm bill approved by the end of this year so we can provide certainty and security for our great producers.

As chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, I have appreciated Senator HEITKAMP's commitment to help empower our Tribal communities and to improve the quality of life in Indian Country. Senator HEITKAMP has been an advocate for Native communities. She was able to pass bipartisan legislation to establish a commission on Native children. Additionally, the Senate recently approved Senator HEITKAMP's Savanna's Act, which is legislation to bring greater awareness regarding tragic cases of missing and murdered Native American women.

She has helped to bring awareness to these issues. We will have a hearing on the issue this week as well. We appreciate her insight and work as a member of our committee.

These are just a few examples of the issues that we have worked on together to advance. While we may be on opposite sides of the political aisle, there is one thing we have always agreed on—that it is an honor—an incredible honor—to serve the great State of North Dakota.

In closing, I want to wish Senator HEITKAMP the best going forward and to thank her again for her service on behalf of North Dakota—a place that we are both blessed to call home.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I also rise to honor my Senator next door and my great colleague Senator HEITKAMP.

As you could see from her beautiful remarks, she is a person of true courage and strength and a friend to so many. We saw this strength when she was running for Governor while battling breast cancer. We saw it when she stood up for the people of North Dakota as their attorney general, and we see that courage every single day in the U.S. Senate, as she fights for the people of her State and the values that have defined her as a public servant.

She is simply one of the best and one of a kind. Going forward, I hope that people will listen to the speech that she just gave about those seven generations, because that is service.

HEIDI has always been true to herself and as mavericky as her red hair. When I walk into a room filled with dark suits and I see that red hair in the middle of it, I know where to go and exactly what I will find. There is her joy and her optimism, so much of it coming from growing up in a family of seven kids. There is her sense of humor, which I love, even when it is mixed with some serious trash talk, even when it is directed at my State next door. There is that friendship, which I treasure above all else. There is the example she sets of what one person can accomplish when you combine so much heart and fierce determination.

We saw it with the human trafficking legislation that she talked about today. We saw it with her work on energy. We saw it with her work for her farmers. Thanks to leaders like HEIDI, we are making progress on so many issues.

I will never forget the trip that I got to take to Mexico with Senator HEITKAMP and Cindy McCain on human trafficking. One of the most memorable moments was when we visited a shelter of girls who had seen unspeakable tragedy. We met a little girl named Paloma. That means ''dove'' in Spanish. That girl, unlike the other

ones, didn't say a word. All she did was cry. That is all she did. It made me think of what a refugee once said. She said that what she had seen in her life would make ''stones cry.''

I saw the tears going down HEIDI's face as that girl was just sitting there crying. HEIDI just doesn't watch that happen. She comes back, and she takes those tears and puts them into action. That girl had no voice. HEIDI was her voice. She has done that time and again.

As she mentioned, everywhere you go in North Dakota, you practically meet a member of her family, and somehow they all look the same.

There is also her wonderful husband Darwin, whom I adore. One of my favorite Darwin stories was the time when we took the first all-women Senators trip to Africa, and HEIDI and I were sitting next to each other with some people out in the countryside, with the elders. On one side were all the women, with the women Senators, and on the other side were all the men. I turned to HEIDI—because all of the elders were wearing these incredible hats and outfits—and I said: Who is the guy at the end with the baseball cap?

She said: That is Darwin.

There he was. He was always there, always there for her.

So that is HEIDI.

I will end with one story from that trip; that is, when we were in a hut in the middle of nowhere, and there was a woman who lived there, a widow, with her kids. We went into that hut, these women Senators, and started asking that woman who was so proud of everything she had done—all that was in this hut was one solar panel that she got for her work and one thing on the wall, which was a chart that showed all of the huts. It showed her with a star in the middle, and it showed how she had helped to make sure they had good hygiene and if they got baby care, as she was in charge of that.

One of us asked this woman, who we had learned had walked every day, an hour and a half each day, to get water: What is your biggest challenge?

This woman looked at these Senators and looked at this Senator with red hair from America and said: I have no challenges. I am a leader.

That is HEIDI HEITKAMP. She is a leader. Whatever challenges she has overcome in her life—health, representing a State that isn't always easy when you look at it politically for a Democrat, the challenges she had bucking our own party, taking things on—every single moment, she overcame those challenges because HEIDI HEITKAMP is a leader.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, as I listened to Senator HEITKAMP's farewell remarks to us today, I could not help but think of the fact that she used her final speech on the Senate floor not just to talk about her accomplishments, of which there are many, but to inspire us. It was a call to action. It was a call to the better angels of ourselves to work together in the interests of our country.

Maine and North Dakota are separated by a great distance, but the people of our two States have in common the qualities of hard work, of respect for tradition, balanced by a spirit of innovation and a belief in personal responsibility, always tempered by compassion.

During her years in the Senate, HEIDI HEITKAMP has demonstrated those qualities time and again. She is passionate, as we heard today; she is energetic, as we have seen in her work; and she is a committed public servant who has worked so diligently for her State and for our country.

Senator HEITKAMP has a remarkable record of public service. As her State's attorney general, she fought to protect the people of North Dakota against drug dealers, to defend seniors against abusive scams, and to keep sexual predators off the streets.

Senator HEITKAMP has continued those causes, that fight as a Member of the U.S. Senate. Among the many issues on which we have worked together, Senator HEITKAMP's determined leadership on efforts to support victims of human trafficking and to prevent youth homelessness stand out. She and I led the charge to increase Federal funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

She has also been such a strong advocate for children, as you all heard today. She has worked to help teenagers who find themselves without a permanent home or on the street.

I was proud to stand with her in helping to forge the bipartisan path forward on the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which became law and includes Senator HEITKAMP's provision to give safe harbor to victims of human trafficking. She has also shed light on the role healthcare providers can play in identifying and protecting the victims of human trafficking by authoring the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Act—the SOAR Act—on which I was proud to be her lead Republican.

Senator HEITKAMP has been such a valued leader in strengthening our agriculture. In fact, the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee was just talking about the absolutely vital role she has played working with both the chairman and the ranking member. She knows that when we strengthen agriculture, we sustain our rural communities.

The Next Generation in Agriculture Act that she authored and I cosponsored will ensure that new farmers and ranchers have the support and guidance they need.

It has been so rewarding to work with Senator HEITKAMP on so many bipartisan issues, such as improving school nutrition, increasing access to healthcare in underserved areas, and expanding mental health services for our rural vets. She was also instrumental in the success of the Common Sense Coalition in preventing a lengthy government shutdown earlier this year.

Senator HEITKAMP has been an effective and courageous colleague, but most of all, she has been a dear friend. Our friendship transcends party lines and is rooted in mutual respect and trust.

To my friend, I say thank you for your service to our country and thank you so much for your friendship. I am so grateful that we served together, and I wish you all the best.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I want to talk for just a few minutes about Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP, but first I want to start by talking a little bit about why North Dakota is so important to me.

My grandfather and grandmother lived in Argusville, in West Fargo, and moved to the place where I farm in about 1910, so I have always had a kinship with North Dakota.

Before I came to this body—even before I got into the State legislature—I always looked at North Dakota with envy because they had two U.S. Senators by the names of Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad. I thought they were incredibly effective people, and when I got to this body, I found out that in fact they were. Byron used to talk about Rosie the Riveter and trade and Kent used to talk about the budget.

Then there was this lady by the name of HEIDI HEITKAMP, who decided to run when Kent hung up his cleats. I remember sitting in caucus as the campaign unfolded in 2012. As a candidate, especially in a tough State like North Dakota is or a tough State like Montana is, you always worry about different issues as they are coming down the pike and how you were going to deal with them and how you were going to message them. Healthcare was a big deal in the 2012 election. I saw one of the ads HEIDI had offered up. She didn't step away from the issue. She laid into the issue. That was a sign of what was to come when she got into this body.

I remember the night she got elected and, as she pointed out, she wasn't supposed to get elected, but she did because she is a special person and a special candidate. I remember driving home the next morning, and I called Kent Conrad. I said: Congratulations. He said: You are going to love HEIDI HEITKAMP. She is an incredible person. I remember he also said: What you are going to love about her the most is that she is normal. In this body, that says a lot—because HEIDI HEITKAMP is normal. She is somebody who sees the world as it is. She sees rural America as it is. She has leaned into every issue. They have been well documented

here today. She has been incredibly effective in this body, but most importantly—and most of what this body is going to have to compensate for when she goes—every issue she brought up today revolves around rural America.

Not many people live in rural America anymore. We have all moved to the coast or we have moved to the bigger cities. She is right; Fargo is the big city. In Montana, people have moved from the rural areas to the big cities like Great Falls and Billings and Missoula. Those people and their challenges in those rural areas are real. HEIDI HEITKAMP brought those challenges to the floor, brought them to committee every single day. I can't tell you how much I appreciate that, being a child of rural America.

So as we move forward, as HEIDI has given her last speech on the Senate floor and laid out the challenges we need to take up in this Senate—and the challenges she laid out are real and they will not get solved by one party or the other, they will only get solved, as she knows, by working together. I will say this. You have been an incredible friend, an incredible ally, somebody who is normal, and I wish you Godspeed moving ahead. I am sure we haven't heard the last of HEIDI HEITKAMP.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Montana for his comments and those of Senator KLOBUCHAR, as well as my distinguished colleague and friend from Maine.

Normal; maybe ''supernormal'' would be a better term. Every time HEIDI HEITKAMP came into our committee room—I had the privilege and the honor of being the chairman of the sometimes powerful Senate Agriculture Committee, along with my distinguished ranking member, Senator STABENOW, whom I will yield to in just a moment. Every time she came into the committee room, it might be a little bit late, but it was like a ray of sunshine came in and a ray of commitment.

HEIDI, thank you for that speech. Thank you for those marching orders, if you will. This marine will cease parade rest and come to attention and do the best I can following your example.

I want to say something to HEIDI's staff. I don't know if the Senate cameras will do this—they obviously have me on there—but it would be a good idea to pan these young people over there.

Senator Frank Carlson, a long time ago—one of my mentors, my first boss from Kansas—said there are no self-made men or women in public office. It is your friends who make you what you are. I relate to that, saying friends, people, staff. We all think we have the best staff on the Hill, and if we don't think that, something is wrong. You have had the privilege of working for a lady who has great admiration from both sides of the aisle, who has accomplished so much. This time is so special for you, and thank you for what you have done for HEIDI. Thank you for getting her prepared, ready. You didn't have to do too much because she does that on her own, but during this special time, see if you can take this step and then the next step in your life—and it prepares you for that next step—and shine. Represent HEIDI well. Represent yourself well.

I think you have had a rare privilege to work for somebody like HEIDI HEITKAMP. She has been a good friend to me and a good friend to so many here.

We aren't going to miss you because you are going to be back in some capacity—maybe taking time off from what you are doing in your home State of North Dakota. Everybody who knows you knows you are going to be back in public service in some capacity.

I think I will stop right there and yield to my distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator STABENOW.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to someone who has made a really big impression from the day she set foot in the Senate.

It might be her infectious laugh; I dare you not to smile when you hear it. It might be her hugs, which I know many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will miss. Or it might be her ever-present iced coffee, no matter how cold it is outside. I might be biased, but I think it is the hair.

Saying goodbye to Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP is hard for many of us, especially the members of the Senate Redhead Caucus. After all, we are losing a third of our membership.

In all seriousness, I will miss HEIDI, and I know I am not alone. I have had the chance to get to know her from the very beginning, back when she was first running for the Senate. I campaigned with her in North Dakota, and the thing that really struck me was her passion for the people of her State and for agriculture.

We have had the opportunity to work closely together during our time on the Agriculture Committee and especially as members of the farm bill conference committee. I can tell you that HEIDI has been instrumental in getting this deal done and in making sure that North Dakota's farmers and ranchers are well-represented.

Thanks to HEIDI, we have taken huge steps forward in trade with Cuba; it is her language in the farm bill.

She wasn't afraid to go her own way in order to stand up for North Dakota. Even when we didn't agree on issues like conservation easements, HEIDI fought for her farmers and got it done.

I would like to think her passion comes from her red hair, but in reality, I think it is her oversized heart. Whether she was listening to the struggles of women farmers during our women's agriculture CODEL in Africa, or shining a light on the epidemic of missing and murdered Native American women, or sharing her own story of surviving breast cancer and the need to protect people with preexisting conditions, in a city where spreadsheets rule, HEIDI threw her heart into this job, and her State and our Nation are better for it.

HEIDI, thank you for your friendship, your leadership, and for putting your whole heart into fighting for North Dakota.

I join my great friend Senator ROBERTS, first of all, in indicating what a huge difference you have made on the Agriculture Committee. From the day you walked in, you hit the ground running and have made an incredible difference.

As you were talking today about some parts—and we could go through every single chapter—you made a difference. The Tribal provisions are in there. But you mentioned Cuba, and this is very historic. It took work on the Senate floor to be able to move it through. It took work for us in the conference committee. It is because of you that it is in there and opportunities for farmers are in there.

I also greatly appreciate that when we had differences—like conservation and easements—you pushed hard and were successful in getting changes for North Dakota that needed to happen. It was you who did that. Others took credit, but you did that.

When I think about our traveling together to Africa and think about the impact you have had on women and children—whether it is Native women and children, whether it was what we were doing overseas, whether it was what you have done every day for all of our children—I am so grateful.

Most importantly, I am grateful for your friendship. I am going to miss you greatly. I wish you Godspeed while you determine the future. I know it will be bright, and hopefully in some way we will all be benefiting from it.

God bless you.

Mr. ROBERTS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in honoring and paying tribute to my friend and mentor, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP.

I am particularly and profoundly grateful for both her trailblazing work mentoring women who want to run for public office and her remarkable ability to get things done across party lines in the Senate.

For years, Senator HEITKAMP has been at the forefront of mentoring other women and encouraging them to enter public service, recognizing that balanced representation is vital to our country's success. In fact, HEIDI HEITKAMP and I first met through a program that she helped start to encourage and prepare women to run for

office—to do more than just tell us it was possible but to help us understand that there were ways to prepare for it, to run in our own way, to be our own people. She helped demonstrate that even though you may experience setbacks—including her own setback battling breast cancer—you still have what it takes to serve your communities and to make a difference. I am incredibly grateful for those lessons, I am incredibly grateful for her efforts because they have helped inspire women all across the country.

All the issues that HEIDI just talked about in her farewell speech—there are now armies of current and future public servants who will take those issues and challenges as their own because she has helped prepare them to do that.

Then there is Senator HEITKAMP's work in the Senate. During the time we served together in the Senate, I have been so impressed by Senator HEITKAMP's ability to stand up for her priorities and her values, while also working with anybody else here willing to step up to get results, particularly on issues such as fighting for rural communities, standing up for our country's veterans, strengthening our Nation's healthcare system, and, yes, reminding our colleagues that there is a northern border that needs to be secured and attended to.

Serving together on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I saw firsthand her capacity to be constructive and to find compromise. In doing so, she earned the respect and trust of her colleagues, while also building a record of bipartisan accomplishments—accomplishments we all know last because of their very bipartisanship.

Above all, Senator HEITKAMP was relentless in fighting for what she believed. Just ask any of the witnesses who testified before her on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

It has been truly an honor to serve with Senator HEITKAMP, and all of us need to continue to work to emulate her example—the example that she has set of listening to others and being productive, her commitment and her recognition of the importance of getting things done while always doing the right thing for the people we serve.

Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP's voice in this Chamber will be sorely missed, but I also know that she will keep fighting to make a difference and that she will continue to do just that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I think all of us here watching Senator HEITKAMP today give her farewell address were tremendously moved. I come away, first of all, with, this is a person of character, a person we have served with who cares about doing the right thing, a person who cares deeply about the issues that are before this august body and someone we will miss very much.

By the evidence of the Republicans who turned out to listen here on the floor—and I am sure many others were listening in their offices—I think they may miss her more than Democrats because she worked with them so much. She cared about reaching across the aisle. She wasn't worried that it was going to hurt her back home because she was going to be solving problems.

One of the things I think of when I think of HEIDI HEITKAMP is that I have known HEIDI—she is my friend. She reminds me: Don't call me your oldest friend in the Senate. But she is my longest standing friend. I go back to the early 1990s with HEIDI, when we were attorneys general together from two small States—New Mexico and North Dakota—and we have been very, very good friends since then.

HEIDI is a leader of principle. She wants to do the right thing, no matter what. That is pretty special in this institution we are in. She wants to do what is right by North Dakota and do what is right by our country. She always follows her conscience, and she gives the citizens of her State and this great country her very best judgment. That is really the spirit of a true public servant—to do what is right and let the chips fall where they may. A couple issues we have had recently are good examples, and I will talk about one back when we were attorneys general together.

The Kavanaugh vote was a big vote for the Senate. I think it was probably a tough vote for HEIDI, but I think she came to it with the idea that she was going to do the right thing. She had the courage to stand up for victims—victims of sexual assault, victims of sexual harassment, all of the permutations of that. I know that for the better part of her career—whether she was an attorney general, whether she was a U.S. Senator, or whether she was working in other capacities both in and out of government—she was always working for victims. I think one of the things that helped HEIDI understand that so well was that her mother was sexually assaulted as a teenager. Knowing that—HEIDI learned from that. She learned about the prevalence of it, that it was out there and it was deep and it was hidden in a lot of ways. So I saw early on, as a State attorney general, that she was a champion—a real champion—for victims.

Shifting from the example I just gave with the vote on the Supreme Court, another example of her persistence to do what is right—nobody had ever taken on the tobacco industry, this huge industry. People talked a little bit and would say: It is so bad that people are addicted to smoking. But the attorneys general of our country in the 1990s filed a lawsuit against the tobacco companies because they were targeting our children. We found research that showed tobacco companies knew that if you get young people addicted at a very young age, they are going to smoke for life. For them, it was all a profit motive. If you get a young person addicted, you know you are going to have a smoker for life; you know you will have somebody who is going to buy cigarettes for life. We knew that.

She was one of the leaders in the attorneys general's effort to bring this horrible, horrible scourge under control. We filed our lawsuit. The tobacco companies saw what was coming. We did our discovery. They didn't want this case in court—there was no way. They were going to lose big. So we had what was the biggest civil settlement in the history of the country. After we knew we were going to have a settlement, the smaller States knew we had to have a tough negotiator to represent us because we were afraid that larger States—California, New York, and others—would get more of the money than we would. We all felt we had participated equally. So whom did we select? We selected HEIDI HEITKAMP to be our negotiator, and, boy, did she do a good job for the smaller States.

Just to remind everybody, this year, $34 million from that settlement flows to the State of North Dakota. It was settled several decades ago, but the money is still coming in to do prevention, to help out with tobacco addiction, and to do what is really important there.

The other quality I want to mention—and I know we are going over in terms of where we are supposed to be in our caucuses—there is a remarkable trait—and we saw this today, with everyone who turned out, and our staff knows this—HEIDI HEITKAMP is one of the most well-liked U.S. Senators by both sides of the aisle. She was so well-liked that President Trump—convinced he needed somebody in his Cabinet who was well-liked and respected—recruited HEIDI HEITKAMP to be his Secretary of Agriculture. I really think what the President was doing cozying up to her was trying to make friends in the Senate. He figured that if he got her, she was going to make a real difference, and he was hoping that her popularity would rub off on him.

I will never forget when President Trump invited her up on the stage at one of his political rallies in September of 2017. He invited her up to the stage and said:

> Everybody's saying, ''What's she doing up here?'' But I'll tell you what: Good woman.

''Good woman.'' Do you know what I say? No, Mr. President. She is a great woman. She is a great woman.

I could go on forever, but I just want to comment—and HEIDI commented about her commitment to Native communities, to Native women and to Native children. She worked as a State attorney general, she worked in the Senate, and she worked in other elected offices on this. She didn't give up. She is working in the Senate until the very end to make sure we get Savanna's Act passed, which is going to protect missing and indigenous women.

We have already passed it through the Senate Indian Affairs Committee,

and she is intent on making sure it gets passed this session, and I am going to work with her on that. She has worked on VAWA reauthorization. Heidi has always broadcast the core principles in our relations with Native communities—Tribal sovereignty, Tribal consultation, strong government-to-government relations—and she has always tried to make sure Senators who don't have Native communities understand the situation we are facing.

My friendship with HEIDI has made me a better public servant and a better person. Before we came here to serve, we had already known each other for many years—since the 1990's when we both served as State attorneys general. At that time, there was only a handful of women serving as their State's attorney general. HEIDI herself was a trailblazer, serving as North Dakota's first female Attorney General.

It was then I saw the first of the innumerable examples of her commitment to serving the people of North Dakota and the public interest.

A number of attorneys general, including HEIDI and I, initiated groundbreaking lawsuits against big tobacco. Those lawsuits were met with skepticism. The disease and terrible health impacts caused by tobacco products had cost States precious resources. The tobacco companies were working to lure underage youth to buy their harmful products through targeted advertising. Like so many other times in her life, HEIDI's work helped us beat some long odds.

Our lawsuits proved highly successful. North Dakota is still reaping the benefits, having received a $34 million tobacco settlement from those efforts just this year.

In the years since, I have seen HEIDI continue her dedication to public service and achieve great things, not least of which was 6 years ago when she became North Dakota's first woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

Although she has come far from her humble beginnings, she has never forgotten her roots. She fights for the working people of North Dakota and across the Nation.

While HEIDI is highly accomplished, she remains plain spoken, straight shooting, and down to earth.

I have been privileged to serve with HEIDI on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs—a committee she knew from the get-go that she wanted to be on. She came to Washington ready to fight for Native communities in North Dakota, to make sure they weren't being left behind.

She is a fierce defender of tribal sovereignty and demands that the federal government meet its treaty and trust responsibilities and engage in meaningful consultation with tribes when Federal action impacts tribal interests.

HEIDI has worked tirelessly on behalf of North Dakota's five tribes and all of Indian country.

Just like when she was attorney general, I have seen her laser-focused on protecting and empowering those most in need of a champion—like children and domestic violence survivors.

The very first bill HEIDI introduced was to tackle the systemic problems facing Native children by establishing a National Commission.

With more than one in three Native American children living in poverty, suicide rates 2.5 times higher than the national average, and one of the lowest high school graduation rates in the country, she knew we must do more—much more—for our Native youth. It was no surprise to me that she got that bill passed in short order before the end of her first Congress.

For decades, HEIDI has been on the frontlines of protecting victims of domestic violence. As attorneys general, we worked to implement the Violence Against Women Act after it first got passed in 1994.

We continued the fight together here in the Senate. In fact, one of the first things we worked on was to help pass the 2013 VAWA reauthorization. That reauthorization was hard fought. We wanted to protect key provisions that restored tribal jurisdiction to domestic violence crimes committed by non-Indians on reservations. Those cases were falling through the cracks.

At the time, opponents claimed that tribes didn't have the resources or expertise to enforce the Act. Thanks to the tireless work of HEIDI and many of my colleagues on the Indian Affairs Committee, the provisions remained in the bill, and President Obama signed it into law in March 2013.

Five years later, we know for a fact that those opponents were wrong. According to a report this year from the National Congress of American Indians, since VAWA of 2013 was enacted, 18 tribes have once again begun exercising jurisdiction over domestic violence crimes. NCAI is collaborating with 50 other tribes to develop best practices. There have been 143 arrests of 128 non-Indian abusers, with 74 convictions.

HEIDI has always prided herself on working across the aisle to get things done—whether she is tackling domestic violence or working to improve public safety.

She partnered with my good friend John McCain to make sure that Indian Country is part of the AMBER Alert child abduction warning system. That bill was signed into law last April.

Just last week, the full Senate unanimously passed one of HEIDI's bills—Savanna's Act. Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind—a member of the Spirit Lake tribe, 22 years old, and 8 months pregnant—was brutally murdered in Fargo last year. The sad truth is, reportedly more than 80 percent of Native women will experience violence in their lifetime. HEIDI is determined to do something about that.

Her bill would improve law enforcement tracking of and response to the growing crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women. HEIDI has been an incredible voice combatting this crisis—working to make sure these women are not invisible. I have been touched by her commitment to this fight.

I am inspired by HEIDI's work for Indian Country and am committed to carrying on her work so that tribes in North Dakota and across Indian Country know that. Even if one of their strongest defenders is moving on to the next chapter, her mission will not be lost.

The list of all HEIDI's accomplishments is as long as her heart is big. She has worked for the people of North Dakota for decades. She has been an independent voice in the Senate, not tied to party or ideology but committed to doing what is right for the people of her State. She will always roll up her sleeves and work with all sides to solve problems. She will always fight for the little guy.

On a personal note, she is one of the most loyal friends anyone could ask for.

She never shied away from the hard votes—approaching every single one with conscience and courage. I admire HEIDI for her conviction.

All of us here will miss HEIDI tremendously. I know that her work is not done—not even close. Like so many here, I look forward to her next challenge and to seeing what more she accomplishes for her State and the Nation and the countless lives she is sure to touch.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to echo what my colleague from New Mexico said about our friend and colleague Senator HEITKAMP. I can say that everything he just said—there is strong bipartisan agreement on that front. I want to emphasize a couple of points he mentioned about Senator HEITKAMP. Certainly, she is one of the most well-liked Senators, optimistic and upbeat.

As Senator UDALL just mentioned, I think there is a certain element in the Senate—whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, if you are a former attorney general, you come to this job with a little bit of the same viewpoint, the same experiences.

I want to emphasize what Senator HEITKAMP mentioned in her remarks and Senator UDALL mentioned in his remarks, which is her strong dedication to two issues that I think really matter—certainly, they matter to my constituents, and they matter to most Americans—and that is her relentless advocacy and fight with regard to combating the big problem we have in America with sexual assault and domestic violence—it is a very big, difficult problem in my State, and I know it is a problem in many other States—

and her commitment to the Native peoples of our country.

One example is a bill that Senator HEITKAMP and I worked on together called the POWER Act. The whole focus is to get more legal representation for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. When we were working on this bill together, she was obviously a huge advocate, but she came back to me and said: We need to make this especially focused on the Native communities. That was her idea. That was in the bill. The bill was passed in the Congress and signed into law 2 months ago. I have no doubt that bill, for which she was the strongest advocate, is going to make lives better for women throughout our country who have gone through horrible experiences, particularly in the Native communities, whether in North Dakota or Alaska or New Mexico, and that was because of her hard work.

So I want to echo what so many others have said. In those areas and so many others, it has been my honor to serve with Senator HEITKAMP. I know she is going to continue to serve her community, State, and country in important ways. My best to her.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:18 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

MORNING BUSINESS—(Continued)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 3:45 p.m. today, the Senate vote on adoption of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jonathan A. Kobes, of South Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kobes nomination?

Mr. ROUNDS. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 258 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Capito	Hoeven	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Kyl	Thune
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—50

Baldwin	Harris	Nelson
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Heitkamp	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Jones	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Flake	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the nomination is confirmed.

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 actions.

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

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

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

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the 115th Congress is drawing to a close, and it has been a good 2 years. Our goal 2 years ago was simple: to make life better for American families—which is exactly what we have done. We knew that a huge part of making life better for American families was in the expanding of opportunity and putting more money in their pockets, so we passed a historic reform of our outdated Tax Code that slashed tax rates for families and removed barriers to economic growth.

It is already producing results. Since we passed tax reform a year ago this December, we have seen unemployment drop to its lowest rate in almost 50 years, and we have seen job openings reach a record high. For the past 7 months, there have been more job openings than there have been Americans looking for work. We have seen company after company dispense raises or bonuses or boost benefits for their employees. We have seen the best wage growth since the great recession and more.

Most importantly, the economic benefits of tax reform are reaching the people who need them the most. During the Obama administration, what economic prosperity there was tended to be concentrated in large metropolitan areas, but under Republican government, growth and prosperity are reaching small cities and rural families and communities. Thanks to tax reform, a lot of families are finding it easier to pay their bills and to put a little bit away for the future.

Yet, of course, tax reform is far from the only thing we did in this Congress to improve the lives of the American people. Along with the White House, we lifted burdensome regulations. We enacted legislation to improve career and technical education programs. We passed legislation to make it easier for Main Street banks and credit unions to lend money to small businesses and farmers and ranchers. We passed the largest pay increase in nearly a decade for our men and women in uniform.

We delivered real reforms for our veterans through the VA MISSION Act. This legislation streamlined the VA's community care programs to help ensure veterans receive efficient, timely, quality care. Once fully implemented, it will also expand caregiver assistance to disabled pre-9/11 veterans—an overdue benefit for generations of our heroes. We also modernized the Veterans Benefits Administration's appeals system to develop a quicker, more responsive system for veterans.

On the national security front, we have reinvested in our Nation's military to ensure that our troops are equipped not only for today's missions but to meet the threats of the future. A recent report from the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission outlined how dangerously our military superiority has eroded—to the point at which it would be difficult for us to win a war against two major powers. This alarming reduction in our military's readiness is why Republicans have made rebuilding our military such a priority in this Congress. There is no better way to ensure peace for our country than to make sure that the

U.S. military is the strongest, best equipped fighting force in all the world.

On the healthcare front this Congress, we passed the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act to address the nationwide opioid epidemic. This bipartisan legislation reflected ideas and input from no fewer than 72 of our Members here in the Senate to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

We repealed ObamaCare's individual mandate tax, which forced patients to buy insurance that they didn't want and couldn't afford. We also eliminated ObamaCare's Independent Payment Advisory Board, which would have empowered a board of unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats to make substantial changes to Medicare.

We passed legislation to give terminally ill patients access to experimental care.

In February, we also passed the longest extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in the program's history.

Then, of course, there are the many excellent judges we have confirmed to the Federal bench—judges who can be relied on to uphold the law and the Constitution and to give anyone who comes before their benches a fair shake.

TRIBUTE TO ORRIN HATCH

Mr. President, as usual, more than one of our accomplishments this Congress would not have been possible without the leadership of Senator HATCH. He spearheaded the historic tax reform bill that is putting more money in the pockets of the American people, and he is also responsible for the longest extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in the program's history.

In his 40-plus years of public service, he has been a powerful voice for the people of Utah and for all Americans. He has fought for economic growth and job creation, for trade policies that benefit American companies and American workers, for judges who will uphold the Constitution and the rule of law, and for fiscal responsibility and intellectual property rights.

Senator HATCH has long been a leader on the issue of religious liberty. Together with the late Senator Ted Kennedy, he authored the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to protect Americans' First Amendment right to live in accordance with their religious beliefs.

A stalwart conservative, he has nevertheless known how to reach across the aisle to get things done for the American people. No legislator alive today has had as many pieces of legislation that he or she has sponsored signed into law by the President.

It is difficult to imagine the Senate without ORRIN HATCH. I have been privileged to serve with Senator HATCH throughout my time in the Senate, including on the Senate Finance Committee, which he chairs. It is hard to imagine his not being there, but the impact he has had on the Senate will not soon be forgotten. He leaves a record of legislative achievement and an example of character and leadership, of fierce conviction paired with a consummate gentlemanliness. There are few people to whom the word ''statesman'' can be applied more fittingly.

I wish him the very best in his well-deserved retirement. I know he will enjoy having more time to spend with Elaine, his wife, with his children and his numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as, hopefully, having some extra time to follow the Utah Jazz.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

AGRICULTURE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session, that the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2, and that the final 10 minutes before the vote be equally divided between the managers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2, which the clerk will report by title.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2), to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same: Signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of December 10, 2018.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I may consume.

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today for the final time representing the great people of Indiana here in the U.S. Senate. My 6 years representing Hoosiers in this body and the 6 years I spent as a Congressman for the Second District of Indiana before this have been among the great honors of my life.

I am the grandson of immigrants—immigrants who came here with nothing except the dream of America—a dream that says that any opportunity can come true, that if you work hard, you can accomplish anything.

My dad was in the CCC. For all of our young pages here who have no idea what the CCC is, it was the Civilian Conservation Corps. It was for teenagers your age, back in the Depression, who were asked to go and try to help raise money for their family so that the other family members could eat.

My dad was shipped to Idaho to build bridges. Today we call that infrastructure. Back then, we said it was building bridges. He built bridges all throughout the Pacific Northwest, having grown up in the Lower East Side of New York City and having never been west of the Hudson River in his life until that point. It was America that gave him that chance.

My brothers and sisters were the first generation to ever go to college. That is how America works. You work hard, and each generation builds on the next. We are so lucky to live in this country that is so blessed and that gives us this opportunity, but we have a responsibility here to meet the challenges that have been given to us.

I want to take this opportunity to discuss some of the things I have learned in my time in Congress and to share a few thoughts on how the work that happens here, and how it will happen in coming years, is going to be absolutely essential to how our Nation moves forward and succeeds.

In my 12 years here in the Capitol, I have prided myself on the relationships I have built and on the bipartisan nature of working together. I have been found to be one of the most bipartisan Members. My friend HEIDI, who is down the aisle here, who gave a wonderful speech this morning, was my partner on so much of this. I would never have been able to achieve for Hoosiers so much of this without working together in a bipartisan fashion.

My friend TODD YOUNG is across the way. He is the other Senator from Indiana. Our focus has been on how to make life better, whether it meant assisting constituents or resolving an issue with a Federal agency.

In one case, a pizza parlor owner came up to me. He was 90 years old. Now he is 93. He said: My streetlight is out. You are my Senator. It needs to be fixed before the big game this weekend.

I called the mayor, and it was fixed. He was asked that weekend, and he said: Of course, I got it fixed. I called my Senator. That is what I did.

We are multitasking in this job. It is to make lives better.

I was blessed to work with my friend RON JOHNSON, the Senator from Wisconsin. We worked on legislation called the Right to Try Act. It means giving people who are sick the chance to get medication they need.

We were told: There is no shot. This can't get done.

We had zero votes at the time. When it was done, we had 100—100. A young man from my State, Jordan McLinn, has the chance to get the medication he needs now. People all over the Nation do. Other kids with Duchenne

muscular dystrophy can also get help, and other people with ALS can also get help. That is the purpose of this job—that we work for them.

I was able to get more than 50 provisions signed into law over the past 6 years. It was only possible because I worked together every day with every Senator. There are friends like SUSAN COLLINS and LISA MURKOWSKI who, when the government shut down, we worked to end it. It became like a regular group that we had. Every time it shut down, we would work to open it back up again.

You learn from other Members, like ROGER WICKER, who I worked together with to end military suicide. We have not been able to end it yet, but we sure worked on it every day.

We learn from others Members in hearings about the difficulties people in their States are facing, and we work together to address common challenges. You can be from Idaho, you can be from North Dakota, you can be from New Hampshire, or you can be from Indiana, but we all have the same challenges.

All of us worked hard to get here. Our jobs should not be worrying about politics but worrying about making lives better. Partisanship gets us nothing. Division gets us nothing.

I was thinking: What is the best way to explain this? It is this. When a fire department goes to a house, they don't ask if the person living there is Democrat or Republican. They are just there to help their neighbor. No soldier has ever asked, when they are in a foxhole fighting their way out: Where do you come from? Which party are you? What is your religion? What is your ethnic background?

You are Americans. You are in this together. You have each other's backs.

As an institution, the Senate must be a place that we are all proud of, that promotes that ideal, and that sets the example that we want our children and grandchildren to follow. It means getting to know one another. It means listening to other perspectives and to other experiences.

One of the things that amazed me the most—and when I was out campaigning and going to town halls, I never failed to be astounded—was when folks came and said: You didn't do the one thing I wanted; so I am really mad at you, and I will never support you again.

I said: But we did 19 other things.

They said: But I didn't get that one.

I said: Apparently, you are not from a family of five children, like I am.

There were five children and two dogs. So when there were seven pork chops, I was the last to wind up with one.

So if you are someone who wants 100 percent of what you want every time, this is not the place. This is a place where we can get 70 percent to build America, to make it a better place.

The rhetoric—the divisive rhetoric—and the political campaigns, increasingly funded by tens of millions of dollars of anonymous, dark money interests, are really doing damage to this country.

I have always been for campaign finance reform. The reason I wasn't very good at raising money—which I wasn't very good at—was because people ought to have a right to know who is talking to them, who is standing up for what they have to say. I have always believed that if you have something to say, you should be willing to put your name on it.

I am concerned by our inability here to tackle serious, long-term issues. My friend Heidi touched on it. Our obligation, as public servants, is to leave a country for our children and grandchildren that is in better shape than we got it. It is the most basic promise that we make.

My wife Jill's dad was a Guadalcanal marine. He was wounded in the South Pacific. I told him: You are our hero.

He said: No, I was born at the wrong time.

I said: But you are still our hero.

He said: Look, I did my job, which is to leave for the next generation a better country than was given to me.

That is what we are supposed to do. My friend MICHAEL BENNET has talked about this a lot, but we have a deficit right now of $21.8 trillion. I had to look because it was, I think, $21.7 trillion yesterday. This deficit is going to destroy everything we are trying to do in this country, and we have done next to nothing to address it.

My friend CHUCK SCHUMER can probably relate to this the best, but there is an old cartoon. It was Popeye. Popeye had a friend named Wimpy. Wimpy loved hamburgers, but Wimpy never had any money. So Wimpy's saying was this: ''I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.'' That is the American government today. We do things, and we don't pay for any of them—but someday we will. That someday is now.

My friends Jordan and Peter Hanscom just had a baby boy about 5 months ago. You know what he was born into? $67,000 of debt. It is because we didn't have the responsibility to pay for our bills.

At the end of next year, 2019, the deficit is going to $23 trillion. Unless we do something here, it is on an unstoppable course to be at $30 trillion.

So what did we do here?

We passed a tax cut, because what is another $1.5 trillion? It is a tax cut at a time when we have a full-employment economy, a strong economy. We passed a tax cut, and we are now running, in a great economy, over $1 trillion in deficits every year.

If we can't balance our books now, when are we ever, ever going to do this? Right now we are on a course that, within 10 years, the interest payment will be almost $1 trillion a year, which is unsustainable.

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was asked in 2010, when the deficit was $14 trillion: What is the most dangerous thing to our national security? China? Russia? He said: The debt, because we can't pay for anything, and if we can't pay for anything, how am I going to protect the men and women who serve this Nation?

We have serious, serious work to do.

At my church back home, St. Anthony's Church in South Bend, IN—I know, an Irish kid going to St. Anthony; you have to question it sometimes—we were running up a debt, and we were solving it by adding more debt to fix the debt we had. A new pastor came in. He came to the pulpit one Sunday, and he said: Here is the deal. We are not spending anything we don't have anymore. We need to have the revenue to match what we want to do, and the things we want to do and can't pay for, well, we will continue to want to do them, but we will not do them.

Magic occurred. We balanced our books. The parish went on. It got stronger, and all of a sudden, we were in the black.

As a body here, we do not have the right to tell CJ, that little boy, and children being born today—we don't have the right to financially cripple the country they will be inheriting.

We had ancestors who fought for this Nation. I think of my Uncle Tom, who fought with Patton in North Africa and who gave everything he had. His Purple Heart is in my office. It has been there every day while I have been there. They sacrificed everything. The least we can do is to pay our bills, not to give out crazy tax cuts that we can't pay for, and to make sure that we balance our budgets.

We are better than this. Sometimes we just have to have the ability to say no—to say no to things that, by common sense, you would never do with your own checkbook, or if you did, the end would not be very, very pleasant on that kind of thing.

If we continue doing these things, this amazing and wonderful place that I have been a part of, with the most amazing colleagues—that is the part that has been so great. It is every colleague, and one is better than the next. But this is a long-term threat to our democracy and to our country's success. We can do better, and every one of you can lead on this.

Too often, what we watch in our politics doesn't reflect the spirit or the values or the diverse coalitions of Americans that have made this country so successful. It is not the type of example we want to be leaving for our kids.

I will tell you the kind of example we want to leave. It is when we do great, great things when we have looked up and have seen our country in trouble. I had the privilege to represent Kokomo, IN, back in 2008, 2009 when the economy collapsed, and we had a transmission plant. We built all of the transmissions for all of the Jeeps in the country there. That is why I drive a Jeep. But those wonderful people—we went from over 5,000 to less than 100. They counted on us. We came together, and we

said: We can do big things. We can get this done.

President Obama—I told him: Chrysler is going to make it.

He said: How do you know?

I said: I lit a candle at Mass. Does that work?

He laughed. He said: Well maybe not, but I will give it a shot.

You have to have faith in the people of this country, that if you give them a fair shot, they can get it done.

As an institution, we came together, Democrats and Republicans, including my friend FRED UPTON from Michigan, who is right across the line, and together we got it done. That plant, which had over 5,000 people working there and then less than 100 when we crashed, has over 9,000 there today because we looked at each other and said: It is not about Democrats or Republicans; it is about making sure that mortgages can be paid, that these people will not lose their houses, that we can continue to make great products here in this country.

I think of healthcare, and I often think maybe this is why I wound up here. A friend of mine, Al Gutierrez, who is the CEO of St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Mishawaka, called me after we had so many problems getting it started a couple of months later, and he said: I just want to fill you in on something that happened. We had a big meeting of all of the brain trust. It is because we have had so many terrible heart cases come in, so many people who were sick who had come in, and we are trying to figure out what has gone wrong that so many people have had bad heart cases recently. So we had the CFO, the surgeons, the this, the that, and one person raised their hand 5 minutes in and said: This is the first time they have ever had insurance. They could never afford it before.

These are our working families. Moms and dads, who would be really sick, had this amount of money, and it either went for the tuition for their daughter at Ball State or to get well, and parents always take care of their kids first. They looked at each other and said ''Well, that is the end of the meeting'' because they could get healthcare for the first time.

Every townhall I have gone to—and it is not unique to me; it is to everybody; it is to all our Members, Republican and Democrat—I have people come up and say: The healthcare bill saved my life. I wouldn't be here otherwise. I have one family, triplet girls. They were born at 6 months, came out of the hospital at the 10th month. Their hospital bill, when they came out, was $5 million. The mom and dad said: We would have lost everything, and we don't know if our kids could have made it, but the healthcare bill saved us. The healthcare we had saved us.

It is big stuff that we do right, and it is not perfect. That is where we have to come together, not to attack things but to fix things, to make things better. Almost nothing in this world started out perfect. You fix it a little bit here, you fix it a little bit there, and you can get there.

So when I saw those families, I thought of all of you because you gave them healthcare; you gave them a chance.

I think of my friend John McCain, who is not with us anymore, who stood up and said: I am not going to worry about party. It is country first. When he did that, he made sure those people could still get healthcare.

It is every Senator's job to work toward those goals until they are reality. I know it sounds naive—constantly working together—but we can, and we must, and we know from recent experience there are a lot of things we can work together on, to be more functional, to be more productive.

One of them is the chance I have had to work with our men and women in uniform. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving with Chairman LEVIN, Chairman McCain, a wonderful ranking member, JACK REED, who is here with us today—chairman ad hoc—being able to advocate for those servicemembers is one of the most amazing responsibilities we could have, ensuring that they have everything they need. They are mostly in their twenties. They are defending freedom in every corner of the globe. They give us the ability to be safe, to live in our houses.

I remember going to Coast Province in Afghanistan, right by the Pakistan border. The Indiana National Guard was there. I said: What message do you want me to take home to your families?

They said: Tell them we got this. We know how to do this. And tell them we are going to make sure they are safe.

That is what these men and women were about.

I had the privilege of going to Iraq with KIRSTEN. We got the same message from amazing people who gave everything they had—everything.

I think of my first 8 months in Congress. It was in 2007, and things were in flames, and in our district in Indiana, as in many of our other States, we have a lot of people who serve. Per capita, we are about first in National Guard people, and in 8 months, I lost eight young men. We were losing one every month.

Last year was 10 years later. If you want to know the awesome responsibility we have, all of those young men we lost—those children who were 2 and 3 and 4 and 5—they were 13 and 14 and 15. I saw their folks; I saw their moms, and their moms would say: They want to know what their dad was like because he is not here anymore. I would tell them what a hero their dad was, what an amazing person he was.

We have tried to work to not only keep them safe, but to stop military suicides.

I worked with the dad and mom of a young man, Jake Sexton, who took his life on his second tour when he came home for R & R. His home is near Muncie, IN, and he just couldn't go back and took his own life. His dad called me and said: Can we do something? I want Jake's death to mean something.

So all of you helped me, and we all worked together, and we made it so that every servicemember would get an annual mental health assessment, and they wouldn't be punished for doing it. What I mean by that is they wouldn't worry that they wouldn't get the next promotion, that they wouldn't get the next step up.

I remember four-star GEN Joe Votel, who came before our committee and said: I want everybody to know that I have sought mental health. I am a four-star general, and we are in this together.

So in every branch of every service, every member can now get an annual mental health assessment. You helped me give them the chance to do this. We have to also make sure that as we do this, we help them transition back to civilian life.

One of the other things the Indiana National Guard told me in Afghanistan—as I was leaving, I said: What do you need? Trucks? Vests? Better MREs?

They said: No, we just need a job when we go home.

We need to make sure they have that chance, that we stand up for our veterans.

We have been able to get new veterans centers in a number of places around our States because we promised them we would be there for them, and we have an obligation to keep our word. I know that JOHNNY ISAKSON and JON TESTER work every day to make sure they can get it done.

The work that has been done by all of these people takes your breath away. They don't get paid much. They are in the most difficult places in the world. And when they come home, all they ask for is a decent job, decent healthcare, and a chance to see their family survive and do well.

As I said, I think of those young men and women every day. When you want to know what progress you have helped us make—when KIRSTEN and I first came in together in the House, we were losing almost one every month. Now, it is not perfect; the world isn't perfect. But most of our young men and women are home. We do the best we can to keep those countries safe, to keep our country safe, and together we can continue to improve on it.

One other thing I want to mention is—and HEIDI talked about it today—this past year we have lost 70,000 young people to drug addiction—70,000. It has become more than car crashes. It has become more than anything else you can think of—70,000 people to opioids, meth, fentanyl; it is the whole batch. We can try nonstop to help them, to provide hope and purpose and dignity where they may not be feeling it—one kind word, one bit of assistance, one bit of encouragement.

I went to an event in Indianapolis, and it was an event for families who had lost someone and families who have someone in rehab. A young man came up to me from one of the wealthiest families you could think of—doing really well, the whole family. I saw him there, and I said: Mike, who are you here for?

He said: Me.

He had gotten hurt, had received an opioid in treatment. He was in a spiral that was nonstop.

His mom was there with him. She said: I don't think I have slept a night since.

So we can do this together. One of the things we just did, we just passed a law that would allow the FDA to give early approval to nonaddictive painkillers so that when somebody is hurt, they don't wind up getting addicted.

I am telling you that this is a five-alarm fire. In my State, well over 1,000 died last year from this in all parts of the State, all towns, all areas, Bridgeport—it doesn't matter, your religion, your race, anything. This is the great danger that parents need to be worried about, that we can stop. We can provide hope and purpose and dignity; that is what we have to do. These are moms and dads and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters, and when you lose one, your family is never, ever the same again.

I have seen the faces, I have met the families, and I spend time with them. The Senate can be a place in which we work together as a team—PAT has seen it in Kansas; JOHNNY has seen it in Georgia. When we work together as a team, when we leave name calling out, there is no division, and there is no agenda, other than making it so that every kid can come home safe every night.

Before I finish, I would also like to thank so many wonderful people. I have met so many friends and had so many opportunities. I have traveled to places I could never imagine. You know, we used to have a saying in Indiana: The only places you could go to in a CODEL are places where you could get killed. I was able to go to Afghanistan, to Iraq, to South Korea. I say the first part as a joke. The second part is, it is because our young men and women were there, and they were there keeping us safe. All they ever wanted was a chance to represent this Nation that they love so much—those wonderful people.

I want to thank the folks who work here in the Senate, who have done so much for all of us—the ones who, when you talk too loud, will lean over and tell you ''The whole country is hearing what you are saying right now,'' and then quickly move away to the back—for their hard work and dedication. I want to say thank you to the committee staffs who help shape policy and ensure we can have robust debate and oversight on the big issues of our time; to the Capitol Police, our friends, who have been so amazing to all of us, who protect us and keep us safe; to the cooks and the cleaning teams and the building maintenance folks. I think my office was painted every month for the last 6 years. To the whole gang, you make this place work. You make this Nation work.

I also thank my staff, who are here on the floor with me—no, HEIDI, you were wrong; this is the best staff in the Senate—who have done amazing work and who have every day made me look better and smarter than I am. I am incredibly grateful to them. They have resolved thousands of cases. In 2016, we received about 350,000 faxes, emails, letters, and combinations. We had an election. In 2017, we received 1.5 million—five times more—with the same amount of people, who sent out every letter, who followed up on every call, who repeatedly were there for the people of our State so that they knew their government cared about them and loved them and wanted their lives to be better. I couldn't do this job without them.

I also want to thank my family, who are in the Gallery—my children: Molly, her husband Mike, my son Joe, and my wife Jill—who have been through all of this.

I remember we had a family dinner, one of those summits you have around the table. This was back when I decided to run for Congress.

I told my family: What do you think? I have been asked to run for Congress.

My son said: That is the worst idea I have ever heard.

He was close. But they have been on this journey with me for 12 years, and it has been an amazing journey.

I want to thank everyone from my State. What an amazing privilege to represent them.

I remain optimistic about the future of our country. We have to take these issues seriously. Our country is filled with hard-working, decent people who just want us to do commonsense things. I have been privileged to travel all 92 counties all over my State, all corners of the State, and I think Indiana's best days are ahead and our country's best days are ahead.

May God bless all of my colleagues here in the Senate with the wisdom and courage you will need, because we don't just lead the Nation; we lead the world.

May God bless and protect this institution, Indiana, and our country that we all cherish and love so much.

This has been the privilege of a lifetime for a person whose family came off the boat at Ellis Island. My grandmother's passage documents said she had $10, and her occupation was ''maid.'' But she believed in America. She believed in this amazing country. We have been privileged to help lead it, and it has been one of the greatest privileges of my lifetime.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving with both speakers I have heard today, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota and Senator JOE DONNELLY of Indiana. They represent the best of the Senate. All of us are proud to be here. All of us are proud of the opportunity to serve. But they are two special people. They are special because they have a smile on their faces. They are special because they are very smart. They are special because they know how to play the game in a bipartisan way—not block things but help them pass.

I have enjoyed getting to meet JOE. I have enjoyed getting to know HEIDI. I am going to miss them a lot. America is very proud to have a great son like JOE and a great daughter like HEIDI. I am very lucky to have had the chance to have them cross my way so I can become a friend of theirs.

God bless both of you. Thank you for your service. Thank you very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I, too, rise to recognize my distinguished colleague, JOE DONNELLY, for his years of dedicated service to the State of Indiana. I also want to commend his family for their dedication. I know this is a team effort in public life to work on behalf of our country and our States and our constituents. They have been all in for the people of Indiana, and I just want to rise them up during this important time as they turn to a new chapter in their lives.

JOE DONNELLY has a heart for service, clearly, from his service on the school board, to serving as a Member of Congress—our terms overlapped—to the last 6 years he has spent in the U.S. Senate. I have to say it has been a real privilege to have JOE as my partner in the Senate over the last couple of years.

Back home, he describes himself as the hired help. Throughout his time in public life, JOE has never forgotten whom he works for. That is because he genuinely likes people—not in the abstract; he likes individual Hoosiers and individual Americans and servicemembers and veterans and our seniors and young children. That is why he has such a magnetic personality. That is why he is beloved by colleagues on the right and the left, who represent red States and blue States. That is why I have enjoyed working with JOE as well. Hired help.

JOE touched on the casework and the challenges he has been able to resolve on behalf of the people of Indiana, individual problems people have had with this vast government maze that sometimes we have to navigate. He does have a reputation for having done very well on that front. I think that is a reputation he is rightly proud of. He has also been able to get some important legislative initiatives done on behalf of the people of Indiana, and I would like to emphasize a couple on which we had an opportunity to work together—again, consistent with his bipartisan nature.

JOE and I worked together to ensure that our brave law enforcement officers have greater access to mental health services. Actually, truth be told, JOE was really the champion of that effort. That is certainly one of his legacies during his time in the Senate. I can think of no more important legacy as I look at his record of achievements.

We worked to make sure that we properly commemorated the Landmark for Peace Memorial in Indianapolis, where Robert F. Kennedy delivered some stirring words the evening of Martin Luther King's assassination. It was a moving moment for all present, Black and White and people of modest means and wealthier means. They all came together that evening because of that stirring speech. JOE and I worked together to make sure that memorial park is tastefully recognized from here into the future. It is a nice piece of legacy, and it wouldn't have happened but for the efforts of JOE DONNELLY.

JOE and I worked on a resolution to designate August 3, 2018, as National Ernie Pyle Day. We are proud of that in Indiana. Ernie Pyle is a celebrated war correspondent and Hoosier journalist who deserves memory in the consciousness and imagination of future generations of journalists. There, again, JOE and I had an opportunity to work together.

We worked together on perhaps the most consequential issue of our time—fighting this scourge of opioid abuse. We have worked on multiple bills on that front.

One of the more fun areas we worked together was actually one of the first things JOE and I did after I was sworn in to the Senate. We struck from all government publications the word ''Indianan.'' We don't use that back home. Because of JOE DONNELLY and our work together, the word ''Indianan'' will never appear in government publications. Instead, it will forever hereinafter be the word ''Hoosier.'' The word ''Hoosier'' is the proper word and will now be used to describe someone from the State of Indiana.

I think JOE would characterize himself as a regular guy. I actually think he is an extraordinary guy in so many ways. He is uncommonly approachable for a U.S. Senator. That is very important in this democratic republic in which we live. We want to make sure that the people we hire to help us—we want to make sure our elected representatives are people we can talk to and people who will listen. He has developed a reputation that I think he should be very proud of as being regarded as someone who is really approachable.

JOE is refreshingly plainspoken. There is not a lot of flowery language that he brings to bear. He is who he is, and he is very comfortable with that, and he speaks in such a way that is equally accessible to all Hoosiers and all Americans. That is really important, too, and I think it is something that others will seek to model moving forward.

You have been an example on that front.

Perhaps most important to me, he is a really good guy. He is authentic. We don't want our public servants to be phony-baloney, plastic figures. JOE is not. JOE will tell you what is on his mind and how he is feeling. He is just a really good guy. He is somebody you might want as your neighbor.

I know JOE has an incredible future. I know he is going to stay engaged in making sure his community is taken care of. I know he will continue to care about Indiana and America and things going on around the world.

Perhaps we will have an opportunity, my friend, to partner together moving forward and do some good together and—as I think you put it, plainly but very directly—to leave this world a little better than you found it. Thank you for your service, JOE. Thank you to your family.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to lend my voice and talk for a moment about a very special friend, Senator JOE DONNELLY.

One of the things we know about the Midwest and Great Lakes is that we do care about our neighbors. Someone with a really good snowblower might clean off his neighbor's driveway, too, since he was out there anyway. That reminds me of JOE DONNELLY.

We know that JOE is the senior Senator from Indiana. It is a wonderful neighboring State. We may compete now and again, but I have been so grateful to be Senator DONNELLY's neighbor and his friend.

Over the past 6 years, I have had the good fortune to partner with Senator DONNELLY on many issues that affect our States and the country.

We are both passionate about fighting for workers and stopping the exporting of American jobs. We want to export our products, not our jobs. JOE has been at the front of the line fighting for American workers.

Making things and growing things—that is what Michigan does, that is what Indiana does, that is what we are all about, and JOE has been at the front of the line to make sure that jobs are there making things and growing things.

We have had the opportunity to work together on the Senate Agriculture Committee, and in just a moment, we are going to hopefully be passing a 5-year farm bill. JOE has been an important voice in that. It is something that we relish because, as a committee, we work together on a bipartisan basis and get things done. Senator DONNELLY has been a very important part of that, including getting important wins for Indiana. It includes his legislation that targets the opioid crisis by expanding USDA rural development investments in community treatment facilities and telemedicine—no small thing.

That will save lives. It provides peace of mind for farmers to use crops and participate in crop insurance. It creates a broadband grant program, which will connect underserved communities. As Senators from the Great Lakes States, we have fought together to protect our water—our most precious resource.

I will never forget the event Senator DONNELLY and I did to celebrate the Regional Conservation Partnership Program when we announced nearly $14 million in public and private investment improving water quality and wildlife and fish habitat in the St. Joseph watershed—a watershed that we share. We held that at Pier 33 in St. Joseph, MI, just up the road from South Bend. If you have ever been to Pier 33, you have probably seen their showroom and the amazing collection of beautiful boats. In fact, I am not sure ''boats'' is the word for these amazing boats. I know Senator DONNELLY was impressed, as was I. After the press conference, I asked him how he thought it went, and he said it was good, but he was disappointed that he wasn't going to get to take home one of the boats. I shared that as well.

If you ask anyone in the Senate, they are likely to say the same thing: Senator JOE DONNELLY—JOE—is one of the nicest guys you will ever meet.

He is also very funny. Both of those qualities have made him a real joy to work with. I know I speak for everyone on both sides of the aisle; he will be missed.

Senator DONNELLY—JOE, thank you for your hard work, your leadership. Thank you for being a wonderful and great neighbor. Let me know the next time you are up North, and we will grab lunch and check out some of those boats.

Mr. DONNELLY. Good deal. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, very quickly, I want to add to the remarks of my distinguished ranking member, Senator STABENOW, on the sometimes powerful Senate Agriculture Committee, and I associate myself with her remarks.

In a moment or two, we are going to go to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, for which he had positive contributions. We wouldn't have been able to pass a bill without bipartisan support, which he stressed in his last message to the Senate.

JOE, thank you for being a friend, and thank you for being a great colleague, and thank you for being such a great member of the farmers, ranchers, and growers in Indiana. You have done a good job. We will certainly miss you.

Mr. President, I think we have to ask unanimous consent to give an additional 10 minutes to the distinguished ranking member and me to make remarks prior to the vote on the farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Michigan.

H.R. 2

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to first thank our majority leader and the Democratic leader for their support in bringing this bill to the Senate floor for consideration. Thanks to all of our Agriculture Committee members, including the Presiding Officer and conferees on both sides of the aisle, for working to put this bipartisan farm bill together. Most importantly, I want to thank our distinguished chairman of the committee—my partner, my friend—for working so hard.

We have worked together from the very beginning. We promised each other we would deliver a strong, bipartisan farm bill. Despite many obstacles along the way, we kept that promise.

The final farm bill reflects a hard-fought bipartisan agreement on a 5-year bill to strengthen the diversity of American agriculture and the 16 million jobs it supports. We know something about that in Michigan, where agriculture and the food industry support one out of four jobs. That is a lot of jobs. We also grow a wider variety of crops than any other State but one—a small State called California.

Now more than ever, we need to be broadening the diversity of American agriculture, and that is exactly what the farm bill does. Our farm bill continues to support the wide variety of farms all across America—big farms, small farms, ranchers, urban, rural. We provide new permanent support to keep this progress going, which I think is really important.

We invest in the bright future of agriculture by helping new and beginning farmers, including young people and our returning veterans, who are playing a greater role in agriculture in Michigan, as well as across the country.

New investments in international trade promotion will help farmers sell their products abroad. This couldn't come at a more important time. Streamlined, permanent support for farmers markets, food hubs, and local food processing will help our farmers sell their products to their neighbors. We need to sell around the world, and we need to be able to sell in our own communities.

By protecting and expanding crop insurance and improving support for our dairy farmers—in fact, strengthening the support for our dairy farmers, who were hit so hard with price drops and other issues—we maintain a strong safety net for farmers. Importantly, we maintain a strong safety net for our families.

We said no to harmful changes that would take away food from families. Instead, we will increase program integrity and job training to be able to make sure that things are working as they should and that every dollar is used as it should be. Instead, we will connect participants with healthy food through strong investments in farmers markets and nutrition incentives.

This bill also continues the farm bill's legacy as one of the largest investments in our land and our water. It is so important to Michigan. By focusing on successful conservation partnerships, we will actually grow funding by leveraging nearly $3 billion in new private investment over the next decade.

This bill also supports our small towns and rural communities, such as Clare, where I grew up. New investments in high-speed internet will support communities most in need. There are new opioid treatment resources to help those struggling with addiction.

The bill also helps ensure that small town water systems are providing clean and reliable tapwater. All of these things create opportunities for young people to stay in their homes and their hometowns and raise their families, which is what we want. That is what this bill is all about—growing opportunity.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill. I want to thank all of my incredibly talented staff for their hard work, as well as the chairman's staff. I know we will have another opportunity to speak more at length about the provisions of the 12 titles of the farm bill and be able to speak more about the hard work of our staff, but today we are ready for a vote, to be able to get this done so that we can send it to the House for their support, as well, and then on to the President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE).

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for her remarks and associate myself with those remarks. I rise today as the Senate considers the conference report on an issue that is critically important to our Nation—the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, the farm bill.

The goal, the responsibility, the absolute requirement is to provide farmers, ranchers, growers, and everyone within America's agriculture and food value chain certainty and predictability during these very difficult times. This conference agreement includes policy improvements from both the House-passed bill and the Senate bill, which passed this body with a strong bipartisan vote of 86 to 11. We have worked to maintain as many priorities for as many Members as possible.

This farm bill meets the needs of producers across all regions and all crops. It ensures that our voluntary conservation programs are keeping farmland in operation while protecting our agriculture lands, our forests, and other natural resources.

The bill focuses on program integrity—program integrity, and commonsense investments to strengthen our nutrition programs to ensure the long-term success of those in need of assistance. With trade and market uncertainty, to say the least, it provides certainty for our trade promotion and research programs.

Feeding an increasing global population is not simply an agriculture challenge; it is a national security challenge. This means we need to grow more, raise more with fewer resources. That will take investments in research, new technology, lines of credit, and proper risk management. It takes the government providing tools and then getting out of the producer's way.

Organizations representing thousands of agriculture, food, nutrition, hunger, forestry, conservation, rural, business, faith-based, research, and academic interests have issued statements supporting this conference report. This is what happens when the Congress works in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion. This is a good bill. It is a good bill that accomplishes what we set out to do—again, to provide certainty and predictability for farmers, families, and rural communities.

We have made tough choices, being judicious with the scarce resources we have on behalf of the taxpayer. This may not be the best possible bill. We know that, but it is the best bill possible under these circumstances. Importantly, it provides our farmers, our ranchers, and other rural stakeholders much needed certainty and predictability.

I encourage my colleagues to support this conference report. Every farmer, every rancher, every grower, everyone within our Nation's food supply is watching to see if we cannot meet our obligations and pass this bill. Let us do that. Let us tell those farmers and ranchers, who are going through tough times, that they are going to be good for the next 5 years. Their lender is paying attention to this bill. Let us support this bill.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question occurs on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

(Mr. JOHNSON assumed the chair.)

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 259 Leg.]

YEAS—87

Alexander	Cortez Masto	Hirono
Baldwin	Crapo	Hoeven
Bennet	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Blumenthal	Daines	Inhofe
Blunt	Donnelly	Isakson
Booker	Duckworth	Jones
Boozman	Durbin	Kaine
Brown	Ernst	King
Burr	Feinstein	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Fischer	Lankford
Capito	Gardner	Leahy
Cardin	Gillibrand	Manchin
Carper	Graham	Markey
Casey	Harris	McCaskill
Cassidy	Hassan	McConnell
Collins	Hatch	Menendez
Coons	Heinrich	Merkley
Corker	Heitkamp	Moran
Cornyn	Heller	Murphy

Murray	Sasse	Thune
Nelson	Schatz	Tillis
Perdue	Schumer	Udall
Peters	Scott	Van Hollen
Portman	Shaheen	Warner
Reed	Shelby	Warren
Risch	Smith	Whitehouse
Roberts	Stabenow	Wicker
Rounds	Sullivan	Wyden
Sanders	Tester	Young

NAYS—13

Barrasso	Johnson	Paul
Cotton	Kennedy	Rubio
Enzi	Kyl	Toomey
Flake	Lee	
Grassley	Murkowski	

The conference report was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Montana.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY RELATING TO ''RETURNS BY EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS AND RETURNS BY CERTAIN NONEXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS''—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 630, S.J. Res. 64.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 64) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to ''Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain NonExempt Organizations.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of 5 USC 802, there are 10 hours of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I just want to make a very short statement and then flesh it out a little further tomorrow.

The resolution we are about to take up will help to protect our democracy, and it will hold special interests accountable. I do not believe we can continue to allow special interests to hide under the cover of darkness, as they have such great influence on our elections. The American people have spoken. I think they have made it clear that they are very tired of the dark money in our elections and that the decision by the administration to allow megadonors and special interests to further hide is not acceptable.

The vote is simple. The vote is for more transparency by these special interests. Quite frankly, it has major impacts on our elections. I just went through one, and I will talk a little more about it tomorrow.

The bottom line is that this resolution is one that, I believe, will add more transparency, will help our democracy, will help both Democrats and Republicans know who is trying to influence the elections, and will also allow us to determine whether foreign entities—which is, by the way, illegal—are trying to influence our elections.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

2008 HOUSING CRISIS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, this is a special time of the year—Christmas. All of us are in a hurry to get home. Our children are waiting for us to get home. Our families can't wait to share the joy of the day. We want fun around the fire and the household. I would hate to be the grinch who stole Christmas in the Senate. I don't want to think that 10 years from now, if only I hadn't said this, this wouldn't have happened or, maybe, if I had seen it coming, I would have done something.

In 2008 and 2009, the Senator from Montana, Senator HOEVEN, and I, among others, went through the 2008–2009 housing crisis that ended up in mortgage-backed securities failures, in all of the trouble that happened on Wall Street—Dodd-Frank—and in the collapse of our economy. It was the worst collapse of our economy ever since 1927. We all remember what happened. We ended up getting the TARP. We ended up having crisis after crisis. Slowly but surely, we guaranteed enough stuff to get the market strong enough to begin to build back. Just now, it is back where it ought to be from the standpoint of values, which is a decade later.

Quite frankly, the housing market is not as strong. Its only strength is that there are not that many houses for sale. That is because people aren't putting them on the market. Builders can't build specs, and there is not near the credit that there should be. People who have resales are putting them off and fixing the houses up because they are staying longer. So they are selling them for more money.

On the Multiple Listing Service, in Atlanta, GA, when I left my company in 1998, there were 140,000 houses on the market in Atlanta in June of 1998. Now there are about 60,000. That is not because the market has failed. It is just that there is not that big a housing stock out there, and it is for all of the reasons I said. In terms of financing being readily available, it is readily available, and that is what I want to talk about.

I was thinking the other day. I heard an ad on the radio about no-doc loans, and I heard an ad about the VA's 100-percent loan—that we will approve what the banks will not—and stuff that I knew was patently wrong. So I turned to the business section, which I used to look at as a businessman every day but don't anymore because I don't have the decisions to make. I am glad that I did because it taught me a lesson, and I want to read you this from last Sunday's paper: How about a loan with no down payment, zero-down mortgages, and jumbo loans? We will approve what the banks won't.

That is exactly the thing that took us down the wrong path in 2008 and 2009. Greed took over common sense. Then, common sense failed, and we did some bad things. All of the things in the mortgage-backed securities market took place all at once. What happened was, because money was chasing rates and rates were starting to rise—and now they are starting to rise; that is happening in our economy—the instruments that yielded higher rates than the going rate for regular credit started being created to be sold and packaged on Wall Street. You would make money on the sale of the security, but you would also fund the mortgage at a higher yield to you, the investor, which is just fine and dandy until the person at the lower end of the spectrum, who gets approved with a no-document, no-down payment loan, ends up qualifying for it, gets it, does not make a payment, and gets foreclosed on. All of a sudden, the credit is lost. The house is lost. The same thing that happened in 2008–2009 starts happening all over again.

I am not saying that we are on the verge of a collapse. What I am saying is that it is a carbon copy—I mean a carbon copy—of exactly what was happening in 2008 and 2009 when the markets collapsed. We can't afford another one. Banking is stronger today for a lot of reasons. It is mainly because there aren't nearly as many of them. There aren't nearly as many of them because a lot of them failed. In the South—in Atlanta, GA, my State—we lost more than almost anybody in the country, simply because the capacity was not there.

As I said about the housing market, the number of houses available in the marketplace is much lower than it was back in the 1990s and back in 2005, 2006, and 2007. It is down because there is not as much to put on the market. There is not enough credit to finance it and put it on the market and have spec loans. People are very tight with their money because a lot of them got burned in 2008 and 2009. They see their parents who lost their houses and their savings. They see values collapse. They couldn't get through their college by borrowing against their homes because their home equity loans died.

There are lots of folks out there who are trying to put together instruments and package them in an attractive way to sell them on the New York markets and through mortgage-backed securities and to attract low-credit borrowers or young borrowers who aren't totally prepared to borrow the way they should be. It is of higher risk for us. It is a high risk for our economy. The middlemen make a lot of money early, but on a 30-year mortgage, you don't want to just make your money early. You want to have somebody with skin in the game for all 30 years.

So I just want to say to all of my colleagues—and I am talking to myself as

much as I am talking to you; I am not talking at myself; I am talking with myself—that we have to be careful if we see things happening that happened in our recent past that we didn't learn from. If we let them happen again, they will be worse. Then you will just say: Well, I wish I had seen it coming.

It is coming. Read the paper with me. I am going to come to the floor a lot in the next few months just to kind of monitor it myself. I see the creep of easy credit, the creep of no documentation, the creep of no underwriting for the quality of the borrower, and the creep of greed coming into the marketplace. The greater it gets, the worse the economy is and the faster it goes bad, and we all go bad with it.

So I just came out to wish everybody a Merry Christmas. I don't want to be the grinch who stole Christmas, but it is happening, and it is being advertised in our newspapers. It is happening in our cities, and it is happening in our backyard. We need to make sure that we don't let it get away from us because, if we do, we will have only ourselves to blame.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my remarks, the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, be recognized.

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

DEFENSE BUDGET

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I don't know how, but a lot of people back home have gotten in their heads that defending America is a complicated issue and that it is the kind of issue they think is going to have to be decided in Washington by a lot of smart people and all that, but nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is, defending America is just common sense. It is called priority—something we didn't have in the last administration. We all—every American citizen—need to be responsible for our own national security. I am going to be coming here each week to outline the common sense for our common defense—what we are working on here in Washington—for families back home.

Today I will talk about how we face the urgency in funding our national defense. It is very simple. Again, it is common sense. Without action to exempt the military from sequestration or to reach a budget agreement, once again, we will have to face the devastating cuts of the Budget Control Act in our military. We could handle it in other areas, and I am very supportive of it but not in the military at this particular time.

I will tell you why. We know what the result will be. We saw it during the Obama administration. Without sufficient, sustained, and predictable funding, we will squander the progress the military has made over the past 2 years, which is to improve readiness, increase procurement for critical capabilities, and investment in future technologies. This is just in the past 2 years. We need to continue to make progress.

We also need to implement the national defense strategy. The Trump administration's national defense strategy correctly prioritized strategic competition—and that is with China and Russia—but the effective strategies are going to have to be matched with resources.

This chart is from the National Defense Strategy Commission. That is this document right here. This is put together by a number of very top people chosen by Democrats and Republicans. In fact, Senator JON KYL was a member of this Commission before he got to the Senate. He and I will be talking about this and complementing each on this tomorrow. This chart we are looking at right now gives you an idea of what is happening with some of the other countries. We have China, which is actually increasing—they are passing us in terms of their number of ships. This is true with everything else. It looks like they will pass us in about 2023.

In this country, we are kind of used to having the very best of everything. Ever since World War II, we thought that was our mission.

There is a quote out of this document we have right here that has been so brilliantly described by so many people. It says: ''Put bluntly, the U.S. military could lose the next state-versus-state war it fights.'' These are the top military and nonmilitary people in our society who conducted this study. It has been heralded as the most accurate study by all parties having to do with our Nation's defense.

At a minimum, next year's defense budget should at least be $733 billion. That is a floor, not a ceiling. I have to say, that represents a no-growth budget because, in fiscal year 2018, we went from $700 billion. Then, in fiscal year 2019, we went to $716 billion, and then this will actually be going up to $733 billion. If that happens—do the math—that is an increase of 2.1 percent, which is not even a growth. It is a no-growth budget.

I have to say, General Dunford, Secretary Mattis, and the rest of them have called for fully implementing the national defense strategy, which would require between 3 to 5 percent of real growth.

On both sides of the aisle, we have had some individuals who are advocating for cutting defense spending because of the increased deficit. I am concerned about the increased deficit, but we also have to have this priority. We have to have America catch up. We are not used to having to catch up defensewise, but we are now.

Defense spending is not the primary reason for our increased debt. We could eliminate the entire Pentagon budget, and the deficit would actually grow. Here is why.

Over the past 10 years, our national debt has grown 86 percent. During the same time, mandatory spending has grown 41 percent. All that time, defense spending has been cut by 3 percent. It has been cut by 3 percent. Meanwhile, constant dollar defense spending dropped $200 billion between the years 2010 and 2015. In 2010, the total budget was $794 billion. In 2015, 5 years later, it dropped to $586 billion. That is a drop of $200 billion. In percentage terms, it is a 24-percent drop. This hasn't happened since the end of the Korean war.

We have to do something about the growing debt. The only way we can actually curtail it is to address the growth in mandatory spending. There are a lot of programs in mandatory spending that could be cut. Again, if you cut out the entire defense budget, it would not reduce or eliminate the debt.

As mandatory programs drive spending growth to new highs, debt held by the American people has correspondingly increased. If we don't do something about this, interest on the debt will surpass defense spending by fiscal year 2023.

As we see from this gray line here, this is the net increase in spending compared to the total spending of nondefense. It passes nondefense in 2023.

The Obama administration viewed the world as they wanted to see it, not as it was. The assumption that Russia was a strategic partner was and is fundamentally flawed and profoundly misguided. It has cost us dearly.

Today we are faced with the reality that those decisions not only weakened our national security by sacrificing our military advantages over Russia, but it will be costly to recoup the capabilities that President Obama had chosen to cut with his lack of priorities for the military. That is the reality.

I think this President has done a good job in outlining who our pure competitors are. We are talking about countries that have things better than we have. We are going to be talking about that in some detail tomorrow.

When the military is forced to reduce spending, it is going to have to take tradeoffs between lowering readiness, reducing force structure, and just not modernizing. In this case, we suffered through all three of those in the last administration.

In the meantime, our adversaries—Russia and China—have increased their own military spending and focused on force structure and modernization. The size of the Chinese Navy will soon pass the size of the U.S. Navy. There it is right here. It shows we are almost ready for those lines to cross in 2018. They will cross in 2022.

Over the 2000 and 2030 timeframe, the U.S. Navy is growing at an average rate of about one ship every 2 years, while the Chinese Navy is growing more than 20 times faster, at an average rate of about 10 ships annually. The quality and capability of those ships is increasing as well.

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I see no bigger imperative than this: to fully fund our defense and to fully implement the national defense strategy.

When I talk to people out in the real world—I am talking about going out to Oklahoma and talking to groups of people—and they find out it was true that ever since World War II, we have had the occasion of being No. 1 in all areas of our equipment, such as artillery and other things, they are shocked to find out that the Chinese and the Russians actually have equipment that is better than ours. We will be specifically talking about this tomorrow.

With that, I thank my friend from Iowa. By unanimous consent, I think he is the next speaker after my remarks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma.

H.R. 2

Mr. President, I want to thank Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman ROBERTS and Ranking Member STABENOW for their hard work in putting together the 2018 farm bill. It was a long and difficult process, and they negotiated in good faith.

I also want to thank my friend and colleague from Iowa, Senator JONI ERNST, for her dedication to reforming the Conservation Reform Program. In the Midwest, we refer to that as the CRP. The program's intent is to reduce land erosion, improve water quality, and help wildlife populations. Over the years, it has strayed from its intended focus.

Some landowners have been receiving more than $300 per acre to enroll their entire farms in the CRP. That puts young and beginning farmers at a competitive disadvantage. In fact, even well-established farmers have had rented land taken away from them because it was enrolled in the CRP at lucrative rates paid by the government that the individual farmer could not compete with.

Farmers can't and shouldn't have to compete with the government, especially with the current debt our country has. Senator ERNST has been an advocate for these reforms, and these reforms have been accomplished as a result of her efforts.

Unfortunately, the 2018 farm bill did not include another critical reform that would help young and beginning farmers, that is my payment limitations amendment. This is a process I have been trying to get accomplished and have been unsuccessful through at least this farm bill and two previous farm bills.

Each time I have been successful in getting these reforms throughout the U.S. Senate—in the 2014 farm bill, I was able to get them through both the House and Senate in the same form—but do you know what? In the dark rooms of conference committee meetings and phone calls, people who don't like to save the taxpayers money and who don't want to help young and beginning farmers and medium-sized and smaller farmers and who worry more about the wealthy farmers have been able to undercut the effort, even when a majority of both bodies has supported it.

I didn't give up as a result of the 2014 bill and the disappointment there. I got through the U.S. Senate those hard caps on what any one farmer can get and to make sure the people who benefited from it were, in fact, farmers, not nonfarmers who maybe had a distant relationship from some farming operation, maybe even being on Wall Street.

Once again, I was undercut in this effort to save the taxpayers money and to concentrate our farm bill on medium- and small-sized farmers who need the help, when things have happened naturally or politically or internationally that are beyond their control that drive down prices or acts of God such as a drought. It is the small- or medium-sized farmers who need the help from the government, not these big farmers and corporate farmers whom we are going to end up helping, the way this bill is written.

To say the least, I am disappointed that the bill makes more subsidies available to the wealthiest farmers and many nonfarmers. I would say that is a severe understatement. I am more than just a little disappointed, especially when the impact of large farmers being allowed to manipulate the system is that young and beginning farmers face even larger hurdles.

So far, the bill has not won much praise outside of the Washington lobby groups whose members will receive more taxpayer subsidies from a few select changes.

At its core, farm policy should be a limited safety net to help farmers weather the storm of natural disasters, unpredictable commodity markets, and other unforeseen challenges. This bill goes well beyond that limited safety net.

Today we have a farm bill that is intentionally written—I want to emphasize ''intentionally written''—to help the largest farmers receive unlimited subsidies from the Federal Government. There is no other way to characterize what the conference committee has done in this area.

In the last farm bill, both bodies of Congress approved a commonsense amendment I offered that would have limited the abuses related to title I subsidies. This time the House would not even have that debate—no debate on my reforms. The Senate did, however, include it in their bill.

However, the 2014 conference committee put in a loophole that exempted family farms, which account for approximately 95 percent of farms, from the new rules. This bill makes their original loophole even larger. So as bad as the 2014 farm bill was, this new 5-year farm bill widens that loophole almost beyond explaining.

The new farm bill will allow nieces and nephews to qualify as part of a family farm without any new requirements that they actually have to work. Despite what some of my colleagues may say, this is not about helping nieces and nephews get into farming. Why? Because every person who really farms already qualifies for title I payments by themselves without this new gimmick. So this new gimmick is just to award this big taxpayer money to people who aren't actually working the farm.

Allowing nieces and nephews to qualify as part of a large farm entity merely allows larger farmers to get more subsidies. They just need to hire the right lawyer to structure the farming operation in a certain way, and they can then receive unlimited taxpayer subsidies.

For years I have been using this figure about the top 10 percent of the farmers receiving more than 70 percent of the subsidies from the government. That is only one of the many reasons it is so hard for young and beginning farmers to get started.

I know it is hard to believe, but I have never heard a single young or beginning farmer tell me that the way to help the young and beginning farmer is to give more money out of the U.S. Treasury to the largest farmers.

Many farmers are hurting from the downturn in commodity prices. That has been a downturn over the last three or four years. Corn and soybeans have had significant price declines in those years. If only all crops were as lucky as cotton, with its high prices ensured by the Federal Government over the last year, then all people would be, what we say, ''living in the clover.''

However, market corrections do not justify Congress expanding subsidy loopholes that only benefit the wealthy—especially at a time when our long-term fiscal situation is as bad as it has ever been.

The last time we passed a farm bill, our national debt was $17 trillion. Today it stands at $21.8 trillion, and we all know that it is growing. So whether it is talking about saving the taxpayers' money or whether it is talking about targeting the farm program to small and medium-sized farmers as opposed to the wealthy, or whether it is talking about getting young people into farming, Congress needs to get serious about spending.

This bill represents an open-ended spigot of taxpayer subsidies in the title I programs of the bill. Because of this, when we cast our vote about 1 hour ago, I voted against this farm bill, which, otherwise, is a pretty basic program. We could have done a lot more to save the taxpayers money, and we didn't.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about some very good

news. After months of bipartisan negotiations, the Senate has finally passed the new farm bill. This bill will probably not get as much attention as some other news going on right now in politics. That is too bad, because the farm bill is a significant piece of legislation that touches the lives of every person every day in Minnesota and throughout the country. This bill is crucial to our Nation's farmers, and our farmers are producing the food and the fuel that feed our Nation and the world.

It is also good news because Congress has come together to get this done. At a time when so many Americans are frustrated with divisive politics, it is worth pausing over the way Members of both parties have come together to produce such an important bill through hard work and compromise.

In the Senate, we came together with a wide range of priorities from every region of the country. Senators representing crops like cotton and peanuts worked together with Senators from States like mine, with soybeans and corn, to reach this final compromise. We were able to find agreement because of the leadership that was provided by Chairman ROBERTS and Ranking Member STABENOW on the Senate committee and Chairman CONAWAY and Ranking Member COLLIN PETERSON, from Minnesota, on the House committee.

When I became a Senator just under 1 year ago, I fought for a seat on the Agriculture Committee, and I immediately formed a farm bill working group in Minnesota so that I could hear from farmers and ranchers, foresters and researchers, rural community leaders and Tribes, as well as experts in nutrition, energy, and conservation, to make sure that Minnesota's priorities were included in this farm bill. From corn growers in Goodhue County in the southeastern part of Minnesota to sugar beet farmers in the northeastern part of the State, I heard the same message: We must pass a farm bill this year.

The farm bill is so vitally important to Minnesotans because agriculture is the foundation of Minnesota's economy. In Minnesota, agriculture generates $121 billion in economic activity and supports 400,000 jobs. Minnesota is No. 1 in sugar beets, No. 2 in corn processing, and No. 3 in soybeans. We raise the second most hogs, and we raise the most turkeys.

So working on the farm bill, one of my first stops was with COLLIN PETERSON in Ada, MN, where we met with farmers and rural development leaders, and everyone in that community told me how the farm bill directly affects them. So I directed my staff to continue these listening sessions, and I am proud to say that we had almost 50 of them around the State. Meeting with the working group and touring farms and rural development projects around Minnesota have made the issues facing rural America and our farmers one of my top priorities here in the Senate. Minnesotans have given me some great ideas about what to fight for here in Washington, DC.

I heard from young farmers in Minnesota—like organic farmer Matthew Fitzgerald of Hutchinson, and Eric Sannerud, a hops farmer in Foley—about the difficulty beginning farmers face in accessing USDA programs. So I pushed for the farm bill to include provisions to support our next generation of farmers with my friend and colleague Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota and Senator ANGUS KING of Maine.

After visiting the Good Acre in Falcon Heights and learning about local food systems, I joined a bipartisan effort to better connect farmers with their communities. So I am grateful for the leadership of Senator SHERROD BROWN from Ohio and Senator SUSAN COLLINS from Maine on this important issue.

In March, I visited the Haubenschild Dairy Farm in Princeton, MN. Three generations of the Haubenschild family run this dairy farm. As we toured their impressive operation, this family talked to me about how dairy farmers have been hit hard by low commodity prices. This was a message that was echoed by dairy farmers across the State, who have been a really important part of my farm bill working group.

So when I got back to Washington, I was determined to help fight for strong safety net programs that support dairy farmers, along with many of my Senate colleagues. A bipartisan coalition of Senators from dairy States worked to make sure that this farm bill builds on the improvements made to the dairy safety net in the March omnibus bill.

The final version of this bill does just that. This farm bill expands gains made in the dairy safety net, especially for small and medium-sized farms. There are still a lot of challenges ahead for dairy farmers, but hopefully these provisions will help Minnesota's farmers who are facing falling milk prices.

Many farmers told me they were worried about skyrocketing healthcare costs. So during a visit to Fergus Falls, MN, healthcare leaders from Douglas County Hospital and Lake Region Healthcare spoke to us about the unique health challenges facing rural communities. In Minnesota we are focused on finding innovative solutions to address rural health challenges. It is clear that Federal agencies need to do more to examine the barriers people face who are accessing care in rural communities.

That is why I helped to shepherd the bipartisan Rural Health Liaison Act through the Agriculture Committee, and I helped to introduce this bill with Senator DOUG JONES of Alabama and Senator MIKE ROUNDS of South Dakota. The Rural Health Liaison Act will create a new position in the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the USDA is working with other agencies and departments, like Health and Human Services, to coordinate efforts. This is an important step toward improving rural health across America.

When I talked to Minnesotans from the Red River Valley, I heard about how important the sugar program is to maintain their competitiveness. I fought during the floor debates to sustain this program on behalf of sugar beet farmers in my State and across the upper Midwest.

I advocated to make sure that the farm bill funds a preparedness and response program to national animal disease outbreaks and a vaccine bank to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease. This was a bipartisan effort, again, with my fellow Minnesota Senator, AMY KLOBUCHAR, and Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas.

At the poultry testing lab in Willmar, MN, I heard about the need for vaccine banks and animal disease readiness. When Minnesota was hit hard by the avian flu outbreak that resulted in the death of nearly 9 million turkeys and chickens, we knew that this program was necessary.

Other Minnesota priorities came from conversations with folks across the State. This bill advances conservation programs so farmers have the opportunity to start conservation strategies and to keep them going long into the future to protect the environment and increase productivity. Minnesotans use these programs almost more than any other State.

Minnesotans know that the transition to clean energy presents a great economic opportunity for rural and farming communities. As the top Democrat on the Rural Development and Energy Subcommittee, I introduced legislation outlining a road map for a strong energy title in this farm bill, and a bipartisan coalition of Senators urged the committee to fund and strengthen these many successful energy programs at the USDA.

One example is the Rural Energy for America Program, which helps agriculture producers, local businesses, and rural communities to develop energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that create jobs, cut energy bills, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Rural communities will benefit greatly from the mandatory funding given to this program.

Another issue emphasized by rural development leaders across Minnesota is the need that people have for access to reliable and affordable internet service. Broadband access is critical to farmers using modern equipment and for rural families trying to access healthcare, education, and jobs.

This bill incorporates my Community Connect Grant Program Act to increase funding for this important effort to create better broadband access to unserved remote rural and Tribal communities. This provision is a step forward and one of the many things we need to do to connect Minnesota and people across the Nation with affordable, reliable internet service.

This farm bill also expands access to jobs and agriculture for returning servicemembers by encouraging the USDA to assist veterans in joining the agriculture workforce. I pushed for this provision, which will help veterans have the resources they need to take advantage of these opportunities.

Today, as our farmers face deep uncertainty regarding tariffs and the impacts they have, this bill includes bipartisan provisions to increase funding for USDA trade promotion activities, because we all know that international markets are essential to many farmers.

All farmers deserve these opportunities, and now there will be greater inclusion of Tribal products in Federal trade promotion efforts and activities to make sure that Native farmers aren't missing out on new international markets. I want to thank my colleagues, Senator JOHN HOEVEN of North Dakota and Senator STEVE DAINES of Montana, for working with me on this issue.

It is great that this farm bill includes these provisions, and I hope farmers will begin to feel some relief, but the core trade problem remains.

Don't get me wrong—I am committed to standing up to our trade partners and holding them accountable when they engage in unfair trade practices. But the chaotic approach we have seen to implementing these tariffs lacks a coherent message and a coherent strategy, and we need to solve this problem for the health of Minnesota and American farm country.

Farmers are on the frontlines of this trade war, and the cycle of retaliation has no end in sight. In this farm bill, we begin to increase access to international markets, but we still need a long-term plan to reopen and preserve the markets farmers rely on.

As I have already mentioned, the farm bill touches the lives of every American. The farm bill provides important stability and predictability to Minnesota farmers, ranchers, rural communities, and Indian Country, while also sustaining hundreds of thousands of Minnesota jobs.

It is important to remember that the farm bill reaches beyond rural development, commodity programs, and trade. The nutrition programs reauthorized by this farm bill are of vital importance, and the data backs this up. According to the Agriculture Department, in 2017, 15 million households with over 40 million people—including millions of children across the country—live in households that are food insecure, which is a fancy way of saying that many people have no clear idea of where all of their meals are going to come from in a certain week. We need to do better than this in America. That is why farmers and ranchers in my State tell me how important they think it is to support nutrition programs, and I am glad this is reflected in the final farm bill.

We have passed this bill in the Senate, and I hope the House will pass it in the next few days. Then the President needs to sign it into law to give farmers and ranchers the certainty they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

FIRST STEP ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this morning the majority leader announced that the Senate will soon take up a revised version of the FIRST STEP Act, which will provide a number of long-needed reforms to our criminal justice system.

I have long been a supporter of these reforms after I saw the positive impact in my home State of Texas back in 2007. Then, in response to a steadily growing prison population, Texas began enacting reforms to reduce recidivism through programs like job training and vocational education. This, of course, allows prisoners to spend their time in prison preparing themselves for life outside of prison. The results were pretty significant. We saw a reduction in both incarceration and crime rates by double digits at the same time. Let me say that again. We saw a reduction in both incarceration and crime rates by double digits at the same time. Not only does this lead to massive savings of taxpayer dollars, it is an investment in the men and women who are committed to turning their lives around.

What we like to say is that Texas has long been known for being tough on crime. But in 2007, we finally decided to be smart on crime, too, recognizing that people who went to prison almost entirely got out of prison at some point. The question is, How prepared were those who were willing to work to turn their lives around for life on the outside?

For years, I tried to bring this successful Texas model to Washington, DC, and now we have a piece of this legislation before us that will take these reforms nationwide. More than 75 percent of the bill we will be voting on is my prison reform legislation that I originally introduced with Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

The great thing about the laboratories of democracy known as the States is that we can actually test some of our theories at the State level to see whether they work. In the case of prison reform, when they do work, we can then scale it up so it applies to the entire Nation.

Today, there are more than 180,000 inmates in the Federal criminal justice system. The Federal Bureau of Prison's budget has doubled to approximately $7 billion over the last decade. We have an opportunity to save lives by reducing the crime rate for each of those prisoners who does not recidivate when they get out of prison and conserve tax dollars, as well as to create a criminal justice system that works for, not against, the American people.

Let me be clear. This is not about letting people out of prison who shouldn't be let out of prison; this is about people who have served their time and are going to be leaving prison and making sure that they at least have available to them some of the tools they need in order to transform their own lives. I am not so naive as to think that every person will take advantage of that opportunity, but we know from experience at the State level that there is a significant percentage of offenders who will take advantage of the opportunity to turn their lives around. That is why I was proud to work with the White House and my colleagues here in Congress—especially, as I mentioned, Senator WHITEHOUSE and Congressman DOUG COLLINS in the House of Representatives—to advance these reforms.

Earlier this year, we passed the bill out of the House with strong bipartisan support, and I have worked with my colleagues here in the Senate as the bill has changed and developed—and, I believe, for the better. Unfortunately, some members of the law enforcement community have raised concerns about the bill. Out of my respect for our law enforcement organizations, I spoke with many of my Republican colleagues about the bill. Originally, they said they were unable to support it or were undecided because they wanted to make sure we were doing everything we could to address the concerns raised by law enforcement organizations. So we went to work trying to make improvements in the bill, which I believe we succeeded in doing.

I want to express my gratitude to Senator DURBIN, who is the principal Democratic sponsor, Senator LEE, Senator GRASSLEY, and others who worked on this and say how much I appreciate their willingness to try to get to yes and come up with something we can pass with strong bipartisan support.

I also wanted to make sure we talked to the stakeholders—the police officers who patrol the streets, the sheriffs who work in each of our States and counties—about their concerns. I believe we have worked hard and successfully to address many of them. I don't necessarily believe all of them will agree with every single piece in this bill, but I think, on the whole, it does balance the interests of our law enforcement personnel with the needs of our society to better prepare people so that when they come out of prison, they will not likely repeat their mistakes, in every case that is possible.

As I say, I think we made some big improvements. The revised legislation will keep dangerous and violent criminals who use guns to commit crimes from being released from prison early. They will not be eligible for any sort of earned time release. It will also limit the amount of time that offenders can spend on supervised release and ensure that the Bureau of Prisons will revoke prerelease custody for offenders who violate the terms of their supervision.

I appreciate all of the work of our colleagues in the Senate who chose to

roll up their sleeves and get to work rather than just complain about what was or was not in the bill. I am proud to announce that I will cosponsor this new and improved version of the bill, and I encourage all of my colleagues to review it and hopefully join me in supporting this legislation. I look forward to working with everybody in this body, as well as our colleagues in the House, to get this bill over the finish line.

I know, when we produce the bill in the House and the Senate, President Trump will sign it. He has encouraged the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, to put this bill on the floor even in this short window of time we have during the lameduck session, and the majority leader has accommodated the President's request by saying that we will address this before we go home for Christmas.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. President, on another matter, the clock is ticking, of course, and we are quickly approaching the deadline to fund the Federal Government. My Republican colleagues and I stand ready to advance our remaining appropriations bills, but it really depends on what our Democratic colleagues decide to do.

Seventy-five percent of the government is already funded through bipartisan cooperation on the passage of appropriations bills, and that is something we haven't done for a long time. But there is still critical funding—particularly for the Department of Homeland Security, for the FBI, and for the Department of Justice—that needs to be taken care of before we break for the holidays.

Earlier today, we know that Democratic Leader Senator SCHUMER and Minority Leader PELOSI met with President Trump to figure out whether there is any room for agreement to resolve the dispute between them. The question is, really, What is the appropriate amount of money in this bill to fund border security? The President said he wants $5 billion. Senator SCHUMER has said $1.6 billion ought to be enough. Obviously, there is a gap between them.

Some people have said: Well, we ought to just shut down the government over this dispute. I don't see the wisdom in that because when you shut down the government because you are unable to resolve a dispute, when you reopen the government, usually what happens is that same problem is staring you in the face. What we need to do is to work together with the administration to come up with a solution rather than resort to tactics like a government shutdown with all the complications that involves. I don't think shutdowns play well for either Republicans or Democrats, for the White House or the Congress.

The problem, it seems to me, is that our Democratic friends are listening to some of the fringes of their own political party who are now telling them: Don't do anything that President Trump wants. Anything President Trump wants, the answer is no.

Well, that is more about politics than it is about doing our job as legislators trying to solve problems.

It also appears that they seem to think that the continued status quo along our border is good enough, and they are more than willing to gamble with a partial government shutdown than work with the President to ensure that our border is secure.

Somewhere along the way, our friends across the aisle have forgotten that border security should be about protecting the American people from the drugs that come across the border—90-plus percent of the heroin consumed in the United States comes from Mexico—or the children and women who are trafficked for sex or the migrants who come from Central America, up through Mexico, and into the United States, and the cartels charging roughly $8,000 a person. It is a huge moneymaking business, but the people who are getting rich are the transnational criminal organizations and drug cartels.

We have seen before what happens when the government shuts down. It affects millions of people across the country and often yields no different result. We have seen what happens when we fail to secure the border. That is why we need to finish our work funding the government and, by doing that, also recognize the importance of a secure border. This should not be about partisan politics or listening to your political base; this ought to be about doing our job. We had the midterm elections; now is the time to govern.

Just a few weeks ago, our friends across the aisle wanted to magnify the migrant crisis by focusing narrowly on the news coming out of Tijuana, Mexico, across the border from San Diego. Some talked about the crisis as if it were a one-off event, an isolated event.

They wanted us to look at this like we were looking through a soda straw and ignore all of the context and the consequences of failing to secure our border. They wanted to ignore how we find ourselves with this humanitarian crisis in the first place.

The caravans of men, women, and children who left their homes in Central America and made the long, dangerous journey to the United States are sadly symptoms of a far greater problem. Our border has been exploited for years, contributing to this crisis. That is why ensuring additional resources for border security is an essential piece of the puzzle.

My home State of Texas is on the frontline—1,200 miles of common border with Mexico. Texas is home to many vibrant border communities that greatly benefit from having some of the busiest land ports in the country, across which legitimate trade and commerce travels. As I said, we are also on the front row of the many challenges that come along with an unsecured border when it comes to public safety.

Yesterday I talked about some of those challenges: striking a balance between a secure border and a completely closed border. A secure border maintains the flow of legitimate goods and services while deterring cartels from shuttling illegal contraband across our borders. A closed border would cut off trade and commerce that is the lifeblood of our economy, which brings me to another challenge—something that I think in Washington there is simply not enough awareness of; that is, the cartels, gangs, and the transnational criminal organizations that get rich exploiting our porous borders.

Some like to think of these organizations as a ''them, not us'' problem because they have taken control over large parts of Central America and even Mexico, but the business of these groups does not stay there. What happens in Central America, what happens in Mexico does not stay in Central America and Mexico. It comes flooding across our borders.

These gangs and cartels are very shrewd and adapt to changing circumstances. They found, the more our borders and ports of entry are clogged with migrants and migrant families, the easier it is to traffic people, drugs, and contraband into the United States. That has a reciprocal effect, too, causing legitimate trade, travel, and commerce to slow significantly at our ports of entry.

It is not only exploitation of our border that poses a threat, it is the violence and the instability caused by the cartels and gangs. That makes it not just a border security issue but a national security issue as well.

My friend and fellow Texan, Representative HENRY CUELLAR—a true blue dog Democrat, as he says—has a great saying for how we should think about this. He likes to say that border security starts in Central America and ends at our border. I think that is exactly right. In other words, you don't mount a goal line defense at a football game. You actually start contesting the game farther down the field. In this case, the game needs to be contested in the places where these migrants and the drugs emanate, from where they start.

We are going to have to work more closely in partnership with Mexico and other Central American governments to address the violence these groups spread by restoring public trust in law enforcement and stabilizing the economy and these countries.

I spoke with my friend, the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN. She represents a border State. She and I have partnered on a number of national security law enforcement matters. She said she was interested in working together in a bipartisan way to address the challenges presented by Central America and Mexico. I said: Absolutely. Sign me up.

Representing a border State, as you might suspect, I make it a point to talk to those who live and work in our

border communities. It is a unique part of the United States. I like to say, the concept that people in Washington, DC, have about the borders has been learned from movies and novels; it is not from talking to people or visiting with the communities along the border. That is not a criticism. That is just a fact of life.

When I hear from people like Manny Padilla, who is the Border Patrol's sector chief for the Rio Grande Valley, I can better understand how much is required to maintain situational awareness and operational control of the border, not to mention personal safety of the Border Patrol, who more and more are frequently assaulted with rocks and other makeshift weapons that endanger their safety and their lives.

For those who may not be at the border every day, it is hard to grasp the range of topography across the 1,200-mile border that Texas shares with Mexico. It can be hard to imagine how many resources are actually needed. In some places, there are high mountains and cliffs and others, there is thick brush. In the urban areas that surround our ports of entry, there is plenty of opportunity to race across the border and blend in, never to be heard from again.

There will be places where physical infrastructure will make the most sense. In some places, technology or personnel is more effective than a fence. The point is, the border security is complex. Better enforcement of our border will require a combination of infrastructure, technology, and personnel. That begins with ensuring we have the resources we need to implement a border enforcement strategy. That is what this issue is all about—the discussion Ms. PELOSI, Senator SCHUMER, and President Trump had today.

My question for our Democratic colleagues is, Why will you not help us secure the border? Are you satisfied with the status quo of drugs coming across the border through these transnational criminal organizations? Are you satisfied with the status quo of these caravans—thousands of migrants from Central America trying to storm our ports of entry and literally closing them down so legitimate trade and commerce cannot occur?

Securing our border and protecting our country should not be a partisan issue; it is something we ought to be able to work out and agree on. We know the challenges our friend Senator SCHUMER has—the Democratic leader on the other side. He has a cadre of people auditioning for the Presidential nomination in 2020, and they are trying to outdo each other in their impending runs for President. I think, in many ways, his hands are tied. Like every leader, he has to decide when to say yes and when to say no to the people in your conference.

Minority Leader PELOSI has a delicate task of trying to cajole her new and emboldened Members of the far-left wing of her caucus. They are both trying to fend off outside groups that think that even talking to President Trump on this issue may mean it will be subject for the next attack or perhaps a primary campaign. I don't envy the spot they are in, but it is a game of political chicken, and they are playing it among themselves.

The reality is, President Trump is in the White House, and our Democratic colleagues need to work with him and us to try to move the country forward, to try solve these problems, as hard as they may be. The American people are the losers when their elected officials decide their political image and their political aspirations matter more than the people they represent in their respective States.

As I said, so far, the Congress has worked together in a bipartisan manner to pass roughly 75 percent of the government funding. We shouldn't let that bipartisan spirit fail us now. Finishing our work and securing our border shouldn't be an occasion to turn the end of the year into a political sideshow. I think the American people do not need any more sideshows and circuses in Washington, DC. They want results, and they want us to own up to our responsibility and do our duty.

Border security is an issue where we should be able to find common ground, and funding the government is, of course, one of our most basic responsibilities. The point should be made that we have already found common ground on many of these issues before. Several of our colleagues on the other side who are still serving in this Chamber, including Senator SCHUMER, supported passage of the Secure Fence Act in 2006. How that is different from what President Trump is requesting now is lost on me, when they agreed that 700 miles of border should be secured by a fence.

I should also note that the Secure Fence Act was also supported by then-Senators Obama, Biden, and Clinton. This should not be a partisan issue. I hope all of our colleagues will choose to get to work, roll up our sleeves, and do our duty. Not only do we have the chance to fund the government and keep the lights on but we also have a chance to put ourselves that much closer to a secure border and helping end the migrant crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, while the distinguished senior Senator from Texas, deputy leader, is still on the floor, let me thank him for his kind remarks and express a word of appreciation for his patience through the long process of getting to a conclusion that we appear now to have finally reached on bringing criminal sentencing reform to a vote on the Senate floor.

This is at least the third Congress in which the Cornyn-Whitehouse bill to improve the preparation of Federal prisoners for release, when they are going to be released, has been with us, and it has been a long process. I think the bill we are going to go to is, in majority, our original bill. For a long time, it has been the engine that I think all sides have seen as the means to solve the sentencing piece, which was much more difficult.

Over and over again, our efforts to move our bill have been held up in order to try to make a package, which is a pretty strong sign that our bill is a pretty good thing to get on board with. I want to thank Senator CORNYN for his patience through all of this.

Then I want to say a quick appreciation to Representative COLLINS and Representative JEFFRIES, whose bill on the House side was basically started like ours, and then they were able to negotiate what Senator CORNYN and I both agree were improvements—so that we adopted our bill to incorporate the improvements from the House side.

Other than that, we are about where we began with the sentencing improvements that have been added, and it has been a long trip, but I am indebted and appreciative of my colleague in all of this, Senator CORNYN, for having kept the faith through these many years and many Congresses in getting to this point.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the senior Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ, be recognized at the conclusion of my remarks, if he is on the floor.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this week, Nations of the world are gathering in Katowice, Poland, to review—and we hope amplify—their commitments to reduce carbon emissions under the 2015 Paris Agreement and to discuss how they will report and verify reductions in carbon pollution.

The United States of America is technically present in Poland in the form of a small delegation, but American leadership in Poland is decidedly absent. Why? It is pretty simple. The Government of the United States of America has fallen under the political control of the industry most responsible for this mess.

American leadership was essential to forging the global consensus on carbon emissions in the original Paris Agreement. I know because I was there in Paris in 2015 as Secretary Kerry and the U.S. negotiating team worked to seal the landmark pact.

What a pathetic difference a few years make. In 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would become the only country in the world to turn its back on this global agreement. The United States abdicates its leadership, just as the scientific warnings of the dangers of climate change grow clearer and

grimmer. In October, came a new report from the world's scientists working through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Just last month, our own Federal Government released its own sobering news about the worsening risks climate change poses to our Nation and our economy.

Our National Climate Assessment warned of hundreds of billions of dollars in losses we can anticipate due to climate change if we don't act to curtail carbon emissions. Trump responded first by describing his own—and I will quote him on this—''very high levels of intelligence.'' Then he went on to simply deny all the science. He said: I don't see it.

Well, guess what. Pope Paul V didn't see it when Galileo demonstrated the Earth revolved around the Sun, but that didn't change the astrophysics.

The climate science—laid out in black and white by Trump's own government agencies—is that our planet is heating up due to our use of fossil fuels.

The science is even more incontrovertible than when Donald Trump said that climate science was incontrovertible back in 2009. Saying that he now doesn't see it is the very definition of climate denial.

So many people who are engaged in climate denial actually know better but, for a variety of motives, will not act, will not admit it. As to the President's not seeing it, ''willful blindness'' would be another term.

This takeover of our government by fossil fuel forces is having very real consequences in U.S. emissions numbers. After years of decline, U.S. carbon emissions rose in 2018, increasing by 2.5 percent.

This, of course, coincides with the Trump administration's efforts on behalf of its industry benefactors to delay, repeal, and weaken rules limiting carbon emissions from powerplants, from oil and gas wells, from industrial facilities, even from vehicles.

Of course all of these industries share a measure of the blame for not cleaning up their own mess on their own, and you can add to that their culpability for pushing the Trump administration to weaken the safety regulations that, in some cases, the industry had actually agreed to. The auto industry had actually agreed to the CAFE standards and then fought to undo them through its trade group so that they could keep their own hands clean.

Chinese carbon emissions increased in 2018, as did Indian emissions. Among major economies, only the European Union saw its emissions decline in 2018.

This is why international summits like Poland are so important. The world urgently needs to correct course, and we can best do so if countries together do their part to reduce emissions.

According to the IPCC, to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change, we need to cut carbon emissions to 50 percent below 2010 levels by 2030, which is just 11 years from now. We have to be 50 percent below our emissions in 2010, 11 years from now, in 2030, and we have to hit net zero emissions—carbon removed for all carbon added—by 2050. That is not that far away.

The IPCC report calls pricing carbon the central policy that will allow us to hold the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius or less. This is not some fantasy of the environmental community. Some of the world's biggest investors—$32 trillion worth of investment represented by these groups—stood up in Poland to say: We need to fix this problem or there will be economic catastrophe ahead. They also said that a price on carbon and an end to the subsidy that the fossil fuel industry enjoys and is at the heart of its political intervention, which has prevented us from taking on climate change, needs to go.

You have to add a price on carbon, and you have to get rid of the fossil fuel subsidies. That is their prescription for avoiding economic catastrophe.

Well, maybe they don't know what they are talking about, but $32 trillion worth of money thinks that they know what they are talking about because they put their money in the hands of these people to make wise investments for the future. A lot of people have bet their savings and resources behind these groups that are now saying: No price on carbon, no end of the fossil fuel subsidies, watch out—watch out for catastrophe.

On an ideological level, if you are sincere about market capitalism, where the costs of a product need to be in the price of the product for the market to work, this is pretty obvious stuff. The only reason this gets difficult is if you are a fake free marketeer who is really fronting for the fossil fuel industry.

But if you are not a fake on market economics when it is the industry that funds your party involved, it is pretty straightforward stuff. It is basic economic market principles.

You put the public harm externalities of a product—those costs—into the price of the product for the market to work—econ 101.

It shows the priorities around here when market capitalism and the principles of free market economics are so readily thrown under the bus by our friends once they cross the interests of big, big donor industries.

The good news is that many governments—from cities, States, and provinces to countries and regions—are already pricing carbon. This chart shows all of the various governments that have set a price on carbon, either through emissions trading—those are the green ones—or through a carbon price, a carbon fee—the various purple ones—and some do both, which is where they are mixed.

The carbon fee involved will vary. Sweden, for example, charges almost $140 per ton of carbon emitted, covering nearly 50 percent of the Nation's emissions.

The Canadian Province of British Columbia enacted a carbon fee in 2008, which has risen over time to its current price of $35 per ton. In the 4 years following the British Columbia carbon fee, fossil fuel use decreased by 17 percent in the Province, compared to increasing by 1 percent in the rest of Canada. So it works at decreasing emissions, and British Columbia's economy grew faster than that of any other Canadian province.

Why would it not? One hundred percent of the revenues raised from British Columbia's carbon fee are returned to taxpayers in the form of other tax cuts. And it is popular; 70 percent of British Colombians support the policy.

So what about the United States? Well, California has put a price on carbon via an emissions trading system, as have the nine Northeastern States, including Rhode Island, that are members of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. For the moment, the prices in California and the RGGI are still relatively low—around 5 bucks for us in Rhode Island for RGGI.

Senator SCHATZ and I have introduced our American Opportunity Carbon Fee Act again to assess a carbon fee starting at 50 bucks per metric ton of emissions in 2019. It is the midrange of the Office of Management and Budget's 2016 estimates of what they call the social cost of carbon. The social cost of carbon is the name for the long-term damage that is done by carbon pollution, which the fossil fuel industry is fighting so hard to be a public subsidy rather than to be put into the price of their product.

Our market-based proposal is an appeal to true conservative Republican colleagues. As one Republican former legislator said: It is not just an olive branch; it is an olive limb that we have offered. But the fossil fuel industry keeps a stranglehold on the Republican Party, preventing climate action—even climate action using market principles.

Axios just did this chart. I saw it today and had it reproduced for the floor. This is the number of times climate change was mentioned in Congress in press releases, floor statements, and online by Members of Congress. This is how often the Democrats have mentioned it from 2013 to 2018. I am afraid I am probably a measurable piece of those blue columns.

But if you look over here, this is how often Republicans have mentioned climate change. Their best year was 678 mentions. For all Republicans in Congress, in all of their press releases, floor statements, and online communications, the grand total is 678 mentions—I mean, seriously—and it has gone down as it has gotten worse because I think it is difficult to talk about if you are a Republican.

Everybody is looking around at the wildfires; everybody is looking around

at the sea level rise coming up; everybody is looking at the storms; everybody is looking around at the science now, not only warning of climate change but being able to connect specific weather events to climate change, most recently, the massive heat wave that wiped out so much of the Great Barrier Reef.

So here is how often Republicans talk about it, and here is how often Democrats do. We should probably do better. But, anyway, that is where we are.

If that doesn't show the effect of the industry squelching debate and driving Republicans into alignment with their industry welfare, then I don't know what could express that much more clearly.

So I wanted to show that, and this is unlikely to change as long as millions of fossil fuel industry dollars slosh around Washington, protecting this corrupting industry from having to account, as economics would suggest, for the actual economic cost of its pollution.

America is called the indispensable Nation, and American leadership is indispensable if we are to achieve a global response to this global challenge. But American leadership is sorely lacking because the dark money and sleazy operatives of the fossil fuel industry today control the Trump administration and swaths of the Republican Party.

There used to be a guy in this body who said ''Country First.'' We could use a little of that now in this tragic, climate-denying Trump sleaze-fest.

I yield the floor, and per the previous order I think Senator MENENDEZ is here, to be recognized momentarily. I saw him come to the floor a moment ago.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss—and I appreciate the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island and the work he has done on this critical question of climate change. I am pleased to join him today on the floor in pursuit of what he has been doing.

I rise today to discuss the negotiations taking place in Katowice, Poland, to finalize the rule book on implementing the Paris climate change agreement. There is an immediate urgency for global action to reduce greenhouse gas pollution as emissions continue to increase. The longer it takes for us to fully accept and acknowledge the problem, the more aggressive the world will have to be to avoid the worst effects of climate change from becoming a reality.

For decades, the science has yielded increasing causes for concern. Today, the connection between manmade greenhouse gas emissions—primarily fossil fuel combustion—and climate change is undeniable. Three major reports on the growing climate crisis have been published in the last 30 days alone. That includes reports from the world's top climate scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.N. Environment Programme. That includes the National Climate Assessment, which was assembled by 13 Federal agencies and 300 government experts—our Federal agencies and our government experts.

What the scientists are telling us is that robust and immediate action is necessary to prevent catastrophic changes in the Earth's climate—changes that have already begun to affect every single American.

There is a tendency to dismiss scientific reports as abstract, as hard to understand. The President seems to simply not believe them. So let me speak plainly: The consequences of climate change are anything but abstract—regional food and water shortages, inundation of island nations and coastal communities that are home to billions of people around the world, mass migration, and refugee crises.

Our own National Climate Assessment makes clear that the United States—with all our wealth and good fortune—is far from immune from the effects of climate change. If we fail to confront this challenge, the United States will experience effects that will cost American lives and billions in losses to our national economy.

While we shouldn't point to any single event as evidence, the changes in trends depicting climate change's harsh reality are undeniable. It is a fact that the average global temperature on Earth has increased by about 0.8 degrees Celsius—1.4 degrees Fahrenheit—since 1880, and two-thirds of the warming has occurred since 1975. It is a fact that the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in many regions of the United States are increasing, including conditions that heighten wildfire risks. It is a fact that sea level has been rising over the past century, and the rate has increased in recent decades. In 2017, global mean sea level was 3 inches above the 1993 average—the highest annual average in the satellite record. None of these facts are new. None of these fact are deniable. The science predicted these climate change effects 20, even 30 years ago.

To echo a common sentiment among climate change leaders on the urgency of the situation, ''We are the first generations to experience the effects of climate change and the last that can act to prevent the worst.''

This urgency is fueling the negotiations in Poland this week. Deliberations on the various elements of these rules began shortly after the Paris Agreement's entry into force in November 2016, and the agreement requires that the rules be completed this year, making the COP in Katowice the most consequential conference of parties since COP21 in Paris.

The Paris Agreement establishes firm, albeit nonbinding, global emissions reduction goals—reductions sufficient to prevent a 2 degrees Celsius increase in global average temperatures. The Paris Agreement also clearly outlined robust and transparent reporting so that parties can hold each other accountable via diplomatic engagement as opposed to binding legal punishment.

Of course, success comes down to execution. That is what makes the development of the implementation rule book so consequential and President Trump's decision to abandon the Paris Agreement so antithetical to our own interests.

The current administration's wholesale rejection of meaningful engagement with the global community is disturbingly naive and is bound to result in repeating past mistakes with detrimental outcomes.

China is emboldened by President Trump's plan to abandon the Paris Agreement. China effectively slowed progress at COP23 and will continue its efforts. In the leadership vacuum that President Trump has created, China is stepping in to write the rules.

It is completely absurd to assume that the United States, by withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, is somehow immune to the global economic implications of climate change.

The President couched his decision to abdicate American leadership regarding the Paris Agreement as putting ''America first'' in a June 2017 announcement riddled with inaccurate characterizations of the Paris Agreement and alternative facts on climate change.

There is no truthful, factual, or reality-based argument to justify how allowing every country in the world except the United States to build the clean energy economy of the future and confront our most pressing global challenge puts America first.

Continued U.S. leadership and climate diplomacy can only yield economic benefits for U.S. workers. More than 900 U.S. businesses support keeping the United States in the Paris Agreement, including more than 20 Fortune 500 companies.

Acting to prevent the worst effects of climate change holds tremendous economic and job-growth opportunities for New Jersey and our Nation. I am proud to say that New Jersey is a national leader in deploying clean energy technologies, creating clean energy jobs, and planning and investing in climate change resilience.

New Jersey is home to 417 solar energy manufacturing and installation companies employing more than 7,000 workers.

New Jersey is also competing hard to become the first Mid-Atlantic State to produce offshore wind energy, supported by the recent enactment of legislation establishing a 3,500-megawatt production goal for offshore wind energy.

New Jersey has also recently increased its renewable energy standards to 50 percent by 2030 and set a new State carbon emissions reduction goal of 80 percent by 2050.

New Jersey's leadership among the States working to combat climate change is rooted in our vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The fact is, if we continue on our current emissions trajectory, the world could see global average temperature increase by 3 degrees Celsius. This would devastate New Jersey, risking $800 billion in coastal property value, along with the health, security, and livelihood of millions of residents. The potential losses from sea level rise and increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather associated with climate change would cost my State's economy billions in economic losses.

Just yesterday, the Star-Ledger—a statewide paper—published a column by Robert Kopp, the director of the Rutgers Institute of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences, highlighting many of these consequences, as outlined by the recent National Climate Assessment.

Our winters have been warming faster than our summers. Pests like pine beetle and ash borer are no longer kept in check by winter freezes. Perhaps even more alarming, we have seen our crops begin to bud earlier and earlier, only to see them decimated by cold snaps later in the season. In the Garden State—famous for our tomatoes, cranberry bogs, blueberries, and other specialty crops—that is a big deal.

As temperatures rise, we also expect to see a surge in heat-related deaths and illnesses due to allergies and asthma, while disease-carrying bugs like mosquitos and ticks thrive in increased seasonal moisture.

Our fisheries—the life blood of so many of our coastal communities—have already begun to see how changing water temperatures are changing migrations, making it harder for us to manage historic fisheries and harder for our fishermen to earn a living.

Of course, perhaps the clearest threat to New Jersey from climate change comes in the form of coastal flooding from sea level rise and extreme weather events. We saw it with Superstorm Sandy, and we understand the devastating consequences it can have for our families, our communities, and our infrastructure.

There is no convincing me that ignoring climate change and walking away from the world's only mechanism for holding countries like India, China, and Russia accountable for their emissions puts New Jersey first.

The Trump administration's failure to recognize this potential and its refusal to recognize the growing market demand for clean energy is a stunning example of the transactional relationship this President has with the fossil fuel industry. He is putting wealthy, politically connected corporations ahead of the best interests of the American people. Proof of the administration's political favoritism for fossil fuels is exemplified by the only U.S. Government-sponsored event at COP24 in Poland, titled ''The Future of Coal.''

Never mind how insulting and tone-deaf it is to sponsor an event to promote dirty, coal-powered energy at a climate change conference while countries like the Marshall Islands, the Maldives, Mongolia, and Mozambique, which face existential crises from climate change, look on—even more than that, this public forum flaunts the administration's wholesale sellout to the industries the government is tasked with regulating. It also shows us this administration's contempt for the booming renewable energy sector in the United States, which, according to Trump's own Department of Energy, employs more Americans than the U.S. fossil fuel industries by a 5-to-1 reality. All told, nearly 1 million Americans work in the energy efficiency, solar, wind, and alternative vehicles sectors. That equals nearly five times the number of workers employed in the fossil fuel electric industry, which includes coal, gas, and oil workers.

As the ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I believe that climate diplomacy must be a priority for U.S. foreign policy. Climate change poses an imminent and long-term threat not just to U.S. national security but also to the long-term prosperity of this country and of our world. Addressing the crisis requires collective action and cooperation by local and national representatives, small and large businesses, and every one of us.

If the United States is to maintain our status as the world's superpower, it is in our best interest to lead the global cooperative effort to address the serious challenges posed by climate change and to promote stability and resilience by helping developing countries reduce their vulnerability to the effects of climate change. If we stand alone on the sidelines as these changes and international economics take shape, we will ultimately be the loser.

I urge my colleagues to join me in calling on the administration to advance continuing U.S. climate diplomacy and reconsider the decision to withdraw. It is essential to U.S. national security interests, as defined by our own Department of Defense, and growing U.S. economic opportunity.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. President, I want to take one moment to speak to a different topic, which is to support the Tester-Wyden Congressional Review Act.

This is an administration cloaked in secrecy and deception. It is an administration that doesn't want the American people to know what it is doing. So it is no surprise that in July, the Treasury Department issued their dark money rule. They don't want the American people to know that behind every bill, amendment, and Executive order is a big-money special interest. They want to make it easier for big corporations, billionaires, and even illegal foreign money to influence our elections. These special interests know that so long as the money keeps flowing, there will be someone in Congress to do their bidding.

At a time when Americans want transparency from their government, this rule would allow special interests to hide their donors from the IRS.

It has been 8 years since the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision—a decision that gave corporations the right to spend unlimited, unchecked, and, more often than not, undisclosed money on our elections. For 8 long years, more and more money has flowed from corporate coffers into campaign ads and political expenditures, and Republicans have defended the dark money poisoning our politics every step of the way.

Let me demonstrate the sheer magnitude of the dark money that has been pumped into our recent elections. In 2016, outside groups spent more than $1.4 billion, much of it funneled through trade associations and nonprofits. In 2018, outside groups spent more than $1.3 billion.

These funds were not spent by the candidates' campaign committees but by groups that did not have to reveal their donors and disclose them to the public.

Spending by independent, outside groups reached an alltime high of $49 million in this year's congressional elections in my home State of New Jersey. State and county parties spent about $8.1 million. In other words, outside groups this year outspent formal parties by over 600 percent.

All of this secret cash and dark money undermines the ability of the American people to hold their government accountable. Yet, for the President and some of my Republican colleagues, that is not enough.

Ask yourself: Under these rules, what is to prevent anonymous foreign corporate donors that have unlimited amounts of cash to influence the American political system and help elect candidates who benefit them and then exert influence over those candidates once elected?

It is no wonder this administration would want to make it harder for the American people to know who is behind donations to tax-exempt organizations. It is the wrong direction and is a dangerous one.

As we now know, the President benefited from this dark money, particularly money that came from the NRA. What is baffling, however, is that the administration would make it easier for hidden money to flow through these organizations when we know that the Russian Government and its agents have used them as a conduit to try to influence our political system.

The recent indictment and guilty plea of Maria Butina shows this is not fantasy but reality. The Butina case came about because she was discovered to be an unregistered foreign agent. Yet she may just be the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Russians who are trying to pass money into our electoral system.

Under this administration's rule, uncovering those efforts will be made harder, not easier. That is why, tomorrow, I will be urging the FBI and the FEC to investigate whether other covert Russian sources may be behind political contributions the NRA made during the 2018 electoral cycle to any House or Senate candidate. We need to know who is contributing millions of dollars to influence the political system right now.

In our democracy, the size of your wallet should not determine the power of your voice. I urge my colleagues to listen to the American people, who have been loud and clear that they want disclosure, that they want to reduce special interest influence in our politics, and that they want this government to work for them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

(The remarks of Ms. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the introduction of S. 3739 and S. 3740 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Ms. MURKOWSKI. With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have the honor of representing Louisiana in the U.S. Senate, and it gives me no pleasure to say that in Louisiana we have a crime problem.

In Louisiana and, frankly, in other parts of America, I regret to say, criminals are turning neighborhoods into war zones and small towns into drug dens and, in the process, families are being destroyed.

Now, some people make a youthful mistake, and they could benefit from a second chance. I think most Americans agree with that, but other people never change. I don't know why it is. If I make it to Heaven, I am going to ask, but there are some people out there, they are not mixed up, they are not confused, they are not sick, it is not a question of whether their mama or daddy loved them enough—they are just bad. Unfortunately, they are just bad.

For that reason, I think we all recognize that prisons are a necessary fixture that make our communities safer.

As we prepare to hear a bill or bills on changes to sentences for Federal prisoners, I wanted to share with the Senate a cautionary tale from my home State of Louisiana.

People in my State are being killed, and people in my State are being hurt because of these so-called ''criminal justice reforms''—I put that expression in quotation—that were put in place by my Governor.

Louisiana, about 14 months ago, started letting prisoners out of our prisons. The overall goal of the Governor was to save money. So far, I think he has let out about 2,000 prisoners. Now, the inmates he let out were not vetted. They weren't vetted by the probation boards, they weren't vetted by the parole boards to see if they were a threat to public safety. These prisoners he let go weren't paired with programs to reduce recidivism. He just let them go. He did it under a statute he named and called the Justice Reinvestment Act. It certainly wasn't any reinvestment in justice for the victims.

His law is failing the law-abiding public in my State. So far, 22 percent of inmates have been rearrested. Now, that is over 14 months—a very short period of time. The Governor and his Department of Corrections said: Well, we are only going to release nonviolent criminals. Well, somebody forgot to tell the criminals they were nonviolent.

In the 23rd Judicial District Court in Louisiana, which encompasses small towns and three parishes, one in three inmates that the Louisiana State government let go has been rearrested. That is higher than the 22 percent I just quoted. That is a recidivism rate of 33 percent in a little over a year.

I have talked to Louisiana's law enforcement officers and prosecutors. They don't support what the Edwards administration has done. Now, they are scared to say anything because the Governor controls a lot of their budgets and their money, but if you ask 9 out of 10 law enforcement officials in my State privately if they support it, they will tell you no, and the 10th is probably lying.

The head of the District Attorneys Association, in fact, has publicly said that Louisiana's streets are not safer because of this so-called criminal justice reform. He also noted that simply reducing prison population is not a measure of success. He is a wise man.

Louisiana State government now seems to care more about criminals than it cares about those criminals' victims. In fact, I have never heard my Governor talk about victims at all. It is always criminals.

I recently received a letter. We all get letters from constituents, but this one really—this one really shook me up. I received a letter from a constituent in South Louisiana about what this failed experiment of criminal release in Louisiana has cost his family. His words—this gentleman's words—have been weighing on my heart and on my mind since I read them, and I would like to read a bit from that letter now.

I am quoting: My name is Gary Prince, and my youngest son Jordan was killed by a drunk driver in May of 2015. He was only 18 years old, and he had just graduated high school 12 days before this accident. The man that killed him was driving the wrong way on Highway 90 near New Iberia and crashed into my son head-on. His blood alcohol level was .16, which is twice the State's legal limit.

He was sent to jail with a sentence of 15 years, but this person that killed my son served only 18 months in jail.

Mr. Prince, the father, goes on: There is a State law which States that anyone convicted of a DUI with vehicular homicide, with a blood alcohol level of .15 or greater, has to serve a minimum of 5 years without the benefit of early release. This was not taken into account for this criminal. My son was a good kid. He had a bright future. He wanted to follow in my footsteps and become a machinist. I feel that my family deserves better than this. I want you to know that when I say my prayers at night, I pray for a better Louisiana.

Mr. Prince, I want you to know how sorry I am for you and your family's loss. While the State of Louisiana might consider this a nonviolent crime, your family paid a horrific price for this man's behavior. I can't imagine anything worse than a man or a woman having to bury his or her son, especially a teenager. For your son's killer to be out on the streets after 18 months is more than just salt in the wound. It is a miscarriage of justice, and it is precisely what happens when policies like criminal release programs are pursued without considering the victims or their families. It is not justice.

I believe in justice. I think most Americans do. What is justice? We talk about it a lot. I agree with what C.S. Lewis said: Justice is when someone gets what they deserve.

I am not saying that deterrence and rehabilitation are not important in a prison system. They are. They have nothing to do with justice. They have to do with the effectiveness of your prison system.

C.S. Lewis said: Justice is when people get what they deserve.

Justice is when the people of Tibet, for example, get to worship the Dalai Lama because they deserve religious freedom.

Justice is when a rapist is sent to prison and stays there for a time commensurate with his crime. That is justice. He is getting what he deserves.

C.S. Lewis didn't just say that. Immanuel Kant said that. He said our penal laws are a moral imperative. He didn't say rehabilitation is unimportant. He didn't say deterrence is unimportant, because they are both important. They just have nothing to do with justice. Hegel said the same thing, and St. Augustine said the same thing—all of the great thinkers in history—that justice is when you get what you deserve.

It doesn't have anything to do with the cost of government. It doesn't have anything to do with deterrence. It

doesn't have anything to do with rehabilitation. Those are all important factors, but this has nothing to do with justice.

A criminal release program gone wrong has had other effects in Louisiana, too. It frees people like Tyrone ''Smokey'' White. Let me tell you about Mr. White. Our Governor let him go. He is a career criminal. He repaid the State promptly by robbing two roofers at gunpoint. Somebody forgot to tell Smokey that he was supposed to be nonviolent, too. Less than a week later, Mr. White was released under Louisiana's criminal release program, despite having more than 60 arrests on his record.

A criminal release program gone wrong looks like a convicted felon named Richard McLendon who, upon being granted early release, illegally gets himself a gun and uses it to fatally shoot another man in Bossier Parish. He then leaves his victim to die like roadkill on the side of the road with multiple gunshot wounds.

A criminal release program gone wrong in Louisiana, anyway, looks like a Dwayne Watkins. He is a pedophile. He had more than 21 arrests for child abuse and other assorted crimes on his record. He got to walk out of jail early—not just once but two times. Watkins earned 10 years for illegally possessing a gun as a felon, and he got out early, and he promptly sexually abused two young girls. He earned 3 more years in jail, and then, thanks to Louisiana State government and the Edwards administration, he got out early again. Give me a break.

In October, less than 2 months after his early release, he approached Kelly and Heather Jose at a shopping mall in Caddo Parish. When he asked to borrow their phone to call a cab, the couple offered him a ride. In Louisiana, we help each other. Well, Mr. Dwayne Watkins decided to repay their generosity by kidnapping them, shooting them, and burning them to death in their own car so badly that their bodies couldn't even be recognized. He is now awaiting trial for murder.

Kelly Jose, one of the victims, was an Air Force Reservist—God rest his soul—in Barksdale Air Force Base. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1998. Heather Jose, the other victim, was a small business owner. She loved working in the ministry of a church. They were good people. They were just trying to do a good deed. This was a senseless tragedy, and it did not have to happen.

Just this weekend, our sheriff from Caddo Parish rightly asked a question. He said: Why is Dwayne Watkins out of prison after violating his parole and sexually abusing two young girls? And many of us are asking that same question in Louisiana right now. But the answer is very simple—the Edwards administration's failed criminal release program.

I want to take a moment and consider what price we might be asking the families back home to pay for these criminal release programs. In my State, innocent people are scared, and rightfully so, that they might become victims of violent crime. We are reneging on the justice we promised the victims like Mr. Prince, who lost a child. Do you want to put a price tag on justice? Have at it. I don't.

In Louisiana, we also failed the Joses' three children. They don't have parents anymore. Mr. Dwayne Watkins took care of that. He should have been in jail serving his time. That is justice.

Louisiana's failed experience has cost law-abiding folks dearly in every corner of my State.

I just want to implore my colleagues in the Senate to please think about more than just the criminals. Think about more than just the money. Think about the lives of the victims and their families, as well, because they are supposed to count too.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

H.R. 2

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, a few months ago, I had a chance to go up to the Colorado-Wyoming border to spend a night at the Ladder Ranch. It is a beautiful property—that is an understatement—situated in the Little Snake River Valley. If you were designing a postcard for the American West, you would struggle to do better than this place.

The ranch is owned by Pat and Sharon O'Toole. It has been in the family for six generations, dating all the way back to 1881. To give you some sense of how long that is, at the time, the State of Colorado was just 5 years old, and the Ottoman Empire was still around. Our world has been transformed since then, but the Ladder Ranch has endured through the Depression, the Dust Bowl, the two World Wars, and the transformation of our economy.

Of course, none of that happened just by chance. It happened because the family looked ahead and made hard choices to deliver that ranch from generation to generation. Pat and Sharon are continuing that legacy today, and they are joined on the ranch by their daughters, and their son, and a whole bunch of grandkids.

I am sharing the story of the Ladder Ranch because in many ways, it is the story of farmers and ranchers across my State and across the country—of people applying their ingenuity and common sense to hand more opportunity to the next generation.

One of the privileges of representing a State like Colorado is that I have had the opportunity to learn about places like the Ladder Ranch and the legacy of every one of our farms and ranches represent.

When I joined the Senate Ag Committee, the truth is that I had no idea how hard it can be for our farmers and ranchers. Like many people, I had very little appreciation of where our food comes from. If you are in agriculture, you can do everything right and still fall behind because of forces beyond your control.

Today, farmers and ranchers in this country are facing tremendous uncertainty. They have persistent drought, which is growing worse due to climate change and threats of wildfire. They have low commodity prices and challenges with finding people who can work, because of our immigration debate here in Washington, and to find the seasonal labor they need. Dairies are struggling to hire the workers they need.

Now, on top of all of that, they have the confusion of the existing trade policies of the United States. Two weeks ago, the USDA announced that farm incomes are projected to drop 12 percent this year. When you add it all up—the uncertainty, the policy, the politics—farm income is going to be down 12 percent this year. All of this acts like a weight on our farmers and ranchers, making it even harder for them to pass on the legacy of their work to the next generation.

Earlier this year, our Agriculture Commissioner in Colorado, Don Brown, who is himself one of the most successful farmers in our State, said: ''You're only 22 once.'' By that he meant that there is an entire generation out there deciding whether or not to pursue a career on the family farm or ranch, and they are looking at all of this uncertainty, and a lot of them are deciding that it is not worth it. That is why the average age of farmers is what it is in the United States.

We owe it to our farmers and ranchers to provide consistency where we can and to help to preserve the legacy of American agriculture for years to come.

By passing the 2018 farm bill, that is exactly what we have done. This bill means more certainty for America's producers in this volatile environment. This bill maintains crop insurance, and it makes risk management tools more effective. Most important to Colorado, this bill helps our farmers and ranchers to diversify their operations for the first time in 50 years.

This bill fully legalizes hemp. The majority leader was out here earlier. I want to congratulate him on his work to do that. In Colorado, our hemp growers have operated under a cloud of uncertainty for years. Our farmers worry about maintaining access to their water. They couldn't buy crop insurance or transport seeds. Some ran into redtape opening a bank account or even applying for Federal grants.

Despite these challenges, hemp cultivation in my State grew sixfold over the last 4 years. Again, it is interesting that the majority leader has wanted this, as well, because the climate in Kentucky and the climate in Colorado have almost nothing in common. But hemp grows in Kentucky, and it grows in Colorado.

We see hemp as an opportunity to diversify our farmers who manufacture high-margin products for the American

people. Now, Coloradans will be able to grow and manufacture hemp without a cloud of uncertainty hanging over them.

This bill also helps farmers and ranchers hand more opportunities to the next generation. It increases funding for conservation easements and makes it easier for people to secure them.

It invests in America's farm economy to drive innovation in agriculture and to keep up our competitiveness in the 21st century. It doubles funding to help communities in places like my State to deal with forest health, and it protects our watersheds better.

Working with the Presiding Officer, we increased funding for wildlife habitat and provided more opportunities for hunting and fishing on private lands.

We worked with Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas to give rural communities new ways to improve housing and infrastructure.

The bill also provides new resources to help farmers and ranchers adapt to major challenges like climate change. For example, it creates tools for farmers and ranchers to sequester carbon, improve soil health, and become more resilient to drought.

We increased resources in this bill for renewable energy and energy efficiency for rural businesses.

All in all, this 2018 farm bill is an excellent piece of legislation, and a lot of credit lies in the approach we took on the Agriculture Committee. It should be like this for all of our committees. It is a committee on which we don't have partisan differences. If we have differences, we have regional differences, and we work them out. That is why that committee, which I am proud to serve on, is one of the only functioning committees in the Senate. We passed a 5-year farm bill the last time there was a farm bill, not a 6-month one, not a 6-day one, but a 5-year farm bill. This is another one because Republicans and Democrats both know we have to support our farmers and ranchers, not create even more uncertainty for them.

The other privilege of being on that committee is that I spend a lot of time in my State in counties where it is unlikely that I am ever going to win 10 or 20 percent of the vote, but I keep going back and back, not because I think I will win but because I think, as a country, we have to find a way to bring ourselves together and solve problems.

Our farmers and ranchers are a model for that. They are applying their ingenuity to things like climate and drought every single day. They don't have the luxury—and I would say we don't have the luxury—of pretending that politics is the only thing that matters. They are focused on delivering their farms or ranches to the next generations and handing more opportunity, not less, to them. That is all that matters, and that is the ethic we should be applying to our national politics.

BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT

Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to call on the Senate to pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.

The bill extends critical VA benefits to veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals while they served in the waters off Vietnam.

There is no reason the Senate shouldn't pass this. Our country already provides these benefits to veterans who served on land, and it is well past time we extended care to those who served at sea.

This bill is the result of a lot of good bipartisan work in the Senate, and the House has already passed it. To get this across the finish line, we should look to the example our veterans set for how to come together and fight until the job is done.

In Colorado, the United Veterans Committee has advocated strongly for this bill, and veterans from across our State have spoken out on behalf of their colleague veterans who deserve justice with the passage of this bill. Their example reminds us that there is no obstacle we cannot overcome to provide every veteran who has served in the United States of America with the greatest healthcare in the world as a reflection of their service. In this moment, we should rededicate ourselves to that goal by passing this significant bill.

Let me end by thanking Senator GILLIBRAND and the Presiding Officer for their leadership, along with Chairman ISAKSON and Ranking Member TESTER for getting it to this point.

We need to pass this bill in the Senate before we go home. It is the right thing to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOE DONNELLY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues in thanking our friend, Senator JOE DONNELLY, for his service to his State and our Nation.

When he was about 30 years old, while he was practicing law in South Bend, JOE DONNELLY sought the Democratic nomination for attorney general in Indiana. Two years later, he ran for State senate. Both times, he lost.

Then he did something truly astonishing: He walked away from politics. For 10 years, he practiced law and ran a small stamp-and-ink business.

In 2003, local party officials asked him to run for Congress. They didn't expect him to win—just be a respectable sacrificial lamb.

He came closer to winning than anyone but he expected.

Two years later, he was elected, in a rematch, to the U.S. House.

As someone who also ran and lost three times before winning an election, I feel a natural camaraderie with my friend from Indiana.

I think I may also have some insight into why he was willing to try one more time.

You see, JOE DONNELLY grew up in New York. He moved to South Bend for college, and he is a Hoosier, through-and-through, but he is also a member of the great White Sox Nation.

In 2005, the Chicago White Sox won the World Series for the first time in 88 years—proof, some would say, that anything is possible if you persevere and work hard.

The next year, it was JOE DONNELLY's turn to score the upset victory by winning election to Congress from a red district in a deep-red State.

In his 6 years in the House, he voted to create the Affordable Care Act.

During the financial crisis of 2009, he voted for the American Recovery Act, to stop America's slide into a second great depression that could have brought down the entire global economy.

When free market hardliners said, ''Save Wall Street but let the American auto industry die,'' Barack Obama said no—and so did JOE.

In November 2012, Hoosier voters sent JOE DONNELLY to the U.S. Senate, the first Democrat to hold his seat since 1977.

In a political era that often seems often to reward snark over substance, JOE DONNELLY is a soft-spoken throwback to an earlier era, when working across the aisle was viewed as a talent, not as treason.

JOE is decent, honest, and direct. You may disagree with him on an issue, but you will never doubt his motives.

His values are classic Hoosier: hard work, common sense, bipartisan compromise, and a disdain for grandstanding.

As a Senator, he has done what he believes is needed to level the playing field for ''regular Joes,'' for farmers and factory workers and, as he says, ''the people who go to work in the dark and come home in the dark.''

I particularly want to thank him for his work to improve mental health care for military members and veterans. That work will save lives and families.

Like all nations, the White Sox Nation has some laws. One of my favorites is: ''Respect the past . . . people that are shoeless . . . and anyone named Joe.''

That last edict is a reference to one of the legends of White Sox history, Shoeless Joe Jackson, but it applies equally to our friend and colleague, Senator JOE DONNELLY, who has served his State and our Nation well and earned our great respect.

TRIBUTE TO HEIDI HEITKAMP

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in thanking Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP for her service to her State and our Nation.

I remember one of the first conversations Senator HEITKAMP and I had after she joined the Senate. I told her: ''I would really like your support on a bill to help the kinds of mom-and-pop stores that are the heart of so many small towns in your state and mine.''

I was about to give her my ''elevator pitch'' on the Marketplace Fairness Act. It wasn't necessary.

HEIDI said: ''Uhm, DICK, you know the 1992 U.S. Supreme Court decision that makes the Marketplace Fairness Act necessary. I'm the petitioner in the case. 'Quill v. North Dakota?' That's me. I was the North Dakota tax commissioner who started that lawsuit.''

As I was quick to learn, helping Main Street, mom-and-pop stores stay in business in the age of Amazon is just one of many causes that HEIDI HEITKAMP had been working on, tenaciously, for years before she was elected to this Senate.

HEIDI HEITKAMP came to Washington with a to-do list. She worked doggedly, with Democrats and Republicans, to whittle down that list.

It was clear from the day she arrived here that she meant to use her new position as a U.S. Senator to right as many old wrongs and fix as many intractable problems as she could.

She leaves knowing that she made a difference in the lives of countless people, in North Dakota and far beyond.

She has been a champion for Native Americans, whose voices are so rarely heard in the halls of power.

The first bill she sponsored in the Senate created a new and long overdue Commission on Native Children, to try to rectify the conditions that cause one-in-three Native American and Alaska Native children to live in poverty, with suicide rates 2.5 times the national average.

Like so much of her work here, that was a bipartisan effort. Her partner in that case was LISA MURKOWSKI.

When the Violence Against Women Act was reauthorized in 2013, it was HEIDI HEITKAMP who pushed successfully to close a loophole that allowed non-Indians who commit sexual assaults on Indian Reservations—very often—to go unpunished.

Her commitment to ''make a better future'' for Native children—and all children—is what motivated HEIDI to become my partner on a bill to increase and improve the treatment of childhood trauma, the root of so much suffering and violence.

We are proud that our trauma bill was included in the new law to combat the opioid epidemic. It will save lives.

HEIDI has said that her proudest achievement as a U.S. Senator was when she was able to help a Korean war veteran receive the Purple Heart and other medals.

The man, Corporal Andy Shaw, was a Native American elder who had served in World War II, was wounded in a gunfight in South Korea at the start of that conflict, and spent nearly the entire Korean war as a POW, but never received the thanks or medals he should have.

After 60 years, HEIDI HEITKAMP was able to right that wrong.

She and her staff tracked down the facts needed to document Corporal Shaw's heroism and sacrifice, and she travelled to the Spirit Lake Sioux Reservation in North Dakota to present Corporal Shaw's medals to him personally.

Andy Shaw has a little trouble standing now, but he stood proud and straight as his Senator presented his Purple Heart.

HEIDI cried because she knew how much he had sacrificed for that medal and what it meant to him.

That is who HEIDI HEITKAMP is: a woman who uses her power to help the underdog.

I wish she were not leaving so soon.

She has been a force for progress, a friend, and a leader for whom I have great respect.

I know that she has a lot of grit and determination still in her, and I look forward to seeing what her next chapter will bring.

H.R. 2

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after months of hard fought and oftentimes contentious negotiations, the Senate passed the conference report on the 2018 farm bill, titled the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, by a vote of 87 to 13. This conference bill tracks closely with the bill passed by the Senate earlier this year and embraces the bipartisan tradition of the farm bill. This is well-balanced legislation that will provide much needed certainty to the country's struggling farmers; maintain food security for millions of American families; provide for cleaner waterways, better soils, protected open space, healthier forests, and the preservation of family farms; will make our drinking water safer; and will give rural America a much-needed economic boost.

I thank Chairman ROBERTS and Ranking Member STABENOW and all of their staff, as well as my own staff, who have worked day and night on this bipartisan effort. As I know from being chairman of the committee during the 1990 farm bill, it is no easy task to balance the needs of the various regions and commodities and the sometimes conflicting priorities among Senators when we are working within a fixed budget.

This farm bill makes continued improvements to the Margin Protection Program, MPP, after the enhancements to the program that I led in February of this year. The newly named Dairy Margin Coverage program brings the margin level up to $9.50, lowers premium costs for a farm's first 5 million pounds of milk, and allows overlap of this program and other Department of Agriculture supported insurance programs. This bill will also help farmers initially blocked by USDA from enrolling in MPP due their participation in the Livestock Gross Margin Insurance for Dairy. They can now retroactively sign up for the improved margin protection program and access the critical benefits they missed out on this spring. A new program to incentivize milk donation is also included in this bill and will allow processors and producers to partner with charitable organizations to donate milk and reduce the waste of milk dumping.

As the father of the organic farm bill, I am pleased that the 2018 farm bill increases the funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and guarantees $50 million a year in mandatory funding by fiscal year 2023. This will ensure baseline funding for future farm bill debates and further protect this critical investment in our local and organic food system. I must add though that I am concerned by one aspect of this bill that I felt was an unnecessary change to the Organic Foods Production Act. From the beginning of the farm bill process, it was clear that some agricultural groups and some Members of Congress did not fully comprehend the importance of the National Organic Standards Board, NOSB, and the role that it plays in maintaining the integrity of the organic seal. Since first authoring the Organic Foods Production Act, I have long argued that the statute was working well, and the many tweaks and adjustments Members sought could easily be addressed administratively.

As such, I was opposed to the statutory changes sought by the House and Senate bills and am disappointed that two of the NOSB provisions related to the redundant language on voting procedures and those dictating the composition of the board were included in the final farm bill.

While I view the NOSB provisions included in the final bill to be silent on the 2013 sunset policy change, I remain opposed its inclusion because I believe it only causes confusion in the organic market and unnecessarily muddies the waters on an already contentious issue within the organic community. With respect to the makeup of the board, the current statute already included a carefully crafted balance of perspectives and interests. I feel strongly that the voice of the independent organic farmer must remain a prominent part of the NOSB and should not be diluted or drowned out as larger organic companies seek a role on the board with their employees or representatives. I

feel very strongly that the two NOSB handler seats versus the farmer slots are a more appropriate avenue for such companies to be represented on the board. While I am disappointed that this House provision was included in the final farm bill conference agreement, I will continue to support the nomination of independent organic farmers to the NOSB farmer seats and the unique perspective they bring to the board.

Ranking Member STABENOW must be applauded for the newly combined Local Agriculture Market Program, LAMP, that also secures $50 million by 2023 and will allow the work of local food programs to continue bringing fresh, local, and nutritious food to the tables of Vermonters and Americans everywhere. For Vermont farmers hoping to diversify and remain viable, this bill legalizes the growth and sale of hemp as an agricultural commodity and allows growers to be eligible for crop insurance. The compromise addresses concerns raised by criminal justice advocates regarding the hemp farming ban of individuals with drug-related felony convictions, and I am glad Vermonters will more fully be able to take advantage of this durable and profitable crop.

The conference agreement continues the proud tradition of providing nutritional assistance to our fellow Americans with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and wholeheartedly rejects the provisions included in the House bill that would have cut food access for millions of families. This bill continues our commitment to worldwide stability and productivity with programs like McGovern-Dole, Food for Peace, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, as well as valuable research to support farmers here at home and around the world. When people here and abroad do not have to wonder where their next meal may come from, children do better in school, workers are more productive, and our world is stronger.

Our Nation's conservation tradition is reinforced in this bill, with significant funding and necessary improvements to programs like the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program conserving family farms, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program fighting nitrogen and phosphorus runoff, and the Conservation Reserve Program in which I was able to include a fix allowing Vermonters to use the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to further protect water quality where they were disqualified before. The worst of the House of Representative's forestry provisions were negotiated out of this bill to make sure we are protecting our forestland based on the best available science and expertise.

This bipartisan farm bill provides critical economic development support to address the unique challenges and needs faced by our rural communities. The Rural Economic Area Partnership, REAP, Zone is renewed to continue developing our rural economy and the Northern Border Regional Commission, NBRC, is reauthorized and increased to $33 million, with an additional $5 million to build capacity in eligible counties. This bill also expands the eligible territory for NBRC investment to all fourteen counties in Vermont. The Commission will build upon the more than $10.5 million in matching funds and $18 million in total economic development and infrastructure projects invested in Vermont since 2010. The bill reauthorizes the good work of State Rural Development Councils through 2023 and reestablishes the position of Under Secretary for Rural Development that had been eliminated, in the 2017 USDA reorganization. I am pleased that I was able to reach a compromise for a 10-year reauthorization of the National Oilheat Research Alliance, NORA, a vital program that funds the development of improved and efficient oilheat technology to increase safety and reduce consumer costs.

I would be here all night if I were to talk about all of the wins for Vermont that were included in this farm bill, so I will close by saying that the 2018 farm bill should be viewed as a watershed moment in much needed bipartisanship and compromise. It will help millions of Americans, farmers, families, and children and will protect our natural resources, economic vitality, and public health. This is why we are here: to help people who need it, protect our national security, and ensure our planet is productive and clean for this generation and for generations to come. This bill must pass the House of Representatives and be signed by the President to deliver real help to real Americans everywhere.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have long supported juvenile justice programs, and I have long supported runaway and homeless youth programs. During the 20 years I served as the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee and in my current role as the vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I have championed bipartisan reauthorizations and supported funding for these programs, overcoming the House of Representatives, which zeroes out juvenile justice programs in its appropriations bills year after year. These programs make a real and lasting difference in the lives of the children and teens they serve. The two programs are funded separately in separate appropriations subcommittees, and their reauthorizations have traditionally moved separately.

I am pleased the Senate today passed the long-debated Juvenile Justice Reform Act. This legislation makes needed, comprehensive, and long overdue updates to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. It mandates research to study, identify, and address disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system and separates young offenders from adult jails and prisons. It also reauthorizes funding for key juvenile justice programs. Funding for these vital programs is key to preventing youth from coming in contact with the juvenile justice system and ensuring youth have the opportunity to get the help they need to avoid repeating the cycle. Reducing recidivism is not just the moral thing to do; it saves future State and Federal dollars.

The Grassley substitute amendment, which passed the Senate this evening, reauthorizes the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act at a lower level than I support, and a lower level than is supported by the providers and advocates in the field who know firsthand what the actual needs are to help these youths. It also fails to make important programmatic improvements that Senator COLLINS and I have been working on for years. These improvements include provisions to prevent and respond to human trafficking—to which runaway and homeless youth are particularly vulnerable—by requiring staff training to identify when a child entering their program has been a victim. Training program staff to identify young victims of trafficking helps ensure staff refers children and teenagers to appropriate services and takes steps to prevent their further traumatization. These young people have experienced major, unimaginable trauma, and we need to make sure they receive the right counseling and treatment to help them recover. Our reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act also includes important nondiscrimination language to ensure all youth who try to access programs can do so regardless of their faith, race, or sexual orientation. Unfortunately, these improvements will have to wait.

While we have much to celebrate with the passage of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, I am disappointed that some Members on the other side of the aisle demanded the inclusion of an extension of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and lowering its authorization without the improvements contained in my legislation with Senator COLLINS. The House passed and the Democratic hotline cleared H.R. 6964, a clean version of the juvenile justice Reform Act with no reference to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. Unfortunately, Senate Republicans on the Judiciary Committee refused to run the hotline on the Republican side. This in effect held hostage these important juvenile justice reforms to leverage authorization cuts to a completely unrelated program.

These two pieces of legislation have not moved in the same reauthorization bill in 30 years. They are funded through different appropriations bills, administered by difference departments, and their authorizations serve different purposes. Senator COLLINS and I have worked for years on a comprehensive bipartisan reauthorization

of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and expressed our concern with including a lower reauthorization with no improvements as part of Juvenile Justice Reform. Unfortunately, members on the other side were willing to hold up passage of Juvenile Justice Reform for yet another Congress, over an unrelated program.

In the interest of ensuring programmatic improvements and reauthorization of juvenile justice programs, Senator COLLINS and I agreed to a 2-year reauthorization of Runaway and Homeless Youth programs at an 8-percent reduction from its last authorized levels. Although I am disappointed that Runaway and Homeless Youth programs are reauthorized even in the short term without needed programmatic improvements, I look forward to working with members of the House and Senate to pass a bipartisan, comprehensive Runaway and Homeless Youth reauthorization in the 116th Congress.

It is my understanding that the House Committee on Education and Workforce will prioritize a comprehensive reauthorization of Runaway and Homeless Youth next Congress, and I hope the Senate Judiciary Committee will do the same. If so, we have a chance to make a real difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable children in our Nation. It is time we seize it.

RECIPROCAL ACCESS TO TIBET ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this evening the Senate unanimously passed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018. I was one of the earliest cosponsors of this bill, and I strongly support it. For far too long, the Chinese Government has tightly restricted access to Tibet, preventing U.S. diplomats and journalists from reporting on the systematic human rights abuses and destruction of Tibetan culture perpetrated by the Chinese Government and arbitrarily preventing Tibetan-Americans from visiting their families. Passing this legislation represents a strong, bipartisan step toward addressing that decades-long injustice. I would like to thank Senator RUBIO and Congressman MCGOVERN for their work on this legislation over several years.

The Chinese Government arbitrarily requires a special permit for a foreign diplomat, reporter, or tourist to visit Tibet, a requirement China does not impose for travel to any other provincial-level jurisdiction, even Xinjiang. The Chinese Government frequently denies requests for these permits to Tibet. Even when it does grant permits, it generally requires foreigners to be accompanied at all times by a government-designated guide. This arbitrary system not only makes it exceptionally difficult to report on the situation in Tibet, but it also gives the Chinese Government significant leverage, which it reportedly exploits in various ways, over persons who hope to obtain a permit.

In a 2015 white paper, the Chinese Government claimed that, under Chinese rule, ''Tibet has been transformed from a poor and backward society to one that is advanced in both economy and culture.'' Setting aside that this statement would look perfectly at home among the discredited justifications for 19th century colonialism, if it were true, then one would expect China to welcome the world to witness its rule in Tibet; yet in 2016, the Washington Post reported that Tibet ''is harder to visit as a journalist than North Korea.'' International media cannot even enter Tibet except on infrequent, tightly controlled tours organized by the Chinese Government. The situation is much the same for U.S. diplomats.

It is not just journalists and officials whose freedom of movement is restricted. Tibetan-Americans attempting to visit their homeland report undergoing a discriminatory Chinese visa process, different from what is typically required for American citizens, and often find their requests arbitrarily denied. I have heard about this problem directly from my Tibetan-American constituents in Vermont. I have spoken about it with the leader of the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

This issue has even touched a Tibetan-American member of my staff, Nima Binara. His 89-year-old grandmother, Kaedungkhangsar Yangchen Dolkar, was a naturalized American citizen who hoped to see her homeland and her relatives one last time before she passed away, a visit the Chinese Government refused to grant. Denying a person's right to visit their homeland is a petty display of authoritarian control and one that we should not tolerate in the 21st century.

I vividly remember visiting Tibet in 1988 and meeting its warmhearted people, appreciating its profound culture, and seeing its breathtaking landscape. With this legislation, we are now a step closer to the day when all American tourists, journalists, and diplomats can make such a trip without undue restrictions. This legislation will also make it more difficult for China to hide its atrocious human rights record in Tibet behind a cloak of isolation. It will make it easier for Tibetans inside Tibet to interact with the outside world and more likely for the world to realize that Tibetans are a distinct people who deserve their right to self-determination.

The House has already unanimously passed this bill. I urge the President to sign it into law without delay.

REMEMBERING BECKY WEICHHAND

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, during this season of Advent, millions of Americans join Christians around the world to celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ.

A central tenet of Christianity is born in the belief that Jesus is the Light of the World.

On December 25, we celebrate the light, the hope, and the joy our Lord and Savior brings into the world.

Today, I come to the floor of the U.S. Senate to pay tribute to a servant of Christ who dedicated her life to bring light, hope, and joy to children and families around the world.

Her name is Becky Weichhand.

Becky blazed a trail of hope and love to spread joy to children, especially those awaiting adoption.

To those who knew her best, Becky was an unconditional prayer warrior, who graciously shared love and loyalty to friends and strangers alike.

By all accounts, Becky shared uncommon devotion in her advocacy for children, especially those in our Nation's foster care system.

Since 2014, Becky served as executive director of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute.

Before that, she served as director of policy, where she shined light on the needs of children here in the United States and abroad, including the United Kingdom, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Cambodia, Vietnam, South Korea, and Haiti.

Since first joining the corps of dedicated professionals working to help the foster youth community, Becky had a plan.

She had a plan for kids who went to bed each night praying for a forever home.

She had a plan for young people who were growing up without a mom or dad.

She had a plan to connect as many kids as possible with a forever family.

Becky worked tirelessly to educate, organize and advocate here on Capitol Hill and at the grassroots.

She devoted her life and career to making dreams come true for adoptive parents and their children.

Among her priorities and achievements, I know that Becky was committed to growing the Foster Youth Internship Program that connects foster youth and congressional offices.

The program provides opportunities for foster youth to work on Capitol Hill.

Through this program, foster youth collaborate and bring real-life perspective to the policymaking tables.

I have been fortunate to have an intern through this program who worked with my staff to help develop Federal child welfare reforms.

They identified more effective ways to serve foster kids, including those who age out of the system.

Becky also worked to grow the Angels in Adoption Program.

It brings recognition to families who go above and beyond the call to action in their local communities to open their hearts and homes to children awaiting adoption.

Shining light on the good deeds and unmet needs of others was her way of bringing light to the world.

As a founder and cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, I would like to turn the spotlight on Becky's good works.

She was driven to find a forever family for every child. She was a problem solver brimming with energy. Her advocacy led to important reforms. She believed in miracles. She made every effort to work miracles for children and families.

Becky mentored foster youth and paved the way for kids to dream big. She gave them reason to hope that their dreams can come true.

I extend my condolences to Becky's family, friends, and loved ones.

At age 36, Becky lost a brave battle to cancer.

Her legacy will live on and bring joy to countless children and moms and dads where it matters the most: in a forever family united through the blessing of adoption.

On Saturday, December 15, a celebration of life will take place at the First Church of God in Becky's hometown of St. Joseph, MI.

On this day, her loved ones will celebrate the light, joy, and hope she brought to this world.

May the blessings of God's Heavenly embrace welcome Becky into her new forever home for life everlasting.

TRIBUTE TO CAROLYN E. BOLDEN

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, along with my colleague, the ranking member on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Senator MURRAY, I wish to pay tribute to Carolyn Bolden, a nondesignated employee on the HELP Committee staff. Ms. Bolden is retiring at the end of this month after more than 23 years of distinguished service to the Congress, including more than 12 years serving on the HELP Committee.

Ms. Bolden has served on the HELP Committee as an assistant editor on detail from the Government Publishing Office since September 2006, providing support in all aspects of editing and printing the committee's many documents.

Ms. Bolden is well-regarded on both sides of the aisle, having proven her professionalism, courtesy, and substantial expertise across four chairs and both parties. Without the support of Ms. Bolden and the rest of the nondesignated staff, the committee could not accomplish the important work the American people expect us to get done on their behalf. I, along with the ranking member and the rest of the committee's members, want to recognize Ms. Bolden for that tremendous contribution to the Committee as she exits her time in the Senate.

I would like to yield now to my colleague, the ranking member, Senator MURRAY, for her remarks.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank Chairman ALEXANDER and join him in commending Ms. Bolden for her many years of dedicated and outstanding service to the Government Publishing Office, the Congress, and the American people. I greatly appreciate the sacrifice that Ms. Bolden has made over the past 13 years in assisting the HELP Committee by applying her expertise in editing, printing, and memorializing our important work. We wish her and her family all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

We hope our colleagues will join us in thanking Ms. Bolden for her service.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD B. PROVENCHER

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, along with my colleagues Senator MIKE CRAPO and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, today I recognize and congratulate Mr. Richard B. Provencher on his upcoming retirement after more than 32 years of distinguished Federal service consisting of Active-Duty military service, service with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NRC, and more than 29 years of service with the U.S. Department of Energy, DOE.

Mr. Provencher began his Federal career in 1986 as a health physicist for the NRC Headquarters Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards. Rick transferred to NRC Region 1 in King of Prussia, PA, where he was a materials inspector. In 1990, he joined the DOE as a health physicist and began his Senior Executive Service career as deputy director at West Valley Demonstration Project in New York. In 1998, he served as the director of the Miamisburg Closure Project in Ohio.

In 2003, he transferred to the Idaho Operations Office in Idaho as the deputy manager for environmental management, where he had a profound impact on DOE's mission to address Idaho's environmental cleanup efforts. Mr. Provencher provided strong leadership to the Federal and contractor workforce, making Idaho's cleanup performance one of the most successful in the Nation.

Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Provencher was instrumental in negotiating and executing an agreement between the DOE and the State of Idaho to implement a cleanup plan for buried waste in the subsurface disposal area at the Idaho National Laboratory, INL, significantly reducing the scope of work from the original plan and saving taxpayers $5 billion.

Most recently, Mr. Provencher served as the Office of Nuclear Energy Manager for Idaho Operations Office and Contractor Assurance, responsible for overseeing the INL—our Nation's flagship nuclear energy laboratory. This responsibility includes managing over 200 Federal technical personnel and oversight of over 6,000 contractor employees with an annual budget in excess of $1 billion. Under his leadership, the INL completed major infrastructure improvements and significantly improved research and development capabilities with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities that will ensure a bright future for the laboratory.

Mr. Provencher's remarkable ability to foster collaboration has strengthened partnerships internal and external to DOE. He repeatedly demonstrated his ability to build coalitions through his interactions with the State of Idaho and other elected officials regarding the operation of the INL. With multiple Departmental organizations present on the site, as well as many strategic partners across the government, it is a testament to Rick's leadership that all the various business functions are seamlessly integrated to support the INL's missions.

Mr. Provencher's performance has improved public trust and confidence in the DOE's mission work. He has partnered with environmental cleanup and laboratory participants in carrying the message of cleanup success, laboratory growth, and contributions to the region which have improved public perception of the INL and overall DOE mission work.

Through his years of dedicated service, Mr. Provencher exemplifies the best qualities of Idaho. Senator CRAPO, Representative SIMPSON, and I thank Rick for his service and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN OSCAR ''JOHNNY'' JONES

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Mr. John Oscar ''Johnny'' Jones, who is retiring from U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development after 37 consecutive years of service to the Nation.

Raised in Coffeeville, MS, Johnny joined USDA in 1980 as a student trainee in the Coffeeville Farmers Home Administration Office. In pursuing a career with USDA, Johnny followed in the footsteps of his father, William Woodrow Jones, and brother, William Woodrow ''Woody'' Jones, Jr., who both made significant contributions to American agriculture and rural economies throughout Mississippi as lifelong USDA employees.

Following his graduation from Mississippi State University in 1982, Johnny was promoted to the position of assistant county supervisor, ACS, for Webster County in Eupora, MS, with responsibility for Webster and Choctaw Counties. In 1985, he was promoted to county supervisor for Attala County. In 1990, Johnny was selected to serve as a rural housing specialist in the State Farmers Home Administration Office in Jackson. Seven years later, Johnny became the State program director for Single Family Housing for Rural Development in Mississippi, a position he has ably held for 21 years.

Working his way up from the Farmers Home Administration Office in his hometown to the State office in Jackson, Johnny not only gained exceptional knowledge and expertise, but he also contributed unique perspective to his work. Johnny understood the needs

of rural Americans, as well as the challenges rural communities must overcome to gain accessibility to the quality of life standards afforded to urban America. Applying his knowledge, expertise, and competence, Johnny devoted himself to making a positive difference in the lives of Mississippians.

Johnny's contributions to the people of Mississippi have been notably remarkable. Throughout his tenure as program director of the Single Family Housing program in Mississippi, he assisted nearly 50,000 families in achieving the American dream of home ownership. Whether a family needed a home or an impoverished elder required emergency home repairs, Johnny effectively managed USDA home loan and repair programs to assure the well-being of people he served, and in the process, he helped them improve themselves and their families.

Johnny Jones made the mission of his profession to selflessly and honorably serve others. He has directly contributed to improving the quality of life of literally tens of thousands of Mississippians. Few individuals have the opportunity through their careers to hold such distinction. On the occasion of his retirement, it is an honor to recognize Johnny Jones for his dedicated service to his State and to the country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING HIGH DESERT MILK

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, agriculture has always been of outsized importance to my home State of Idaho. Dairy farming has always had a presence in the State and has grown considerably over the past several years, and agricultural co-ops play a vital role in making sure our State's agricultural products make it to market. As the chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, it is my distinct privilege to recognize High Desert Milk as the Small Business of the Month for December 2018. High Desert Milk is committed to building longlasting relationships and providing opportunities for dairy farmers across, southern Idaho.

Located on the banks of the Snake River in Burley, ID, High Desert Milk is a cooperative partnership, committed to serving its farmer-owners while also remaining flexible in a competitive market. Founded in 2001, High Desert sought to create a more efficient dairy market for local farmers. In 2008, High Desert opened a purpose-built milk dehydration plant which is capable of processing up to 2.2 million pounds of milk per day. In 2013, the company was able to expand its operations and began producing butter to meet increased demand in the United States. From an initial team of 30 employees, High Desert Milk has grown into a multimillion-dollar operation with over 150 full-time employees. In 17 short years, High Desert Milk has become a fixture in the community by providing reliable milk pickup services and professional milk marketing.

Presently, High Desert Milk works with 23 family-owned dairies across 70,000 acres of southern Idaho farmland. The company's operations support more than 1,000 related dairy jobs in the area. Annually, the company produces almost 60 million pounds of powdered milk, more than 40 million pounds of butter, and 4 million pounds of buttermilk powder. High Desert Milk's products are shipped all across the country and all over the world. The company has a reputation for meeting and even exceeding U.S. Department of Agriculture and customer standards due to careful technician monitoring during processing. High Desert Milk has been named one of the top 100 dairy operations in the United States due to its cleanliness, high quality control standards, and good relationships with its members.

Despite its worldwide presence, High Desert Milk is still a local Idaho company with close ties to Burley and rural southern Idaho. High Desert Milk has a positive presence in the area and takes an active role in its community. The company hosts several annual charity fundraisers, including an annual fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. The company also supports local 4–H and Future Farmers of America clubs and even sponsors an annual high school-age rodeo. These community-building practices aim to encourage youth to take an interest in their local communities and to encourage them to seek careers in Idaho's vibrant agricultural industry. Each year, High Desert Milk presents talented local high school students with scholarships to continue their education. The generous scholarship program encourages students to excel in the fields of agribusiness and dairy science. Scholarships are also made available to High Desert employees who want to continue their studies.

High Desert Milk's tenacious commitment to its member-farmers and community is preparing the way for a new generation of Idaho dairy farmers and entrepreneurs. The company's commitment to quality and efficiency while building a positive relationship with their members and community is a perfect example of Idaho's entrepreneurial spirit. The company has become an economic anchor in southern Idaho, creating new market opportunities for local farmers and providing jobs for local community members.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to High Desert Milk and all its farmer-members for being named the Small Business of the Month for December 2018. I wish you all the best of luck, and I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:58 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 245. An act to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3008. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the George W. Bush Childhood Home, located at 1412 West Ohio Avenue, Midland, Texas, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5513. An act to provide for an exchange of lands with San Bernardino County, California, to enhance management of lands within the San Bernardino National Forest, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6108. An act to provide for partnerships among State and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance the visitor experience at nationally significant battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6118. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an ''American World War II Heritage City'', and for other purposes.

H.R. 6665. An act to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to apply to territories of the United States, to establish offshore wind lease sale requirements, to provide dedicated funding for coral reef conservation, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6893. An act to amend the Overtime Pay for Protective Services Act of 2016 to extend the Secret Service overtime pay exception through 2020, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7213. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 2248. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide certain burial benefits for spouses and children of veterans who are buried in tribal cemeteries, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 2511. An act to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to carry out a program on coordinating the assessment and acquisition by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of unmanned maritime systems, to make available to the public data collected by the Administration using such systems, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the bill (H.R. 3946) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Statesboro, Georgia, the ''Ray Hendrix Veterans Clinic'', and that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the title of the aforementioned bill.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:26 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 315. An act 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.

H.R. 3946. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Statesboro, Georgia, the Ray Hendrix Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 3008. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the George W. Bush Childhood Home, located at 1412 West Ohio Avenue, Midland, Texas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 5513. An act to provide for an exchange of lands with San Bernardino County, California, to enhance management of lands within the San Bernardino National Forest, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 6108. An act to provide for partnerships among State and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance the visitor experience at nationally significant battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 6118. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an ''American World War II Heritage City'', and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–7393. A communication from the Regulations Team Lead, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Buy American Requirement'' (RIN0572–AC42) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 5, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–7394. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances; Withdrawal'' (FRL No. 9986–43) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 7, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–7395. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Margin and Capital Requirements for Covered Swap Entities'' (RIN3052–AD28) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–7396. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Increased Assessment Rate for Fresh Pears'' (AMS–SC–18–0048) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 5, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–7397. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Reynold N. Hoover, United States Army National Guard, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–7398. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Registration of Privately Owned Motor Vehicles'' (RIN0790–AK15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 5, 2018; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–7399. A communication from the Acting Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2017 Fair Lending Report of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–7400. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 5, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–7401. A communication from the Acting Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Truth in Lending (Regulation Z)'' (RIN3170–AA90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–7402. A communication from the Acting Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Consumer Leasing (Regulation M)'' (RIN3170–AA89) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–7403. A communication from the Acting Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold'' (RIN3170–AA91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–7404. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Covered Investment Fund Research Reports'' (RIN3235–AM24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 5, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–7405. 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; Indiana; Cross-State Air Pollution Rule'' (FRL No. 9987–75–Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 7, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–7406. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Relief from the Once-In-Always-In Condition for Excluding Part-time Employees from Making Elective Deferrals under Section 403(b) Plan'' (Notice 2018–95) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 7, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–7407. 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 2018–0203 - 2018–0206); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–7408. A communication from the Executive Secretary, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), transmitting, pursuant to law, two (2) reports relative to vacancies in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2018; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–7409. 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 ''Listing of Drug Products That Have Been Withdrawn or Removed From the Market for Reasons of Safety or Effectiveness'' ((RIN0910–AH35) (Docket No. FDA–2016–N–2462)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–7410. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Labor's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–7411. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–7412. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer and Associate Administrator for Performance Management, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's fiscal

year 2018 Agency Financial Report and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–7413. A communication from the Chief Operating Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the period of April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–7414. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–312. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alaska urging the United States Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29

Whereas, in 1908, the United States Congress enacted 16 U.S.C. 500 (National Forest Receipts Program), which required 25 percent of annual income earned from activities on national forest land to be shared with states for distribution to cities and boroughs in which the land is located for the benefit of education and roads; and

Whereas, in 1986, changes in the approach to managing our national forests seriously curtailed the ability of forest communities to harvest forest products and resulted in steep declines in forest revenue paid to affected communities; and

Whereas, in the early 1990s, the United States Congress recognized that the decision to secure and retain land in federal ownership would deprive the communities in which the land is located of revenue otherwise received if the land were in private ownership; and

Whereas the enactment of P.L. 106–393, 16 U.S.C. 500 note (Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000), temporarily stabilized national forest revenue payments to forest communities and replaced much needed financial support for education and roads; and

Whereas the National Forest Service controls approximately 22,000,000 acres of land in the state; and

Whereas many of the state's rural communities are nestled in the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest; and

Whereas there continues to be little privately owned land in those forest communities on which to pursue economic development activities, and the communities therefore remain largely dependent on revenue generated from national forests; and

Whereas the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 expired on September 3, 2015, and has not been permanently reauthorized; and

Whereas the United States Congress temporarily extended the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 for federal fiscal years 2017 and 2018; and

Whereas education is one of the critical services supported by the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000; and

Whereas failure to permanently reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 will have a devastating effect on many forest communities across America, especially communities in this state, and will severely affect the public education of students living in those forest communities; be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the United States Congress pass and the President sign into law a long-term reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000; and be it further

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature encourages the United States Congress to pass H.R. 2340 or S. 1027 to extend, or legislation to permanently reauthorize, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

Copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States; the Honorable Sonny Perdue, United States Secretary of Agriculture; the Honorable Betsy DeVos, United States Secretary of Education; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 115th United States Congress.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 2369. A bill to authorize aboriginal subsistence whaling pursuant to the regulations of the International Whaling Commission, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–425).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

Report to accompany S. 90, A bill to survey the gradient boundary along the Red River in the States of Oklahoma and Texas, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–426).

Report to accompany S. 441, A bill to designate the Organ Mountains and other public land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–427).

Report to accompany S. 569, A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–428).

Report to accompany S. 2160, A bill to establish a pilot program under which the Chief of the Forest Service may use alternative dispute resolution in lieu of judicial review of certain projects (Rept. No. 115–429).

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2773. A bill to improve the management of driftnet fishing (Rept. No. 115–430).

By Mr. RISCH, from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship:

Report to accompany S. 3562, A bill to amend the Small Business Act to modify the method for prescribing size standards for business concerns (Rept. No. 115–431).

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. CASSIDY:

S. 3737. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out the Medical Surgical Prime Vendor program using multiple prime vendors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 3738. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to prevent the inter partes review process for challenging patents from diminishing competition in the pharmaceutical industry and with respect to drug innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 3739. A bill to amend the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 to modify the membership of the Arctic Research Commission, to establish an Arctic Executive Steering Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 3740. A bill to establish a congressionally chartered seaway development corporation in the Arctic, consistent with customary international law, with the intention of uniting Arctic nations in a cooperative Arctic shipping union, where voluntary collective maritime shipping fees will help fund the infrastructural and environmental demands of safe and reliable shipping in the region; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING):

S. Res. 719. A resolution designating December 15, 2018, as ''Wreaths Across America Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. Res. 720. A resolution expressing the condolences of the Senate and honoring the memory of the victims of the shooting at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, on November 19, 2018; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. Res. 721. A resolution designating the week beginning on October 21, 2018, as ''National Chemistry Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 722. A resolution designating October 26, 2018, as ''Day of the Deployed''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. Res. 723. A resolution congratulating the American College of Emergency Physicians on its 50th anniversary; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 352

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr.

SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 352, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick ''Roddie'' Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II.

S. 568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 568, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 693

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 693, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs, including physician assistant education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 1906

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1906, a bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each of Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

S. 3215

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3215, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require the development of a bus operations safety risk reduction program, and for other purposes.

S. 3332

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3332, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the inclusion of certain fringe benefit expenses for which a deduction is disallowed in unrelated business taxable income.

S. 3611

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3611, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to facilitate the disclosure of tax return information to carry out the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 3622

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3622, a bill to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China.

S.J. RES. 64

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 64, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to ''Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain Non-Exempt Organizations'' .

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 3739. A bill to amend the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 to modify the membership of the Arctic Research Commission, to establish an Arctic Executive Steering Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, there has been a lot of discussion this evening by my colleague from New Jersey and by my colleague from Rhode Island about the issue of climate change and its impact. I come from a part of the country where climate change is there; it is with us; it is real. It is something that we look to as Alaskans with a reality of this world view.

I spend a lot of my time here in the Senate focused on not only the U.S. Arctic but the Arctic as a whole, the eight Arctic nations that we intersect with. So I would like to take a few minutes this evening to speak about the happenings in the Arctic—our new reality—as we are seeing greater opportunities but also greater challenges in an area that I find to be an extraordinary place on our globe.

It was maybe a little more than 150 years ago when Massachusetts Senator and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time, Charles Sumner, argued the geostrategic importance of Alaska to our young Nation at the time. Senator Sumner spoke about how the Aleutians represented this gateway to Asia. This was a maritime route to the west coast that was roughly 1,000 miles shorter than the southern route through the Sandwich Isles, which was popular at the time.

It was about 70 years later that Gen. Billy Mitchell, who was the father of the Air Force, testified before Congress and said that he believed that in the future, whoever controls Alaska controls the world. He thought it was the most strategic place in the world.

Then we had World War II, the Japanese, who also recognized the strategic importance of the Aleutians, and they briefly seized and occupied the islands of Attu and Kiska.

While the war in the Aleutians may be forgotten by many here at home, the world continues to remember the strategic significance of the North.

Although General Mitchell saw the strategic geographic location of Alaska, he could not have imagined the environmental changes that would make sea routes accessible to commerce year-round, nor could he have imagined the rich mineral wealth beneath the Arctic. He might have been able to have imagined that Russia would take a major interest in the Arctic. Given its proximity from the Bering Strait region of Alaska, one can indeed see Russia from one's window. There are not too many people on Little Diomede, but I have been there. Big Diomede sits just about 2½ miles across the water, but I doubt that General Mitchell would ever have been able to have imagined that nations like China or India would have taken an interest in the very remote and often forbidding North, less that they would be fielding icebreakers in 2019 and 2020, as China and India are. He might also wonder why Singapore would take such an interest to justify observer status on the Arctic Council.

While places like Singapore seek observer status, the United States has passed the chairmanship of the Arctic Council and, with it, most of our diplomatic efforts towards the Arctic. The

Arctic Executive Steering Committee and other institutions within the executive branch that are focused on the Arctic have, in my view, just kind of wasted away just when the rest of the world has redoubled its focus on the Arctic.

The Department of Defense clearly gets it. It is starting to recognize what General Mitchell did back in 1935. Before the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee back in May 2016, I asked Secretary Carter whether we were doing what we needed to do from a defense standpoint to address changes in the Arctic. His response was pretty frank and, I think, very revealing. He told me that the Arctic is going to be a major area of importance to the United States strategically and economically in the future.

I think it is fair to say that we are late to the recognition of that, but I think we have the recognition. Now you are asking what comes in behind that recognition. I think a plan that is more than aspirational is needed, and I would be happy to work with you toward that end.

At that time, Secretary Carter's candor was refreshing, if not long overdue, but I have to tell you that we are still waiting for a plan that is more aspirational in the Arctic—not just a plan but a plan that is fully resourced. As an appropriator, I know full well how difficult that is to achieve.

Sometimes around here, like a tree that falls in the forest when there is nobody there to listen, it seems like official Washington doesn't recognize that something new and very real is occurring until it reads about it in the New York Times or perhaps in the Washington Post. Well, on Thanksgiving Day of this year, the Washington Post really laid it out. It had a special section—some 16 pages—which is entitled ''The New Arctic Frontier.'' I would like to quote from the cover of this special section.

It reads:

As the Arctic slowly thaws, the United States, Canada, Russia, China and other interested nations are reconsidering how they strategically approach the region. Corporations have launched new missions to search for oil. Commercial fishing continues to evolve. Shipping and luxury cruise lines alike are planning to send more vessels north. Coastal erosion has prompted questions about how some Alaskan villages will survive and how the U.S. government should react. Against this backdrop, militaries are increasingly preparing for potential conflict in the Arctic. The United States is shifting forces to the north, planning to build a new class of icebreaker ships and cultivating stronger relationships with Nordic militaries. Russia, meanwhile, is investing in ice-capable vessels and infrastructure improvements, and China has declared itself a ''near Arctic state.''

This really sums up where we are today.

Truth be told, General Mitchell has been proven to be correct in ways that he probably could not have imagined when he said Alaska was the most strategic place in the world. For example, right now, here today, Anchorage has the fifth busiest cargo airport in the world—not in the country but in the world. So we are sitting here in Anchorage, AK. We are less than 9½ hours from 90 percent of the industrialized world. So whether you are going to Singapore, London, Mexico City, we are less than 9½ hours from 90 percent of the industrialized world. So many carriers, such as FedEx, UPS, Alaska Airlines, Atlas Air, and others, are already using Anchorage as a cargo hub because of this very, very central location and these very real opportunities for commerce. We are also looking to regain the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport position as a hub for international passenger travel.

Now we are getting ready for the holiday season, for Christmas. I think Santa had this figured out a long time ago. He knew that the shortest way to get around the globe, whether you were going to Fiji or to London or to Los Angeles or to Seoul, was over the Pole. Even Santa understood the geostrategic position of the Arctic. But it is Alaska. It really is Alaska, sitting right up there, which is the gateway to America's Arctic, that is at the center of all of this. That is not just bragging, not just my being parochial about it as Alaska's Senator. It is real, it is compelling, and it is demanding of attention and action. I know it is not easy.

The Washington Post's editors observed that the Arctic portends great opportunities and great challenges, so let's get to work on this. That is my central message today. It is time that we get to work and move ahead with a plan that fits the challenge that the Arctic represents for America. We talk a lot about aspiration. The time for aspiration is over—it is time for action. That starts by fully funding the first of the Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutters, whose purpose is to provide assured, year-round access to our polar regions. These are platforms that can project sea power anywhere, at any time, and are fully interoperable with interagency and international stakeholders to carry out national defense operations. These cutters will include sufficient space, weight, and power to conduct multimission activities that support our Nation's current and future needs in the Arctic.

The Polar Security Cutter will allow us to continue to engage with our fellow Arctic nations and our allies and our strategic competitors.

I share with you a picture of our existing Polar icebreaker, but when you look around the world at the various flags, here we are sitting in the United States—one of eight Arctic nations—and we have two icebreakers. I say two—maybe that is all we need. One of them is currently in dry dock in the Seattle-Tacoma area. She is never going to see activity again. The other one, *Polar Star*, is on her second life. She is working hard, but she is down in Antarctica, and she will be in Antarctica until she, too, is retired. Then where does that leave us? Where does that put us?

We have a medium-strength vessel, the *Healy*. She does great work, but that is what the United States has.

Canada has nine government-owned, either operating or under construction. China has four—China, which has just determined they should be a ''Near-Arctic State.'' Russia has 34, and when you count those that are nongovernment-owned, it is well over 40.

Here we are, the United States of America, an Arctic nation, and we are down to about one icebreaker. We have some work to do here.

Over the past several years, funds have been secured through the Navy to get started on building a new Polar Security Cutter. This year, the administration wisely decided—and I thank them for working with us—that it is time to lock in the project by budgeting the remaining funds necessary to complete the project. It is about $750 million. That is a lot of money. That is a lot of money, but I would submit that this investment in the Polar Security Cutter is a small price to pay for the ability to project U.S. sea power in the Arctic.

The question of whether we follow through on this very important step is going to be determined this week, or perhaps next week, as we complete the fiscal year 2019 appropriations project. I would dare to suggest that our competitors in the Arctic are watching very, very closely whether we have the resolve to follow through on the first of these Polar Security Cutters.

Bringing the Polar Security Cutter online will give us capacity—we appreciate that—but the next and perhaps even more difficult challenge is to build the infrastructure to support the next phase of U.S. sea power in the Arctic. Most critical for that is the development of a deepwater port in the Bering Sea.

Our reality right now is that the Alaska deepwater port nearest to the Arctic is located in the Bering Sea. Dutch Harbor is almost 1,000 miles away from the Arctic. I am looking at my imaginary Alaska map here, but when you are down in the Aleutians—that is the nearest deepwater port—it is 1,000 miles to get to Point Hope, to Barrow, and that area.

A port is a critical piece of infrastructure that is needed, and it will serve many, many uses. It can support the Navy, the Coast Guard, and NOAA's research missions. It will support search and rescue activities that may be necessitated by increasing commercial vessel traffic in the Arctic, and it will provide a platform for the United States to harvest some of the economic upside of the vessel transits. RADM Jon White, U.S. Navy, retired, is President and CEO of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership. At a recent event, which was sponsored by the Wilson Center, he characterized the requirement for a deepwater port in the Arctic as a ''no-brainer.'' He went on to

say: ''Unfortunately, it's not a no-coster.''

Last summer, Navy Secretary Spencer looked at various sites, potential sites for a deepwater port. He is very engaged in seeing how we can work together to bring the funding partners to make this happen. We look forward to working with him toward this endeavor. His engagement is so greatly—greatly—appreciated. He clearly understands the potential here.

All of these developments are very, positive, far more positive than we have seen in recent years. I am grateful for that. They are building blocks.

The race to protect America's strategic interest in the Arctic demands attention on more than just defense; it will take coordination. That is why I am going to introduce today two pieces of legislation that are designed to reinvigorate America's national and commercial strategic efforts.

For well over a decade now, you have heard me talk about how the diminishing Arctic sea ice presents both opportunities and concerns. If you look at this map here, you are looking at planet Earth from the perspective that most of us in Alaska view, which is from the top on down. You have the U.S. Arctic here with Alaska. You have the Canadian Arctic here. Here is Russia coming all the way around to Iceland, and Greenland is down in this area.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, we recognize the impact that climate change is having on the Arctic—rapid impacts, clearly—more so than in any other part of the United States.

The latest report from the U.S. Global Change Research Program underscored this fact. Since the early eighties, the annual Arctic sea ice extent has gone down by about 4 percent per decade. The decrease for September sea ice extent—this is the time of year where we have had the least amount of ice. This time period has been even more pronounced at somewhere between 10.7 and 15.9 percent per decade in terms of the decrease in the sea ice.

What does all of this mean? According to that report, it means we are likely to experience a sea ice-free Arctic summer before this century is out.

Again, when you are looking at the top of the globe, looking at the Arctic here, all of the area in the light blue—you can't see the red around it—was all of the extent of the September sea ice back in 1979. In 2015—3 years ago—the extent of that September ice is here in the pink. As you can appreciate, as you are losing this throughout more parts of the year, it does point to a reality that we are likely to see in the not too terribly distant future—a sea ice-free Arctic summer.

Loss of sea ice in the Arctic, of course, goes hand in hand with overall temperature warming. Over the last several years, it has been somewhat common to refer to the Arctic and include the fact that it is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the country. This latest climate report shows us that this is not exactly right.

In fact, the North Slope of Alaska—this corner right there—is warming at 2.6 times the rate of the continental United States. Much of the rest of Alaska is warming at more than twice the continental U.S. rate as well. So it is not just twice as fast; it is more than twice as fast. Again, we are paying attention.

I face this reality. I hear about this reality every time I step off an airplane in a rural community. I listen to the people there, particularly the elders, as they share their knowledge. Record low extent of Arctic sea ice threatens many of our indigenous communities because of threats of coastal erosion. With less ice, waves build up, beat against the shore, and erode it. It is more than just coastal erosion; it is the impact on their traditional ways of life—food security issues, hunting, access to resources to basically exist.

We are very in tune. It is not just through the eyes of the people who are living there; this is abundantly clear in both the scientific data that is collected by our State and our Federal Agencies, as well as the experience of rural Alaska Natives.

According to this most recent report, the cost of infrastructure damaged from a warming climate in Alaska alone—we had our own chapter in the report—could range from $110 to $270 million per year. So changes to our air, our water, our soil, our food security, our disease ecology directly and directly resulting from our warming climate are going to impact the lives and the health of every Alaskan.

On the one hand, the future in the Arctic looks increasingly challenging for our rural communities. Then, on the other hand, the future also represents a new frontier. There are opportunities out there, whether they are in construction, in tourism, in energy, in minerals, in shipping, or in community development. You have challenges, and you have opportunities.

For some time now, my team and I have been working on two pieces of Arctic legislation to support responsible investment and development in the U.S. Arctic. It hasn't been easy to meet the expectations and the needs of rural and indigenous communities that are most impacted by climate change in the U.S. Arctic, while, at the same time, focusing on economic development, environmental stewardship, human security, but we have really been trying to mesh these all together. I believe these two bills that I am introducing, along with Senator SULLIVAN—the Arctic Policy Act of 2018 and the Shipping and Environmental Arctic Leadership Act of 2018; that is, the SEAL Act—I think are steps in the right direction, helping us move closer to meeting these objectives.

The first bill, the Arctic Policy Act of 2018, will statutorily establish the Arctic Executive Steering Committee under the Department of Homeland Security and provide the coordination necessary to advance a truly integrated plan for the Arctic.

By reinvigorating the central coordinating body for Arctic issues, the legislation will provide a venue to deliver the type of plan America needs and, more importantly, a place to work that plan into action across Agencies.

As it stands now, everybody has a little bit of a piece of something when it comes to the Arctic, but it doesn't really seem as though there is any coordinating entity. When you don't have anybody who ultimately has that responsibility, oftentimes, it is hard to see the progress.

We know Federal policy does not exist in a vacuum, so in addition to establishing the Arctic Executive Steering Committee, the legislation would also establish an Arctic Advisory Committee to ensure that residents of the Arctic and Alaska Native people have a seat at the table for the development of policy. They don't want to be sitting back and being told what is happening; they want a seat at the table. As the indigenous peoples of the region, they fully have that right.

Further, the legislation calls for the establishment of regional Tribal advisory groups, starting with the Bering Sea Regional Tribal Advisory Group to advise the Federal Government as it shapes national priorities within the region. These Tribal advisory groups will be empowered to provide advice on specific challenges or regionally important issues.

I would like to say that if you go to rural Alaska, if you go to a small village, you are not going to find a lot of Ph.D.s out there, but what they do have is a Ph.D. in Arctic living. They know what is going on. Their very lives and survival depend on understanding and appreciating the world around them.

In the Arctic, we have an opportunity to show the world how to integrate indigenous knowledge and voices into policy and science. That is why the legislation will also update the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984. This was legislation my father introduced when he was here in the Senate. We will update this to include more Native voices at the Arctic Research Commission and thereby push to include traditional knowledge and community coordination in our Nation's scientific efforts in the Arctic, especially our efforts to study and understand climate change.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 3740. A bill to establish a congressionally chartered seaway development corporation in the Arctic, consistent with customary international law, with the intention of uniting Arctic nations in a cooperative Arctic shipping union, where voluntary collective maritime shipping fees will help fund the infrastructural and environmental

demands of safe and reliable shipping in the region; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the second piece of legislation I am introducing is the Shipping and Environmental Arctic Leadership Act of 2018—the SEAL Act—which establishes a congressionally chartered seaway development corporation in the Arctic.

So this Arctic Corporation will work with representatives from NOAA, from the State Department, from the Coast Guard, and from DOT, as well as representatives from the State of Alaska, the Alaska business community, Alaska coastal and subsistence communities, and the Alaskan Maritime Labor Organization to help to develop an Arctic shipping union whose leadership will advocate for safe, secure, and reliable Arctic seaway development and further ensure that the Arctic becomes a place of international cooperation rather than competition or conflict.

The capacity to get maritime and shipping services funded by means of international cooperation is not a new concept. We have seen it done, and it exists with the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation in the United States. This is one example where countries that share a large maritime border—the United States and Canada—are able to develop a seaway system—one that is safe, secure, and reliable for its users.

I have people stop me and say: Well, this is so many years off from when we are going to see levels of commercial activity in the Arctic. There is no real need to move on this, is there?

Well, again, I will just remind you of some of the charts we have seen. The multiyear ice that once made the Arctic impassable and shielded our northernmost border year-round is diminishing, again, due to climate change. Because of this, shipping in and around the Arctic traffic will increase. So when you appreciate where we are with the Northwest Passage here, the Northwest Passage, by 2025, is intermittently open, but the for pathway, if you are going from the Bering Strait, right off of Alaska here and through Rotterdam, you are going to have an opportunity to basically be cutting through there.

For the northern sea route, following through Russia, by 2025, they anticipate that this sea lane will be open for a full 6 weeks.

The transpolar route, going more directly over the pole, by 2025 will have 2 weeks of open shipping.

So, yes, shipping is going to increase. When you can figure out a quicker way to get from Asia to Europe, when you can shave off days, when you can use less fuel, you are saving money. So this is, from a trade perspective, hugely significant.

But this looming increase in commercial vessel traffic also translates to greater demand for services and processes necessary to ensure that Arctic shipping can be reliable and safe for shippers that need to transport goods from one place to another on a timetable.

This last chart that I am going to share is just a reminder of not today's reality, but this is the number of vessels that were tracked between year 2014 and 2015. So this is the Aleutians right down here. This is where the Great Circle route ships come through. It is so black here that you can't even tell that these are lines, but this demonstrates the level of existing traffic that we have here. Even 3 years ago, the number of vessels that transited up to the Arctic, whether it was to go over into the Beaufort or the Chukchi in the Arctic Ocean or to go through the northern sea route in that direction—this is here, and this is now. This is what is happening in the Arctic.

So what we are seeking to do with this SEAL legislation is to help to fund a system of Arctic ports—not just one port but a system of Arctic ports—ports of refuge for ships in trouble and ports to send, receive, and transship goods and people, private aids to navigation, all-weather tugs that can help ships that may have lost power or steerage, and to provide a commercial architecture to support the private sector investments in and use of icebreakers that can help ships that may be boxed in because of the ice. That happens.

So as we talk about this proposal that we are laying down in this legislation, I have likened it to Uber for icebreakers. It helps people kind of understand what it is that we are looking at here.

Port infrastructure will also benefit rural Arctic communities and bring down costs for delivering fuel, groceries, and other necessities which, in my State at this time, are just extraordinarily high. I think this legislation can help the United States to organize and attract investment opportunities for ports and icebreakers, for our own safety and for that of commercial vessels that are venturing into the Arctic, as well as, again, for those who live there.

So these two bills, building on the strategic efforts of the Department of Defense and the strides that have been made in the NDAA, can provide the legislative direction needed to help to develop that aspirational plan that Secretary Carter recognized that we need.

While I will be introducing these now, I am also going to be reintroducing them in the next Congress, and I certainly look forward to working with any and all of my colleagues and interested parties, as well as the executive branch, to refine them in the hopes that we can truly reclaim America's leadership role in the Arctic in this next Congress.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 719—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 15, 2018, AS ''WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY''

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 719

Whereas, in 1992, the Wreaths Across America project began an annual tradition of donating and transporting Maine balsam fir veterans' wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery each December and placing those wreaths on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas 5,000 donated veterans' wreaths were transported from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery during the first year of the Wreaths Across America project and placed on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas, during the 27 years preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, more than 6,082,300 wreaths have been sent to locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials, in every State and overseas;

Whereas the mission of the Wreaths Across America project, to ''Remember, Honor, Teach'', is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and overseas, including at—

(1) Arlington National Cemetery;

(2) veterans cemeteries; and

(3) other memorial locations;

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project carries out a week-long veterans parade between the State of Maine and the Commonwealth of Virginia, stopping along the way to spread a message about the importance of—

(1) remembering the fallen heroes of the United States;

(2) honoring those who serve; and

(3) teaching the next generation of children about—

(A) the service of veterans; and

(B) the sacrifices made by veterans and the families of veterans to preserve the freedoms enjoyed by the people of the United States;

Whereas, in 2017, approximately 1,565,300 veterans' wreaths were delivered to more than 1,422 locations across the United States and overseas, an increase of more than 200 locations compared to the previous year;

Whereas, in December 2018, the tradition of escorting tractor-trailers filled with donated wreaths from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery will be continued by—

(1) the Patriot Guard Riders; and

(2) other patriotic escort units, including—

(A) motorcycle units;

(B) law enforcement units; and

(C) first responder units;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of individuals volunteer each December to help lay veterans' wreaths;

Whereas, in 2018, the trucking industry in the United States will continue to support the Wreaths Across America project by providing drivers, equipment, and related services to assist in the transportation of wreaths across the United States to more than 1,500 locations;

Whereas the Senate designated December 16, 2017, as ''Wreaths Across America Day''; and

Whereas, on December 15, 2018, the Wreaths Across America project will continue the proud legacy of bringing veterans' wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates December 15, 2018, as ''Wreaths Across America Day'';

(2) honors—

(A) the Wreaths Across America project;

(B) patriotic escort units, including—

(i) motorcycle units;

(ii) law enforcement units; and

(iii) first responder units;

(C) the trucking industry in the United States; and

(D) the volunteers and donors involved in this worthy tradition; and

(3) recognizes—

(A) the service of veterans and members of the Armed Forces; and

(B) the sacrifices that veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and the families of veterans and members of the Armed Forces have made, and continue to make, for the United States, a great nation.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleague Senator ANGUS KING in sponsoring this resolution to designate December 15, 2018, as Wreaths Across America Day. Throughout human history, the evergreen wreath has been offered as a tribute to heroes. On December 15, we gather to offer this enduring symbol of valor and sacrifice to America's heroes. In this season of giving, we pay tribute to those who have given us the most precious gift of all, our freedom.

Some who secured that gift did not return home. Some did return but have since passed on. Some remain missing but will never be forgotten. Many still live in honor among us.

We here at home must always respect their service. Often, we do this on those special days we set aside each year—Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. Sometimes, we do this spontaneously because our hearts, rather than our calendars, tell us to. That is the origin of Wreaths Across America.

Twenty-six Christmases ago, Morrill and Karen Worcester took time during their busiest season to donate and deliver 5,000 wreaths from their company in Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery to mark the graves of fallen heroes. The people of Maine are proud that this heartfelt expression of America's gratitude began in our State, and I congratulate Karen and Morrill for being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's Patriot Award this April, the highest award the Society can bestow to civilians.

In the years since, that heartfelt gesture became a national phenomenon and an American tradition. More than six million wreaths have been laid by tens of thousands of volunteers at more than 600 cemeteries, here and abroad, and even on ships at sea. This remarkable effort is made possible by trucking companies across the Nation who donate their services and by the generosity of thousands of volunteers and supporters. With the Patriot Guard escort, the convoy from Maine to Washington is greeted at every stop along the way by grateful citizens of all ages. On December 15—after months of hard work, careful planning, and generous donations—wreaths will be laid where American heroes lie at rest.

This year, for the first time, more than 9,300 Maine-made balsam wreaths will mark the headstones of all American service members laid to rest at the Normandy American Cemetery in France. It has been nearly 75 years since our brave troops stormed those beaches to liberate Europe but they will never be forgotten.

Wreaths Across America honors our departed heroes, but it does even more. It tells our veterans that we honor their service. It tells our men and women in uniform today that we are grateful for their courage and devotion to duty. It tells the families of those serving our country that they are in our thoughts and prayers. And it tells the families of the fallen that we share their grief.

The mission of Wreaths Across America is: Remember, Honor, Teach. Thanks to the spirit of this Maine-made tradition, we remember and honor America's veterans, while also teaching the generations to come of the sacrifices that have been made to secure a future of peace and liberty. May God bless these heroes, and may God bless America.

SENATE RESOLUTION 720—EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE AND HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE SHOOTING AT MERCY HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, ON NOVEMBER 19, 2018

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 720

Whereas on November 19, 2018, a gunman opened fire in the parking lot and lobby of Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois;

Whereas the gunman took the lives of 3 individuals who had dedicated themselves to serving others as members of the law enforcement and medical communities;

Whereas Chicago Police Officer Samuel Jimenez, age 28, of the Second Police District, responded to the emergency call with bravery and made the ultimate sacrifice in an effort to protect the lives of others;

Whereas Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said that—

(1) Officer Jimenez and the other officers who responded to the shooting ''did what heroic officers always do—they ran toward the gunfire''; and

(2) the actions of Officer Jimenez and the other officers who responded to the shooting ''saved a lot of lives'';

Whereas Officer Jimenez was—

(1) a dedicated law enforcement officer;

(2) a loving husband; and

(3) a loving father of 3 young children;

Whereas Officer Jimenez was the second police officer of the Chicago Police Department to be fatally shot in the line of duty in 2018, after Commander Paul R. Bauer, the commander of the 18th Police District, was fatally shot while attempting to apprehend an armed suspect on February 13;

Whereas Dr. Tamara O'Neal, age 38, a physician at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center, was fatally shot by the gunman in the hospital parking lot;

Whereas Dr. O'Neal, a graduate of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, had worked in the emergency department at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center treating others and was devoted to her church and to charitable causes;

Whereas Dr. O'Neal was described by the director of the emergency department at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center as a ''wonderful individual'' who was ''dedicated to caring for her community'';

Whereas Dayna Less, age 24, a pharmacist at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center, was fatally shot by the gunman;

Whereas Ms. Less, a graduate of Purdue University, had overcome health challenges as a youth and had decided to become a pharmacist to help serve the health needs of others;

Whereas Ms. Less, who was engaged to be married to her childhood sweetheart, was described by her father as ''the strongest person I know'';

Whereas the city of Chicago suffers from our nation's epidemic of gun violence, with nearly 2,700 people killed or injured by gunfire in Chicago in 2018;

Whereas the medical community in the United States works tirelessly every day to provide professional and dedicated care to individuals affected by gun violence across the nation;

Whereas the law enforcement community in the United States works tirelessly every day to respond to incidents of gun violence and protect others from harm at the risk of their own safety; and

Whereas the nation owes a debt of gratitude to members of the law enforcement and medical communities in Chicago and across the United States for the service they provide in helping others, including in the response to the shooting at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center on November 19, 2018: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses sincere condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of Officer Samuel Jimenez, Dr. Tamara O'Neal, and Dayna Less, the victims of the tragic shooting on November 19, 2018, at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois;

(2) honors the lives and memory of the victims, with gratitude for the service the victims provided as members of the law enforcement and medical communities;

(3) extends support to the individuals subjected to the trauma of the shooting;

(4) thanks the law enforcement officers, medical personnel, emergency responders, and Mercy Hospital and Medical Center workers who responded to the shooting with professionalism, dedication, and bravery; and

(5) stands in solidarity with the victims of senseless gun violence in Chicago and in communities across the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 721—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 21, 2018, AS ''NATIONAL CHEMISTRY WEEK''

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 721

Whereas chemistry is the science of basic units of matter and, consequently, plays a role in every aspect of human life;

Whereas chemistry has broad applications, including food science, soil science, water quality, energy, sustainability, medicine, and electronics;

Whereas the science of chemistry is vital to improving the quality of human life and plays an important role in addressing critical global challenges;

Whereas innovations in chemistry continue to spur economic growth and job creation and have applications for a wide range of industries;

Whereas National Chemistry Week is part of a broader vision to improve human life through chemistry and to advance the chemistry enterprise and the practitioners of that enterprise for the benefit of communities and the environment;

Whereas the purpose of National Chemistry Week is to reach the public with educational messages about chemistry in order to foster greater understanding of and appreciation for the applications and benefits of chemistry;

Whereas National Chemistry Week strives to stimulate the interest of young people, including women and underrepresented groups, in enthusiastically studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and in pursuing science-related careers that lead to innovations and major scientific breakthroughs;

Whereas National Chemistry Week highlights many of the everyday uses of chemistry, including in food, dyes and pigments, plastics, soaps and detergents, health products, and energy technologies;

Whereas the theme of the 31st annual National Chemistry Week is ''Chemistry is out of this world!'', which highlights the role of chemistry in the study of the chemical compositions of and processes relating to stars, planets, comets, and interstellar media; and

Whereas students who participate in National Chemistry Week deserve recognition and support for their efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning on October 21, 2018, as ''National Chemistry Week'';

(2) supports the goals of and welcomes the participants in the 31st annual National Chemistry Week;

(3) recognizes the need to promote the fields of science, including chemistry, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and to encourage youth to pursue careers in these fields; and

(4) commends the American Chemical Society and the partners of that society for organizing and convening events and activities surrounding National Chemistry Week each year.

SENATE RESOLUTION 722—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 26, 2018, AS ''DAY OF THE DEPLOYED''

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 722

Whereas more than 2,100,000 individuals serve as members of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas several hundred thousand members of the Armed Forces rotate each year through deployments to more than 150 countries in every region of the world;

Whereas several million members of the Armed Forces have deployed to the area of operations of the United States Central Command since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks;

Whereas the United States is kept strong and free by the loyal military personnel from the total force (the regular components, the National Guard, and the Reserves), who protect the precious heritage of the United States through their declarations and actions;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces serving at home and abroad have courageously answered the call to duty to defend the ideals of the United States and to preserve peace and freedom around the world;

Whereas the United States remains committed to easing the transition from deployment abroad to service at home for members of the Armed Forces and the families of the members;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces personify the virtues of patriotism, service, duty, courage, and sacrifice;

Whereas the families of members of the Armed Forces make important and significant sacrifices for the United States; and

Whereas the Senate designated October 26 as ''Day of the Deployed'' in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 26, 2018, as ''Day of the Deployed'';

(2) honors the deployed members of the Armed Forces of the United States and the families of the members;

(3) calls on the people of the United States to reflect on the service of those members of the Armed Forces, wherever the members serve, past, present, and future; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe the Day of the Deployed with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 723—CONGRATULATING THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 723

Whereas the American College of Emergency Physicians is the oldest and largest national medical specialty organization representing physicians who practice emergency medicine;

Whereas the American College of Emergency Physicians was founded in 1968 in Lansing, Michigan by 8 physicians and has grown to represent more than 37,000 members belonging to 53 chapters, including 1 chapter in each State, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia and the Government Services Chapter that represents emergency physicians employed by branches of the military and other Government agencies;

Whereas emergency physicians treat more than 141,000,000 patients each year;

Whereas ''Anyone, Anything, Anytime'' is the approach of emergency physicians who provide diagnosis and treatment services in the health care system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year;

Whereas emergency physicians are critical to the ability of the United States to respond to disasters and mass casualty events;

Whereas quick thinking and smart decisions by emergency physicians can save many lives every year;

Whereas emergency physicians are leaders in defining, evaluating, and improving quality emergency care, focusing on individual patients while advocating for the wellness of society as a whole;

Whereas emergency medicine was recognized in 1979 by the American Board of Medical Specialties as the 23rd medical specialty in the United States;

Whereas the American College of Emergency Physicians is a leading continuing education source for emergency physicians and a primary information resource on developments in the specialty of emergency medicine; and

Whereas the development of physicians specializing in emergency care has contributed greatly to the health and well-being of all the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the American College of Emergency Physicians on its 50th anniversary;

(2) recognizes the accomplishments and contributions emergency physicians have made to advance the health care system in the United States; and

(3) reaffirms the value of emergency medicine and the vital role that emergency physicians serve in ensuring the health and well-being of their patients.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4073. Mr. PERDUE (for Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. NELSON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1092, to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions.

SA 4074. Mr. PERDUE (for Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. COONS)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2961, to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

SA 4075. Mr. PERDUE (for Mr. GRASSLEY) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 6964, to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

SA 4076. Mr. PERDUE proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 565, honoring the 40th anniversary of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Kings Bay, Georgia.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4073. Mr. PERDUE (for Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. NELSON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1092, to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Interstate Transport Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF KNIVES.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term ''transport''—

(1) includes staying in temporary lodging overnight, common carrier misrouting or delays, stops for food, fuel, vehicle maintenance, emergencies, or medical treatment, and any other activity related to the journey of a person; and

(2) does not include transport of a knife with the intent to commit an offense punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year involving the use or threatened use of force against another person, or with knowledge, or reasonable cause to believe, that such an offense is to be committed in the course of, or arising from, the journey.

(b) TRANSPORT OF KNIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of any law or any rule or regulation of a State or any political subdivision thereof, a person who is not otherwise

prohibited by any Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving a knife shall be entitled to transport a knife for any lawful purpose from any place where the person may lawfully possess, carry, or transport the knife to any other place where the person may lawfully possess, carry, or transport the knife if—

(A) in the case of transport by motor vehicle, the knife—

(i) is not directly accessible from the passenger compartment of the motor vehicle; or

(ii) in the case of a motor vehicle without a compartment separate from the passenger compartment, is contained in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console; and

(B) in the case of transport by means other than a motor vehicle, including any transport over land or on or through water, the knife is contained in a locked container.

(2) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not apply to the transport of a knife or tool in the cabin of a passenger aircraft subject to the rules and regulations of the Transportation Security Administration.

(c) EMERGENCY KNIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A person—

(A) may carry in the passenger compartment of a mode of transportation a knife or tool—

(i) the blades of which consist only of a blunt tipped safety blade, a guarded blade, or both; and

(ii) that is specifically designed for enabling escape in an emergency by cutting safety belts; and

(B) shall not be required to secure a knife or tool described in subparagraph (A) in a locked container.

(2) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not apply to the transport of a knife or tool in the cabin of a passenger aircraft subject to the rules and regulations of the Transportation Security Administration.

(d) NO ARREST.—A person who is transporting a knife in compliance with this section may not be arrested for violation of any law, rule, or regulation of a State or political subdivision of a State related to the possession, transport, or carrying of a knife, unless there is probable cause to believe that the person is not in compliance with subsection (b).

(e) COSTS.—If a person who asserts this section as a claim or defense in a civil or criminal action or proceeding is a prevailing party on the claim or defense, the court shall award costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the person.

(f) EXPUNGEMENT.—If a person who asserts this section as a claim or defense in a criminal proceeding is a prevailing party on the claim or defense, the court shall enter an order that directs that there be expunged from all official records all references to—

(1) the arrest of the person for the offense as to which the claim or defense was asserted;

(2) the institution of any criminal proceedings against the person relating to such offense; and

(3) the results of the proceedings, if any.

(g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit any right to possess, carry, or transport a knife under applicable State law.

SA 4074. Mr. PERDUE (for Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. COONS)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2961, to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990; as follows:

On page 28, line 3, strike ''$19,000,000'' and insert ''$16,000,000''.

On page 28, line 7, strike ''$6,000,000'' and insert ''$5,000,000''.

SA 4075. Mr. PERDUE (for Mr. GRASSLEY) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 6964, to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
Sec. 3. Application of amendments.
TITLE I—DECLARATION OF PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS
Sec. 101. Purposes.
Sec. 102. Definitions.
TITLE II—CHARLES GRASSLEY JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM
Sec. 201. Concentration of Federal efforts.
Sec. 202. Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
Sec. 203. Annual report.
Sec. 204. Allocation of funds.
Sec. 205. State plans.
Sec. 206. Repeal of juvenile delinquency prevention block grant program.
Sec. 207. Research and evaluation; statistical analyses; information dissemination.
Sec. 208. Training and technical assistance.
Sec. 209. Administrative authority.
TITLE III—INCENTIVE GRANTS FOR PRISON REDUCTION THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES, MENTORING, INTERVENTION, SUPPORT, AND EDUCATION
Sec. 301. Short Title.
Sec. 302. Definitions.
Sec. 303. Duties and functions of the administrator.
Sec. 304. Grants for delinquency prevention programs.
Sec. 305. Grants for tribal delinquency prevention and response programs.
Sec. 306. Evaluation by Government Accountability Office.
Sec. 307. Technical amendment.
TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
Sec. 401. Evaluation by Government Accountability Office.
Sec. 402. Authorization of appropriations; accountability and oversight.

SEC. 3. APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.

The amendments made by this Act shall not apply with respect to funds appropriated for any fiscal year that begins before the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE I—DECLARATION OF PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

SEC. 101. PURPOSES.

Section 102 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11102) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting '', tribal,'' after ''State'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting '', tribal,'' after ''State''; and

(B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(3) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

''(3) to assist State, tribal, and local governments in addressing juvenile crime through the provision of technical assistance, research, training, evaluation, and the dissemination of current and relevant information on effective and evidence-based programs and practices for combating juvenile delinquency; and''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) to support a continuum of evidence-based or promising programs (including delinquency prevention, intervention, mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, family services, and services for children exposed to violence) that are trauma informed, reflect the science of adolescent development, and are designed to meet the needs of at-risk youth and youth who come into contact with the justice system.''.

SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS.

Section 103 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11103) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (8)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by adding ''or'' at the end;

(B) by striking subparagraph (C); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (C);

(2) in paragraph (18)—

(A) by inserting ''for purposes of title II,'' before ''the term''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''that has a law enforcement function, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the Attorney General;'';

(3) by amending paragraph (22) to read as follows:

''(22) the term 'jail or lockup for adults' means a secure facility that is used by a State, unit of local government, or law enforcement authority to detain or confine adult inmates;'';

(4) by amending paragraph (25) to read as follows:

''(25) the term 'sight or sound contact' means any physical, clear visual, or verbal contact that is not brief and inadvertent;'';

(5) by amending paragraph (26) to read as follows:

''(26) the term 'adult inmate'—

''(A) means an individual who—

''(i) has reached the age of full criminal responsibility under applicable State law; and

''(ii) has been arrested and is in custody for or awaiting trial on a criminal charge, or is convicted of a criminal offense; and

''(B) does not include an individual who—

''(i) at the time of the offense, was younger than the maximum age at which a youth can be held in a juvenile facility under applicable State law; and

''(ii) was committed to the care and custody or supervision, including post-placement or parole supervision, of a juvenile correctional agency by a court of competent jurisdiction or by operation of applicable State law;'';

(6) in paragraph (28), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(7) in paragraph (29), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(8) by adding at the end the following:

''(30) the term 'core requirements'—

''(A) means the requirements described in paragraphs (11), (12), (13), and (15) of section 223(a); and

''(B) does not include the data collection requirements described in subparagraphs (A) through (K) of section 207(1);

''(31) the term 'chemical agent' means a spray or injection used to temporarily incapacitate a person, including oleoresin capsicum spray, tear gas, and 2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile gas;

''(32) the term 'isolation'—

''(A) means any instance in which a youth is confined alone for more than 15 minutes in a room or cell; and

''(B) does not include—

''(i) confinement during regularly scheduled sleeping hours;

''(ii) separation based on a treatment program approved by a licensed medical or mental health professional;

''(iii) confinement or separation that is requested by the youth; or

''(iv) the separation of the youth from a group in a nonlocked setting for the limited purpose of calming;

''(33) the term 'restraints' has the meaning given that term in section 591 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290ii);

''(34) the term 'evidence-based' means a program or practice that—

''(A) is demonstrated to be effective when implemented with fidelity;

''(B) is based on a clearly articulated and empirically supported theory;

''(C) has measurable outcomes relevant to juvenile justice, including a detailed description of the outcomes produced in a particular population, whether urban or rural; and

''(D) has been scientifically tested and proven effective through randomized control studies or comparison group studies and with the ability to replicate and scale;

''(35) the term 'promising' means a program or practice that—

''(A) is demonstrated to be effective based on positive outcomes relevant to juvenile justice from one or more objective, independent, and scientifically valid evaluations, as documented in writing to the Administrator; and

''(B) will be evaluated through a well-designed and rigorous study, as described in paragraph (34)(D);

''(36) the term 'dangerous practice' means an act, procedure, or program that creates an unreasonable risk of physical injury, pain, or psychological harm to a juvenile subjected to the act, procedure, or program;

''(37) the term 'screening' means a brief process—

''(A) designed to identify youth who may have mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse, or other needs requiring immediate attention, intervention, and further evaluation; and

''(B) the purpose of which is to quickly identify a youth with possible mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse, or other needs in need of further assessment;

''(38) the term 'assessment' includes, at a minimum, an interview and review of available records and other pertinent information—

''(A) by an appropriately trained professional who is licensed or certified by the applicable State in the mental health, behavioral health, or substance abuse fields; and

''(B) which is designed to identify significant mental health, behavioral health, or substance abuse treatment needs to be addressed during a youth's confinement;

''(39) for purposes of section 223(a)(15), the term 'contact' means the points at which a youth and the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system officially intersect, including interactions with a juvenile justice, juvenile court, or law enforcement official;

''(40) the term 'trauma-informed' means—

''(A) understanding the impact that exposure to violence and trauma have on a youth's physical, psychological, and psychosocial development;

''(B) recognizing when a youth has been exposed to violence and trauma and is in need of help to recover from the adverse impacts of trauma; and

''(C) responding in ways that resist retraumatization;

''(41) the term 'racial and ethnic disparity' means minority youth populations are involved at a decision point in the juvenile justice system at disproportionately higher rates than non-minority youth at that decision point;

''(42) the term 'status offender' means a juvenile who is charged with or who has committed an offense that would not be criminal if committed by an adult;

''(43) the term 'rural' means an area that is not located in a metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget;

''(44) the term 'internal controls' means a process implemented to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives in—

''(A) effectiveness and efficiency of operations, such as grant management practices;

''(B) reliability of reporting for internal and external use; and

''(C) compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as well as recommendations of the Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office; and

''(45) the term 'tribal government' means the governing body of an Indian Tribe.''.

TITLE II—CHARLES GRASSLEY JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

SEC. 201. CONCENTRATION OF FEDERAL EFFORTS.

Section 204 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11114) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), in the first sentence—

(i) by striking ''a long-term plan, and implement'' and inserting the following: ''a long-term plan to improve the juvenile justice system in the United States, taking into account scientific knowledge regarding adolescent development and behavior and regarding the effects of delinquency prevention programs and juvenile justice interventions on adolescents, and shall implement''; and

(ii) by striking ''research, and improvement of the juvenile justice system in the United States'' and inserting ''and research''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking ''Federal Register'' and all that follows and inserting ''Federal Register during the 30-day period ending on October 1 of each year.''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking paragraph (7);

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (6) and (7), respectively;

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4), the following:

''(5) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, in consultation with Indian Tribes, develop a policy for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to collaborate with representatives of Indian Tribes with a criminal justice function on the implementation of the provisions of this Act relating to Indian Tribes;'';

(D) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(E) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking ''monitoring'';

(ii) by striking ''section 223(a)(15)'' and inserting ''section 223(a)(14)''; and

(iii) by striking ''to review the adequacy of such systems; and'' and inserting ''for monitoring compliance.''.

SEC. 202. COORDINATING COUNCIL ON JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION.

Section 206 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11116) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting ''the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, the Secretary of the Interior,'' after ''the Secretary of Health and Human Services,''; and

(ii) by striking ''Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization'' and inserting ''Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''United States'' and inserting ''Federal Government''; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''paragraphs (12)(A), (13), and (14) of section 223(a) of this title'' and inserting ''the core requirements''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', on an annual basis'' after ''collectively''; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B) not later than 120 days after the completion of the last meeting of the Council during any fiscal year, submit to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate a report that—

''(i) contains the recommendations described in subparagraph (A);

''(ii) includes a detailed account of the activities conducted by the Council during the fiscal year, including a complete detailed accounting of expenses incurred by the Council to conduct operations in accordance with this section;

''(iii) is published on the websites of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Council, and the Department of Justice; and

''(iv) is in addition to the annual report required under section 207.''.

SEC. 203. ANNUAL REPORT.

Section 207 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11117) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''a fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year'';

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and gender'' and inserting '', gender, and ethnicity, as such term is defined by the Bureau of the Census,'';

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (F)—

(i) by inserting ''and other'' before ''disabilities,''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(G) a summary of data from 1 month of the applicable fiscal year of the use of restraints and isolation upon juveniles held in the custody of secure detention and correctional facilities operated by a State or unit of local government;

''(H) the number of status offense cases petitioned to court, number of status offenders held in secure detention, the findings used to justify the use of secure detention, and the average period of time a status offender was held in secure detention;

''(I) the number of juveniles released from custody and the type of living arrangement to which they are released;

''(J) the number of juveniles whose offense originated on school grounds, during school-sponsored off-campus activities, or due to a referral by a school official, as collected and reported by the Department of Education or similar State educational agency; and

''(K) the number of juveniles in the custody of secure detention and correctional facilities operated by a State or unit of local or tribal government who report being pregnant.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) A description of the criteria used to determine what programs qualify as evidence-based and promising programs under this title and title V and a comprehensive list of those programs the Administrator has determined meet such criteria in both rural and urban areas.

''(6) A description of funding provided to Indian Tribes under this Act or for a juvenile delinquency or prevention program under the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–211; 124 Stat. 2261), including direct Federal grants and funding provided to Indian Tribes through a State or unit of local government.

''(7) An analysis and evaluation of the internal controls at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to determine if grantees are following the requirements of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant programs and what remedial action the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has taken to recover any grant funds that are expended in violation of the grant programs, including instances—

''(A) in which supporting documentation was not provided for cost reports;

''(B) where unauthorized expenditures occurred; or

''(C) where subrecipients of grant funds were not compliant with program requirements.

''(8) An analysis and evaluation of the total amount of payments made to grantees that the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recouped from grantees that were found to be in violation of policies and procedures of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant programs, including—

''(A) the full name and location of the grantee;

''(B) the violation of the program found;

''(C) the amount of funds sought to be recouped by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and

''(D) the actual amount recouped by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.''.

SEC. 204. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.

(a) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 221(b)(1) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11131(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''2 percent'' and inserting ''5 percent''.

(b) OTHER ALLOCATIONS.—Section 222 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11132) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''age eighteen'' and inserting ''18 years of age, based on the most recent data available from the Bureau of the Census''; and

(B) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting the following:

''(2)(A) If the aggregate amount appropriated for a fiscal year to carry out this title is less than $75,000,000, then—

''(i) the amount allocated to each State other than a State described in clause (ii) for that fiscal year shall be not less than $400,000; and

''(ii) the amount allocated to the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for that fiscal year shall be not less than $75,000.

''(B) If the aggregate amount appropriated for a fiscal year to carry out this title is not less than $75,000,000, then—

''(i) the amount allocated to each State other than a State described in clause (ii) for that fiscal year shall be not less than $600,000; and

''(ii) the amount allocated to the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for that fiscal year shall be not less than $100,000.'';

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''efficient administration, including monitoring, evaluation, and one full-time staff position'' and inserting ''effective and efficient administration of funds, including the designation of not less than one individual who shall coordinate efforts to achieve and sustain compliance with the core requirements and certify whether the State is in compliance with such requirements''; and

(3) in subsection (d), by striking ''5 per centum of the minimum'' and inserting ''not more than 5 percent of the''.

(c) CHARLES GRASSLEY JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM.—Part B of title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11131 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in the part heading, by striking ''FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR STATE AND LOCAL PROGRAMS'' and inserting ''CHARLES GRASSLEY JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM''; and

(2) by inserting before section 221 the following:

''SHORT TITLE

''SEC. 220. This part may be cited as the 'Charles Grassley Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program'.''.

SEC. 205. STATE PLANS.

Section 223 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11133) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''and shall describe the status of compliance with State plan requirements.'' and inserting ''and shall describe how the State plan is supported by or takes account of scientific knowledge regarding adolescent development and behavior and regarding the effects of delinquency prevention programs and juvenile justice interventions on adolescents. Not later than 60 days after the date on which a plan or amended plan submitted under this subsection is finalized, a State shall make the plan or amended plan publicly available by posting the plan or amended plan on the State's publicly available website.'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''described in section 299(c)(1)'' and inserting ''as designated by the chief executive officer of the State'';

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (i), by inserting ''adolescent development,'' after ''concerning'';

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) in subclause (III), by striking ''mental health, education, special education'' and inserting ''child and adolescent mental health, education, child and adolescent substance abuse, special education, services for youth with disabilities'';

(bb) in subclause (V), by striking ''delinquents or potential delinquents'' and inserting ''delinquent youth or youth at risk of delinquency'';

(cc) in subclause (VI), by striking ''youth workers involved with'' and inserting ''representatives of'';

(dd) in subclause (VII), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ee) by striking subclause (VIII) and inserting the following:

''(VIII) persons, licensed or certified by the applicable State, with expertise and competence in preventing and addressing mental health and substance abuse needs in delinquent youth and youth at risk of delinquency;

''(IX) representatives of victim or witness advocacy groups, including at least one individual with expertise in addressing the challenges of sexual abuse and exploitation and trauma, particularly the needs of youth who experience disproportionate levels of sexual abuse, exploitation, and trauma before entering the juvenile justice system; and

''(X) for a State in which one or more Indian Tribes are located, an Indian tribal representative (if such representative is available) or other individual with significant expertise in tribal law enforcement and juvenile justice in Indian tribal communities;'';

(III) in clause (iv), by striking ''24 at the time of appointment'' and inserting ''28 at the time of initial appointment''; and

(IV) in clause (v) by inserting ''or, if not feasible and in appropriate circumstances, who is the parent or guardian of someone who has been or is currently under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system'' after ''juvenile justice system'';

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''30 days'' and inserting ''45 days'';

(iii) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(II) in clause (ii), by striking ''at least annually recommendations regarding State compliance with the requirements of paragraphs (11), (12), and (13)'' and inserting ''at least every 2 years a report and necessary recommendations regarding State compliance with the core requirements''; and

(iv) in subparagraph (E)—

(I) in clause (i), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(II) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(D) in paragraph (5)(C), by striking ''Indian tribes'' and all that follows through ''applicable to the detention and confinement of juveniles'' and inserting ''Indian Tribes that agree to attempt to comply with the core requirements applicable to the detention and confinement of juveniles'';

(E) in paragraph (7)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''performs law enforcement functions'' and inserting ''has jurisdiction''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(II) by striking clause (iv) and inserting the following:

''(iv) a plan to provide alternatives to detention for status offenders, survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, and others, where appropriate, such as specialized or problem-solving courts or diversion to home-based or community-based services or treatment for those youth in need of mental health, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorder services at the time such juveniles first come into contact with the juvenile justice system;

''(v) a plan to reduce the number of children housed in secure detention and corrections facilities who are awaiting placement in residential treatment programs;

''(vi) a plan to engage family members, where appropriate, in the design and delivery of juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment services, particularly post-placement;

''(vii) a plan to use community-based services to respond to the needs of at-risk youth or youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system;

''(viii) a plan to promote evidence-based and trauma-informed programs and practices; and

''(ix) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, a plan which shall be implemented not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, to—

''(I) eliminate the use of restraints of known pregnant juveniles housed in secure

juvenile detention and correction facilities, during labor, delivery, and post-partum recovery, unless credible, reasonable grounds exist to believe the detainee presents an immediate and serious threat of hurting herself, staff, or others; and

''(II) eliminate the use of abdominal restraints, leg and ankle restraints, wrist restraints behind the back, and four-point restraints on known pregnant juveniles, unless—

''(aa) credible, reasonable grounds exist to believe the detainee presents an immediate and serious threat of hurting herself, staff, or others; or

''(bb) reasonable grounds exist to believe the detainee presents an immediate and credible risk of escape that cannot be reasonably minimized through any other method;'';

(F) in paragraph (8), by striking ''existing'' and inserting ''evidence-based and promising'';

(G) in paragraph (9)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', with priority in funding given to entities meeting the criteria for evidence-based or promising programs'' after ''used for'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (i)—

(aa) by inserting ''status offenders and other'' before ''youth who need''; and

(bb) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(II) in clause (ii) by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(III) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

''(iii) for youth who need specialized intensive and comprehensive services that address the unique issues encountered by youth when they become involved with gangs;'';

(iii) in subparagraph (B)(i)—

(I) by striking ''parents and other family members'' and inserting ''status offenders, other youth, and the parents and other family members of such offenders and youth''; and

(II) by striking ''be retained'' and inserting ''remain'';

(iv) in subparagraph (E)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''delinquent'' and inserting ''at-risk or delinquent youth''; and

(II) in clause (i), by inserting '', including for truancy prevention and reduction'' before the semicolon;

(v) in subparagraph (F), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''expanding'' and inserting ''programs to expand'';

(vi) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) through (S) as subparagraphs (H) through (T), respectively;

(vii) by inserting after subparagraph (F), the following:

''(G) programs—

''(i) to ensure youth have access to appropriate legal representation; and

''(ii) to expand access to publicly supported, court-appointed legal counsel who are trained to represent juveniles in adjudication proceedings,

except that the State may not use more than 2 percent of the funds received under section 222 for these purposes;'';

(viii) in subparagraph (H), as so redesignated, by striking ''State,'' each place the term appears and inserting ''State, tribal,'';

(ix) in subparagraph (M), as so redesignated—

(I) in clause (i)—

(aa) by inserting ''pre-adjudication and'' before ''post-adjudication'';

(bb) by striking ''restraints'' and inserting ''alternatives''; and

(cc) by inserting ''specialized or problem-solving courts,'' after ''(including''; and

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) by striking ''by the provision by the Administrator''; and

(bb) by striking ''to States'';

(x) in subparagraph (N), as so redesignated—

(I) by inserting ''and reduce the risk of recidivism'' after ''families''; and

(II) by striking ''so that such juveniles may be retained in their homes'';

(xi) in subparagraph (S), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(xii) in subparagraph (T), as so redesignated—

(I) by inserting ''or co-occurring disorder'' after ''mental health'';

(II) by inserting ''court-involved or'' before ''incarcerated'';

(III) by striking ''suspected to be'';

(IV) by striking ''and discharge plans'' and inserting ''provision of treatment, and development of discharge plans''; and

(V) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(xiii) by inserting after subparagraph (T) the following:

''(U) programs and projects designed—

''(i) to inform juveniles of the opportunity and process for sealing and expunging juvenile records; and

''(ii) to assist juveniles in pursuing juvenile record sealing and expungements for both adjudications and arrests not followed by adjudications;

except that the State may not use more than 2 percent of the funds received under section 222 for these purposes;

''(V) programs that address the needs of girls in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, including pregnant girls, young mothers, survivors of commercial sexual exploitation or domestic child sex trafficking, girls with disabilities, and girls of color, including girls who are members of an Indian Tribe; and

''(W) monitoring for compliance with the core requirements and providing training and technical assistance on the core requirements to secure facilities;'';

(H) by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

''(11)(A) in accordance with rules issued by the Administrator, provide that a juvenile shall not be placed in a secure detention facility or a secure correctional facility, if—

''(i) the juvenile is charged with or has committed an offense that would not be criminal if committed by an adult, excluding—

''(I) a juvenile who is charged with or has committed a violation of section 922(x)(2) of title 18, United States Code, or of a similar State law;

''(II) a juvenile who is charged with or has committed a violation of a valid court order issued and reviewed in accordance with paragraph (23); and

''(III) a juvenile who is held in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Juveniles as enacted by the State; or

''(ii) the juvenile—

''(I) is not charged with any offense; and

''(II)(aa) is an alien; or

''(bb) is alleged to be dependent, neglected, or abused; and

''(B) require that—

''(i) not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, unless a court finds, after a hearing and in writing, that it is in the interest of justice, juveniles awaiting trial or other legal process who are treated as adults for purposes of prosecution in criminal court and housed in a secure facility—

''(I) shall not have sight or sound contact with adult inmates; and

''(II) except as provided in paragraph (13), may not be held in any jail or lockup for adults;

''(ii) in determining under clause (i) whether it is in the interest of justice to permit a juvenile to be held in any jail or lockup for adults, or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, a court shall consider—

''(I) the age of the juvenile;

''(II) the physical and mental maturity of the juvenile;

''(III) the present mental state of the juvenile, including whether the juvenile presents an imminent risk of harm to the juvenile;

''(IV) the nature and circumstances of the alleged offense;

''(V) the juvenile's history of prior delinquent acts;

''(VI) the relative ability of the available adult and juvenile detention facilities to not only meet the specific needs of the juvenile but also to protect the safety of the public as well as other detained youth; and

''(VII) any other relevant factor; and

''(iii) if a court determines under clause (i) that it is in the interest of justice to permit a juvenile to be held in any jail or lockup for adults—

''(I) the court shall hold a hearing not less frequently than once every 30 days, or in the case of a rural jurisdiction, not less frequently than once every 45 days, to review whether it is still in the interest of justice to permit the juvenile to be so held or have such sight or sound contact; and

''(II) the juvenile shall not be held in any jail or lockup for adults, or permitted to have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, for more than 180 days, unless the court, in writing, determines there is good cause for an extension or the juvenile expressly waives this limitation;''.

(I) in paragraph (12)(A), by striking ''contact'' and inserting ''sight or sound contact'';

(J) in paragraph (13), by striking ''contact'' each place it appears and inserting ''sight or sound contact'';

(K) in paragraph (14)—

(i) by striking ''adequate system'' and inserting ''effective system'';

(ii) by inserting ''lock-ups,'' after ''monitoring jails,'';

(iii) by inserting ''and'' after ''detention facilities,'';

(iv) by striking '', and non-secure facilities'';

(v) by striking ''insure'' and inserting ''ensure'';

(vi) by striking ''requirements of paragraphs (11), (12), and (13)'' and inserting ''core requirements''; and

(vii) by striking '', in the opinion of the Administrator,'';

(L) by striking paragraphs (22) and (27);

(M) by redesignating paragraph (28) as paragraph (27);

(N) by redesignating paragraphs (15) through (21) as paragraphs (16) through (22), respectively;

(O) by inserting after paragraph (14) the following:

''(15) implement policy, practice, and system improvement strategies at the State, territorial, local, and tribal levels, as applicable, to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, without establishing or requiring numerical standards or quotas, by—

''(A) establishing or designating existing coordinating bodies, composed of juvenile justice stakeholders, (including representatives of the educational system) at the State, local, or tribal levels, to advise efforts by States, units of local government, and Indian Tribes to reduce racial and ethnic disparities;

''(B) identifying and analyzing data on race and ethnicity at decision points in State, local, or tribal juvenile justice systems to

determine which such points create racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system; and

''(C) developing and implementing a work plan that includes measurable objectives for policy, practice, or other system changes, based on the needs identified in the data collection and analysis under subparagraph (B);'';

(P) in paragraph (16), as so redesignated, by inserting ''ethnicity,'' after ''race,'';

(Q) in paragraph (21), as so redesignated, by striking ''local,'' each place the term appears and inserting ''local, tribal,'';

(R) in paragraph (23)—

(i) in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), by striking ''juvenile'' each place it appears and inserting ''status offender'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in subparagraph (C)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(II) in clause (ii), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) if such court determines the status offender should be placed in a secure detention facility or correctional facility for violating such order—

''(I) the court shall issue a written order that—

''(aa) identifies the valid court order that has been violated;

''(bb) specifies the factual basis for determining that there is reasonable cause to believe that the status offender has violated such order;

''(cc) includes findings of fact to support a determination that there is no appropriate less restrictive alternative available to placing the status offender in such a facility, with due consideration to the best interest of the juvenile;

''(dd) specifies the length of time, not to exceed 7 days, that the status offender may remain in a secure detention facility or correctional facility, and includes a plan for the status offender's release from such facility; and

''(ee) may not be renewed or extended; and

''(II) the court may not issue a second or subsequent order described in subclause (I) relating to a status offender unless the status offender violates a valid court order after the date on which the court issues an order described in subclause (I); and''; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) there are procedures in place to ensure that any status offender held in a secure detention facility or correctional facility pursuant to a court order described in this paragraph does not remain in custody longer than 7 days or the length of time authorized by the court, whichever is shorter;'';

(S) in paragraph (26)—

(i) by inserting ''and in accordance with confidentiality concerns,'' after ''maximum extent practicable,''; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: '', so as to provide for—

''(A) data in child abuse or neglect reports relating to juveniles entering the juvenile justice system with a prior reported history of arrest, court intake, probation and parole, juvenile detention, and corrections; and

''(B) a plan to use the data described in subparagraph (A) to provide necessary services for the treatment of such victims of child abuse or neglect;'';

(T) in paragraph (27), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(U) by adding at the end the following:

''(28) provide for the coordinated use of funds provided under this title with other Federal and State funds directed at juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs;

''(29) describe the policies, procedures, and training in effect for the staff of juvenile State correctional facilities to eliminate the use of dangerous practices, unreasonable restraints, and unreasonable isolation, including by developing effective behavior management techniques;

''(30) describe—

''(A) the evidence-based methods that will be used to conduct mental health and substance abuse screening, assessment, referral, and treatment for juveniles who—

''(i) request a screening;

''(ii) show signs of needing a screening; or

''(iii) are held for a period of more than 24 hours in a secure facility that provides for an initial screening; and

''(B) how the State will seek, to the extent practicable, to provide or arrange for mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment for juveniles determined to be in need of such treatment;

''(31) describe how reentry planning by the State for juveniles will include—

''(A) a written case plan based on an assessment of needs that includes—

''(i) the pre-release and post-release plans for the juveniles;

''(ii) the living arrangement to which the juveniles are to be discharged; and

''(iii) any other plans developed for the juveniles based on an individualized assessment; and

''(B) review processes;

''(32) provide an assurance that the agency of the State receiving funds under this title collaborates with the State educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.) to develop and implement a plan to ensure that, in order to support educational progress—

''(A) the student records of adjudicated juveniles, including electronic records if available, are transferred in a timely manner from the educational program in the juvenile detention or secure treatment facility to the educational or training program into which the juveniles will enroll;

''(B) the credits of adjudicated juveniles are transferred; and

''(C) adjudicated juveniles receive full or partial credit toward high school graduation for secondary school coursework satisfactorily completed before and during the period of time during which the juveniles are held in custody, regardless of the local educational agency or entity from which the credits were earned; and

''(33) describe policies and procedures to—

''(A) screen for, identify, and document in records of the State the identification of victims of domestic human trafficking, or those at risk of such trafficking, upon intake; and

''(B) divert youth described in subparagraph (A) to appropriate programs or services, to the extent practicable.'';

(2) by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

''(c)(1) If a State fails to comply with any of the core requirements in any fiscal year, then—

''(A) subject to subparagraph (B), the amount allocated to such State under section 222 for the subsequent fiscal year shall be reduced by not less than 20 percent for each core requirement with respect to which the failure occurs; and

''(B) the State shall be ineligible to receive any allocation under such section for such fiscal year unless—

''(i) the State agrees to expend 50 percent of the amount allocated to the State for such fiscal year to achieve compliance with any such core requirement with respect to which the State is in noncompliance; or

''(ii) the Administrator determines that the State—

''(I) has achieved substantial compliance with such applicable requirements with respect to which the State was not in compliance; and

''(II) has made, through appropriate executive or legislative action, an unequivocal commitment to achieving full compliance with such applicable requirements within a reasonable time.

''(2) Of the total amount of funds not allocated for a fiscal year under paragraph (1)—

''(A) 50 percent of the unallocated funds shall be reallocated under section 222 to States that have not failed to comply with the core requirements; and

''(B) 50 percent of the unallocated funds shall be used by the Administrator to provide additional training and technical assistance to States for the purpose of promoting compliance with the core requirements.'';

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking ''described in paragraphs (11), (12), (13), and (22) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''described in the core requirements''; and

(B) by striking ''the requirements under paragraphs (11), (12), (13), and (22) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''the core requirements'';

(4) in subsection (f)(2)—

(A) by striking subparagraph (A); and

(B) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (E) as subparagraphs (A) through (D), respectively; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(g) COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For each fiscal year, the Administrator shall make a determination regarding whether each State receiving a grant under this title is in compliance or out of compliance with respect to each of the core requirements.

''(2) REPORTING.—The Administrator shall—

''(A) issue an annual public report—

''(i) describing any determination described in paragraph (1) made during the previous year, including a summary of the information on which the determination is based and the actions to be taken by the Administrator (including a description of any reduction imposed under subsection (c)); and

''(ii) for any such determination that a State is out of compliance with any of the core requirements, describing the basis for the determination; and

''(B) make the report described in subparagraph (A) available on a publicly available website.

''(3) DETERMINATIONS REQUIRED.—The Administrator may not—

''(A) determine that a State is 'not out of compliance', or issue any other determination not described in paragraph (1), with respect to any core requirement; or

''(B) otherwise fail to make the compliance determinations required under paragraph (1).''.

SEC. 206. REPEAL OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

Part C of title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11141 et seq.) is repealed.

SEC. 207. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION; STATISTICAL ANALYSES; INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.

Section 251 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11161) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''plan and identify'' and inserting ''annually publish a plan to identify''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by striking clause (iii) and inserting the following:

''(iii) successful efforts to prevent status offenders and first-time minor offenders from subsequent involvement with the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems;'';

(II) by striking clause (vii) and inserting the following:

''(vii) the prevalence and duration of behavioral health needs (including mental health, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders) among juveniles pre-placement and post-placement in the juvenile justice system, including an examination of the effects of secure detention in a correctional facility;'';

(III) by redesignating clauses (ix), (x), and (xi) as clauses (xvi), (xvii), and (xviii), respectively; and

(IV) by inserting after clause (viii) the following:

''(ix) training efforts and reforms that have produced reductions in or elimination of the use of dangerous practices;

''(x) methods to improve the recruitment, selection, training, and retention of professional personnel who are focused on the prevention, identification, and treatment of delinquency;

''(xi) methods to improve the identification and response to victims of domestic child sex trafficking within the juvenile justice system;

''(xii) identifying positive outcome measures, such as attainment of employment and educational degrees, that States and units of local government should use to evaluate the success of programs aimed at reducing recidivism of youth who have come in contact with the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system;

''(xiii) evaluating the impact and outcomes of the prosecution and sentencing of juveniles as adults;

''(xiv) successful and cost-effective efforts by States and units of local government to reduce recidivism through policies that provide for consideration of appropriate alternative sanctions to incarceration of youth facing nonviolent charges, while ensuring that public safety is preserved;''; and

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking ''date of enactment of this paragraph, the'' and inserting ''date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, the''; and

(II) by inserting ''in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements'' after ''wards of the State''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (D), by inserting ''and Indian Tribes'' after ''State'';

(iii) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iv) in subparagraph (G), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(H) a description of the best practices in discharge planning; and

''(I) an assessment of living arrangements for juveniles who, upon release from confinement in a State correctional facility, cannot return to the residence they occupied prior to such confinement.'';

(2) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) NATIONAL RECIDIVISM MEASURE.—The Administrator, in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements and in consultation with experts in the field of juvenile justice research, recidivism, and data collection, shall—

''(1) establish a uniform method of data collection and technology that States may use to evaluate data on juvenile recidivism on an annual basis;

''(2) establish a common national juvenile recidivism measurement system; and

''(3) make cumulative juvenile recidivism data that is collected from States available to the public.''.

SEC. 208. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

Section 252 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11162) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting ''shall'' before ''develop and carry out projects''; and

(ii) by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting ''may'' before ''make grants to and contracts with''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) shall provide periodic training for States regarding implementation of the core requirements, current protocols and best practices for achieving and monitoring compliance, and information sharing regarding relevant Office resources on evidence-based and promising programs or practices that promote the purposes of this Act.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting ''shall'' before ''develop and implement projects'';

(ii) by inserting '', including compliance with the core requirements'' after ''this title''; and

(iii) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting ''may'' before ''make grants to and contracts with''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) shall provide technical assistance to States and units of local government on achieving compliance with the amendments to the core requirements and State Plans made by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, including training and technical assistance and, when appropriate, pilot or demonstration projects intended to develop and replicate best practices for achieving sight and sound separation in facilities or portions of facilities that are open and available to the general public and that may or may not contain a jail or a lock-up; and

''(4) shall provide technical assistance to States in support of efforts to establish partnerships between a State and a university, institution of higher education, or research center designed to improve the recruitment, selection, training, and retention of professional personnel in the fields of medicine, law enforcement, the judiciary, juvenile justice, social work and child protection, education, and other relevant fields who are engaged in, or intend to work in, the field of prevention, identification, and treatment of delinquency.'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by inserting ''prosecutors,'' after ''public defenders,''; and

(B) by inserting ''status offenders and'' after ''needs of''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) BEST PRACTICES REGARDING LEGAL REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN.—In consultation with experts in the field of juvenile defense, the Administrator shall—

''(1) share best practices that may include sharing standards of practice developed by recognized entities in the profession, for attorneys representing children; and

''(2) provide a State, if it so requests, technical assistance to implement any of the best practices shared under paragraph (1).

''(e) BEST PRACTICES FOR STATUS OFFENDERS.—Based on the available research and State practices, the Administrator shall—

''(1) disseminate best practices for the treatment of status offenders with a focus on reduced recidivism, improved long-term outcomes, and limited usage of valid court orders to place status offenders in secure detention; and

''(2) provide a State, on request, technical assistance to implement any of the best practices shared under paragraph (1).

''(f) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL AND STATE JUVENILE DETENTION AND CORRECTIONS PERSONNEL.—The Administrator shall coordinate training and technical assistance programs with juvenile detention and corrections personnel of States and units of local government—

''(1) to promote methods for improving conditions of juvenile confinement, including methods that are designed to minimize the use of dangerous practices, unreasonable restraints, and isolation and methods responsive to cultural differences; and

''(2) to encourage alternative behavior management techniques based on positive youth development approaches that may include methods responsive to cultural differences.

''(g) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT INCLUDING HOME-BASED OR COMMUNITY-BASED CARE.—The Administrator shall provide training and technical assistance, in conjunction with the appropriate public agencies, to individuals involved in making decisions regarding the disposition and management of cases for youth who enter the juvenile justice system about the appropriate services and placement for youth with mental health or substance abuse needs, including—

''(1) juvenile justice intake personnel;

''(2) probation officers;

''(3) juvenile court judges and court services personnel;

''(4) prosecutors and court-appointed counsel; and

''(5) family members of juveniles and family advocates.

''(h) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT JUVENILE COURT JUDGES AND PERSONNEL.—The Attorney General, acting through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Office of Justice Programs in consultation with entities in the profession, shall provide directly, or through grants or contracts, training and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of State and local courts, judges, and related judicial personnel to—

''(1) improve the lives of children currently involved in or at risk of being involved in the juvenile court system; and

''(2) carry out the requirements of this Act.

''(i) FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL LUNCHES FOR INCARCERATED JUVENILES.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall provide guidance to States relating to existing options for school food authorities in the States to apply for reimbursement for free or reduced price lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) for juveniles who are incarcerated and

would, if not incarcerated, be eligible for free or reduced price lunches under that Act.''.

SEC. 209. ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY.

Section 299A of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11182) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''The Administrator'';

(B) by striking '', after appropriate consultation with representatives of States and units of local government,'';

(C) by inserting ''guidance,'' after ''regulations,''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following: ''In developing guidance and procedures, the Administrator shall consult with representatives of States and units of local government, including those individuals responsible for administration of this Act and compliance with the core requirements.

''(2) The Administrator shall ensure that—

''(A) reporting, compliance reporting, State plan requirements, and other similar documentation as may be required from States is requested in a manner that respects confidentiality, encourages efficiency and reduces the duplication of reporting efforts; and

''(B) States meeting all the core requirements are encouraged to experiment with offering innovative, data-driven programs designed to further improve the juvenile justice system.''; and

(2) in subsection (e), by striking ''requirements described in paragraphs (11), (12), and (13) of section 223(a)'' and inserting ''core requirements''.

TITLE III—INCENTIVE GRANTS FOR PRISON REDUCTION THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES, MENTORING, INTERVENTION, SUPPORT, AND EDUCATION

SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.

Section 501 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (34 U.S.C. 11101 note) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''Youth Promise'' before ''Grants''; and

(2) by striking ''2002'' and inserting ''2018''.

SEC. 302. DEFINITIONS.

Section 502 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (34 U.S.C. 11281) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 502. DEFINITIONS.

''In this title—

''(1) the term 'at-risk' has the meaning given that term in section 1432 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6472);

''(2) the term 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a unit of local government that is in compliance with the requirements of part B of title II; or

''(B) a nonprofit organization in partnership with a unit of local government described in subparagraph (A);

''(3) the term 'delinquency prevention program' means a delinquency prevention program that is evidence-based or promising and that may include—

''(A) alcohol and substance abuse prevention or treatment services;

''(B) tutoring and remedial education, especially in reading and mathematics;

''(C) child and adolescent health and mental health services;

''(D) recreation services;

''(E) leadership and youth development activities;

''(F) the teaching that individuals are and should be held accountable for their actions;

''(G) assistance in the development of job training skills;

''(H) youth mentoring programs;

''(I) after-school programs;

''(J) coordination of a continuum of services that may include—

''(i) early childhood development services;

''(ii) voluntary home visiting programs;

''(iii) nurse-family partnership programs;

''(iv) parenting skills training;

''(v) child abuse prevention programs;

''(vi) family stabilization programs;

''(vii) child welfare services;

''(viii) family violence intervention programs;

''(ix) adoption assistance programs;

''(x) emergency, transitional and permanent housing assistance;

''(xi) job placement and retention training;

''(xii) summer jobs programs;

''(xiii) alternative school resources for youth who have dropped out of school or demonstrate chronic truancy;

''(xiv) conflict resolution skill training;

''(xv) restorative justice programs;

''(xvi) mentoring programs;

''(xvii) targeted gang prevention, intervention and exit services;

''(xviii) training and education programs for pregnant teens and teen parents; and

''(xix) pre-release, post-release, and reentry services to assist detained and incarcerated youth with transitioning back into and reentering the community; and

''(K) other data-driven evidence-based or promising prevention programs;

''(4) the term 'local policy board', when used with respect to an eligible entity, means a policy board that the eligible entity will engage in the development of the eligible entity's plan described in section 504(e)(5), and that includes—

''(A) not fewer than 15 and not more than 21 members; and

''(B) a balanced representation of—

''(i) public agencies and private nonprofit organizations serving juveniles and their families; and

''(ii) business and industry;

''(C) at least one representative of the faith community, one adjudicated youth, and one parent of an adjudicated youth; and

''(D) in the case of an eligible entity described in paragraph (1)(B), a representative of the nonprofit organization of the eligible entity;

''(5) the term 'mentoring' means matching 1 adult with 1 or more youths for the purpose of providing guidance, support, and encouragement through regularly scheduled meetings for not less than 9 months;

''(6) the term 'State advisory group' means the advisory group appointed by the chief executive officer of a State under a plan described in section 223(a); and

''(7) the term 'State entity' means the State agency designated under section 223(a)(1) or the entity receiving funds under section 223(d).''.

SEC. 303. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.

Section 503 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (34 U.S.C. 11282) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (1) through (3), respectively.

SEC. 304. GRANTS FOR DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

Section 504 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (34 U.S.C. 11281 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 504. GRANTS FOR LOCAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

''(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to enable local communities to address the unmet needs of at-risk or delinquent youth, including through a continuum of delinquency prevention programs for juveniles who have had contact with the juvenile justice system or who are likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system.

''(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator shall—

''(1) for each fiscal year for which less than $25,000,000 is appropriated under section 506, award grants to not fewer than 3 State entities, but not more than 5 State entities, that apply under subsection (c) and meet the requirements of subsection (d); or

''(2) for each fiscal year for which $25,000,000 or more is appropriated under section 506, award grants to not fewer than 5 State entities that apply under subsection (c) and meet the requirements of subsection (d).

''(c) STATE APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a State entity shall submit an application to the Administrator that includes the following:

''(1) An assurance the State entity will use—

''(A) not more than 10 percent of such grant, in the aggregate—

''(i) for the costs incurred by the State entity to carry out this section, except that not more than 3 percent of such grant may be used for such costs; and

''(ii) to provide technical assistance to eligible entities receiving a subgrant under subsection (e) in carrying out delinquency prevention programs under the subgrant; and

''(B) the remainder of such grant to award subgrants to eligible entities under subsection (e).

''(2) An assurance that such grant will supplement, and not supplant, State and local efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency.

''(3) An assurance the State entity will evaluate the capacity of eligible entities receiving a subgrant under subsection (e) to fulfill the requirements under such subsection.

''(4) An assurance that such application was prepared after consultation with, and participation by, the State advisory group, units of local government, community-based organizations, and organizations that carry out programs, projects, or activities to prevent juvenile delinquency in the local juvenile justice system served by the State entity.

''(d) APPROVAL OF STATE APPLICATIONS.—In awarding grants under this section for a fiscal year, the Administrator may not award a grant to a State entity for a fiscal year unless—

''(1)(A) the State that will be served by the State entity submitted a plan under section 223 for such fiscal year; and

''(B) such plan is approved by the Administrator for such fiscal year; or

''(2) after finding good cause for a waiver, the Administrator waives the plan required under subparagraph (A) for such State for such fiscal year.

''(e) SUBGRANT PROGRAM.—

''(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each State entity receiving a grant under this section shall award subgrants to eligible entities in accordance with this subsection.

''(B) PRIORITY.—In awarding subgrants under this subsection, the State shall give priority to eligible entities that demonstrate ability in—

''(i) plans for service and agency coordination and collaboration including the collocation of services;

''(ii) innovative ways to involve the private nonprofit and business sector in delinquency prevention activities;

''(iii) developing data-driven prevention plans, employing evidence-based prevention strategies, and conducting program evaluations to determine impact and effectiveness;

''(iv) identifying under the plan submitted under paragraph (5) potential savings and efficiencies associated with successful implementation of such plan; and

''(v) describing how such savings and efficiencies may be used to carry out delinquency prevention programs and be reinvested in the continuing implementation of such programs after the end of the subgrant period.

''(C) SUBGRANT PROGRAM PERIOD AND DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS.—

''(i) PROGRAM PERIOD.—A subgrant awarded to an eligible entity by a State entity under this section shall be for a period of not more than 5 years, of which the eligible entity—

''(I) may use not more than 18 months for completing the plan submitted by the eligible entity under paragraph (5); and

''(II) shall use the remainder of the subgrant period, after planning period described in subclause (I), for the implementation of such plan.

''(ii) DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS.—In awarding subgrants under this subsection, a State entity shall ensure, to the extent practicable and applicable, that such subgrants are distributed throughout different areas, including urban, suburban, and rural areas.

''(2) LOCAL APPLICATION.—An eligible entity that desires a subgrant under this subsection shall submit an application to the State entity in the State of the eligible entity, at such time and in such manner as determined by the State entity, and that includes—

''(A) a description of—

''(i) the local policy board and local partners the eligible entity will engage in the development of the plan described in paragraph (5);

''(ii) the unmet needs of at-risk or delinquent youth in the community;

''(iii) available resources in the community to meet the unmet needs identified in the needs assessment described in paragraph (5)(A);

''(iv) potential costs to the community if the unmet needs are not addressed;

''(B) a specific time period for the planning and subsequent implementation of its continuum of local delinquency prevention programs;

''(C) the steps the eligible entity will take to implement the plan under subparagraph (A); and

''(D) a plan to continue the grant activity with non-Federal funds, if proven successful according to the performance evaluation process under paragraph (5)(D), after the grant period.

''(3) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—An eligible entity desiring a subgrant under this subsection shall agree to provide a 50 percent match of the amount of the subgrant that may include the value of in-kind contributions.

''(4) SUBGRANT REVIEW.—

''(A) REVIEW.—Not later than the end of the second year of a subgrant period for a subgrant awarded to an eligible entity under this subsection and before awarding the remaining amount of the subgrant to the eligible entity, the State entity shall—

''(i) ensure that the eligible entity has completed the plan submitted under paragraph (2) and that the plan meets the requirements of such paragraph; and

''(ii) verify that the eligible entity will begin the implementation of its plan upon receiving the next installment of its subgrant award.

''(B) TERMINATION.—If the State entity finds through the review conducted under subparagraph (A) that the eligible entity has not met the requirements of clause (i) of such subparagraph, the State entity shall reallocate the amount remaining on the subgrant of the eligible entity to other eligible entities receiving a subgrant under this subsection or award the amount to an eligible entity during the next subgrant competition under this subsection.

''(5) LOCAL USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a subgrant under this subsection shall use the funds to implement a plan to carry out delinquency prevention programs in the community served by the eligible entity in a coordinated manner with other delinquency prevention programs or entities serving such community, which includes—

''(A) an analysis of the unmet needs of at-risk or delinquent youth in the community—

''(i) which shall include—

''(I) the available resources in the community to meet the unmet needs; and

''(II) factors present in the community that may contribute to delinquency, such as homelessness, food insecurity, teen pregnancy, youth unemployment, family instability, lack of educational opportunity; and

''(ii) may include an estimate—

''(I) for the most recent year for which reliable data is available, the amount expended by the community and other entities for delinquency adjudication for juveniles and the incarceration of adult offenders for offenses committed in such community; and

''(II) of potential savings and efficiencies that may be achieved through the implementation of the plan;

''(B) a minimum 3-year comprehensive strategy to address the unmet needs and an estimate of the amount or percentage of non-Federal funds that are available to carry out the strategy;

''(C) a description of how delinquency prevention programs under the plan will be coordinated;

''(D) a description of the performance evaluation process of the delinquency prevention programs to be implemented under the plan, which shall include performance measures to assess efforts to address the unmet needs of youth in the community analyzed under subparagraph (A);

''(E) the evidence or promising evaluation on which such delinquency prevention programs are based; and

''(F) if such delinquency prevention programs are proven successful according to the performance evaluation process under subparagraph (D), a strategy to continue such programs after the subgrant period with non-Federal funds, including a description of how any estimated savings or efficiencies created by the implementation of the plan may be used to continue such programs.''.

SEC. 305. GRANTS FOR TRIBAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS.

The Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (34 U.S.C. 11281 et seq.) is amended by redesignating section 505 as section 506, and by inserting after section 504 the following:

''SEC. 505. GRANTS FOR TRIBAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall make grants under this section, on a competitive basis, to eligible Indian Tribes (or consortia of Indian Tribes) as described in subsection (b)—

''(1) to support and enhance—

''(A) tribal juvenile delinquency prevention services; and

''(B) the ability of Indian Tribes to respond to, and care for, at-risk or delinquent youth upon release; and

''(2) to encourage accountability of Indian tribal governments with respect to preventing juvenile delinquency, and responding to, and caring for, juvenile offenders.

''(b) ELIGIBLE INDIAN TRIBES.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an Indian Tribe or consortium of Indian Tribes shall submit to the Administrator an application in such form as the Administrator may require.

''(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—In providing grants under this section, the Administrator shall take into consideration, with respect to the Indian Tribe to be served, the—

''(1) juvenile delinquency rates;

''(2) school dropout rates; and

''(3) number of youth at risk of delinquency.

''(d) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Of the amount available for a fiscal year to carry out this title, 11 percent shall be available to carry out this section.''.

SEC. 306. EVALUATION BY GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 2 years after the end of the 5th fiscal year for which funds are appropriated to carry out the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an evaluation of a sample of subgrantees selected by the Comptroller General in accordance with subsection (b)) that received funds under section 504(e) of such Act and shall submit a report of such evaluation to the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the United States House of Representatives.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATION.—For purposes of subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall—

(1) ensure that the sample to be evaluated is made up of subgrantees in States that are diverse geographically and economically; and

(2) include in such sample subgrantees that proposed different delinquency prevention programs.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS.—In conducting the evaluation required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall take into consideration whether—

(1) the delinquency prevention programs for which subgrantees received funds under section 504(e) of Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 achieved the outcomes and results anticipated by the particular State involved;

(2) in the case of outcomes and results of delinquency prevention programs defined by the State or a local entity, unanticipated improved outcomes or results for juveniles occurred;

(3) the number of subgrantees that continue after the expenditure of such funds to provide such delinquency prevention programs;

(4) such delinquency prevention programs replaced existing or planned programs or activities in the State; and

(5) the evidence-base information used to justify such delinquency prevention programs was used with fidelity by local entities in accordance with the approach used to find the evidence;

SEC. 307. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 as enacted by Public Law 93–415 (88 Stat. 1133) (relating to miscellaneous and conforming amendments) is repealed.

TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. EVALUATION BY GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation regarding the performance of the

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (referred to in this section as ''the agency''), its functions, its programs, and its grants;

(2) conduct a comprehensive audit and evaluation of a selected, sample of grantees (as determined by the Comptroller General) that receive Federal funds under grant programs administered by the agency including a review of internal controls (as defined in section 103 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11103), as amended by this Act) to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of funds by grantees; and

(3) submit a report in accordance with subsection (d).

(b) CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATION.—In conducting the analysis and evaluation under subsection (a)(1), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11101 et seq.), the Comptroller General shall take into consideration—

(1) the outcome and results of the programs carried out by the agency and those programs administered through grants by the agency;

(2) the extent to which the agency has complied with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (Public Law 103–62; 107 Stat. 285);

(3) the extent to which the jurisdiction of, and the programs administered by, the agency duplicate or conflict with the jurisdiction and programs of other agencies;

(4) the potential benefits of consolidating programs administered by the agency with similar or duplicative programs of other agencies, and the potential for consolidating those programs;

(5) whether less restrictive or alternative methods exist to carry out the functions of the agency and whether current functions or operations are impeded or enhanced by existing statutes, rules, and procedures;

(6) the number and types of beneficiaries or persons served by programs carried out by the agency;

(7) the manner with which the agency seeks public input and input from State and local governments on the performance of the functions of the agency;

(8) the extent to which the agency complies with section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act);

(9) whether greater oversight is needed of programs developed with grants made by the agency; and

(10) the extent to which changes are necessary in the authorizing statutes of the agency in order for the functions of the agency to be performed in a more efficient and effective manner.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS FOR AUDITS.—In conducting the audit and evaluation under subsection (a)(2), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11101 et seq.), the Comptroller General shall take into consideration—

(1) whether grantees timely file Financial Status Reports;

(2) whether grantees have sufficient internal controls to ensure adequate oversight of grant fund received;

(3) whether disbursements were accompanied with adequate supporting documentation (including invoices and receipts);

(4) whether expenditures were authorized;

(5) whether subrecipients of grant funds were complying with program requirements;

(6) whether salaries and fringe benefits of personnel were adequately supported by documentation;

(7) whether contracts were bid in accordance with program guidelines; and

(8) whether grant funds were spent in accordance with program goals and guidelines.

(d) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(A) submit a report regarding the evaluation conducted under subsection (a) and audit under subsection (b), to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate; and

(B) make the report described in subparagraph (A) available to the public.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted in accordance with paragraph (1) shall include all audit findings determined by the selected, statistically significant sample of grantees as required by subsection (a)(2) and shall include the name and location of any selected grantee as well as any findings required by subsection (a)(2).

SEC. 402. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11101 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

''SEC. 601. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, except for titles III and IV, $176,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, of which not more than $96,053,401 shall be used to carry out title V for each such fiscal year.

''SEC. 602. ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

''(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, in order to ensure that at-risk youth, and youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system or the criminal justice system, are treated fairly and that the outcome of that contact is beneficial to the Nation—

''(1) the Department of Justice, through its Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, must restore meaningful enforcement of the core requirements in title II; and

''(2) States, which are entrusted with a fiscal stewardship role if they accept funds under title II must exercise vigilant oversight to ensure full compliance with the core requirements for juveniles provided for in title II.

''(b) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

''(1) AGENCY PROGRAM REVIEW.—

''(A) PROGRAMMATIC AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, the Director of the Office of Audit, Assessment, and Management of the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice (referred to in this section as the 'Director') shall—

''(I) conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the internal controls of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (referred to in this section as the 'agency') to determine if States and Indian Tribes receiving grants are following the requirements of the agency grant programs and what remedial action the agency has taken to recover any grant funds that are expended in violation of grant programs, including instances where—

''(aa) supporting documentation was not provided for cost reports;

''(bb) unauthorized expenditures occurred; and

''(cc) subrecipients of grant funds were not in compliance with program requirements;

''(II) conduct a comprehensive audit and evaluation of a selected statistically significant sample of States and Indian Tribes (as determined by the Director) that have received Federal funds under title II, including a review of internal controls to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of funds by grantees; and

''(III) submit a report in accordance with clause (iv).

''(ii) CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATIONS.—In conducting the analysis and evaluation under clause (i)(I), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of titles II and V, the Director shall take into consideration the extent to which—

''(I) greater oversight is needed of programs developed with grants made by the agency;

''(II) changes are necessary in the authorizing statutes of the agency in order that the functions of the agency can be performed in a more efficient and effective manner; and

''(III) the agency has implemented recommendations issued by the Comptroller General or Office of Inspector General relating to the grant making and grant monitoring responsibilities of the agency.

''(iii) CONSIDERATIONS FOR AUDITS.—In conducting the audit and evaluation under clause (i)(II), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of titles II and V, the Director shall take into consideration—

''(I) whether grantees timely file Financial Status Reports;

''(II) whether grantees have sufficient internal controls to ensure adequate oversight of grant funds received;

''(III) whether grantees' assertions of compliance with the core requirements were accompanied with adequate supporting documentation;

''(IV) whether expenditures were authorized;

''(V) whether subrecipients of grant funds were complying with program requirements; and

''(VI) whether grant funds were spent in accordance with the program goals and guidelines.

''(iv) REPORT.—The Director shall—

''(I) submit to the Congress a report outlining the results of the analysis, evaluation, and audit conducted under clause (i), including supporting materials, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate; and

''(II) shall make such report available to the public online, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section.

''(B) ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, the Administrator shall initiate a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the internal controls of the agency to determine whether, and to what extent, States and Indian Tribes that receive grants under titles II and V are following the requirements of the grant programs authorized under titles II and V.

''(ii) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report containing—

''(I) the findings of the analysis and evaluation conducted under clause (i);

''(II) a description of remedial actions, if any, that will be taken by the Administrator to enhance the internal controls of the agency and recoup funds that may have been expended in violation of law, regulations, or program requirements issued under titles II and V; and

''(III) a description of—

''(aa) the analysis conducted under clause (i);

''(bb) whether the funds awarded under titles II and V have been used in accordance with law, regulations, program guidance, and applicable plans; and

''(cc) the extent to which funds awarded to States and Indian Tribes under titles II and V enhanced the ability of grantees to fulfill the core requirements.

''(C) REPORT BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, the Attorney General shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report on the estimated amount of formula grant funds disbursed by the agency since fiscal year 2010 that did not meet the requirements for awards of formula grants to States under title II.

''(2) OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL PERFORMANCE AUDITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to ensure the effective and appropriate use of grants administered under this Act (excluding title IV) and to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall annually conduct audits of grantees that receive funds under this Act.

''(B) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 and annually thereafter, the Inspector General shall conduct a risk assessment to determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited under subparagraph (A) in the year involved.

''(C) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY ON WEBSITE.—The Attorney General shall make the summary of each review conducted under this section available on the website of the Department of Justice, subject to redaction as the Attorney General determines necessary to protect classified and other sensitive information.

''(D) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of grant funds under this Act (excluding title IV) that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this Act (excluding title IV) during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the 12-month period beginning on the date on which the audit report is issued.

''(E) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this Act (excluding title IV), the Administrator shall give priority to a State or Indian Tribe that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years prior to the date on which the State or Indian Tribe submits an application for a grant under this Act.

''(F) REIMBURSEMENT.—If a State or an Indian Tribe is awarded a grant under this Act (excluding title IV) during the 2-fiscal-year period in which the recipient is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (D), the Attorney General shall—

''(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the general fund of the Treasury; and

''(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the general fund under clause (i) from the grantee that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

''(G) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term 'unresolved audit finding' means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General—

''(i) that the audited State or Indian Tribe has used grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost; and

''(ii) that is not closed or resolved during the 12-month period beginning on the date on which the final audit report is issued.

''(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this paragraph and the grant programs described in this Act (excluding title IV), the term 'nonprofit organization' means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

''(B) PROHIBITION.—The Administrator may not award a grant under any grant program described in this Act (excluding title IV) to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(C) DISCLOSURE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a grant under a grant program described in this Act (excluding title IV) and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, shall disclose to the Administrator, in the application for the grant, the process for determining such compensation, including—

''(I) the independent persons involved in reviewing and approving such compensation;

''(II) the comparability data used; and

''(III) contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision.

''(ii) PUBLIC INSPECTION UPON REQUEST.—Upon request, the Administrator shall make the information disclosed under clause (i) available for public inspection.

''(4) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

''(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice under this Act may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or organization awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this Act, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than $20,000 in funds made available to the Department of Justice, unless the Deputy Attorney General or such Assistant Attorney Generals, Directors, or principal deputies as the Deputy Attorney General may designate, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host a conference.

''(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food and beverages, audiovisual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

''(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

''(5) PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under this Act may not be utilized by any recipient of a grant made using such amounts—

''(i) to lobby any representative of the Department of Justice regarding the award of grant funding; or

''(ii) to lobby any representative of a Federal, State, local, or tribal government regarding the award of grant funding.

''(B) PENALTY.—If the Attorney General determines that any recipient of a grant made using amounts authorized to be appropriated under this Act has violated subparagraph (A), the Attorney General shall—

''(i) require the recipient to repay the grant in full; and

''(ii) prohibit the recipient to receive another grant under this Act for not less than 5 years.

''(C) CLARIFICATION.—For purposes of this paragraph, submitting an application for a grant under this Act shall not be considered lobbying activity in violation of subparagraph (A).

''(6) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the 1st fiscal year that begins after the effective date of this section, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, an annual certification that—

''(A) all audits issued by the Inspector General of the Department of Justice under paragraph (2) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General or Director;

''(B) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (2)(D) have been issued;

''(C) all reimbursements required under paragraph (2)(F)(i) have been made; and

''(D) includes a list of any grant recipients excluded under paragraph (2) during the then preceding fiscal year.

''(c) PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the Attorney General awards a grant to an applicant under this Act, the Attorney General shall compare potential grant awards with other grants awarded under this Act to determine if duplicate grant awards are awarded for the same purpose.

''(2) REPORT.—If the Attorney General awards duplicate grants to the same applicant for the same purpose the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

''(A) a list of all duplicate grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any duplicate grants awarded; and

''(B) the reason the Attorney General awarded the duplicative grant.

''(d) COMPLIANCE WITH AUDITING STANDARDS.—The Administrator shall comply with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, published by the General Accountability Office (commonly known as the 'Yellow Book'), in the conduct of fiscal, compliance, and programmatic audits of States.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 388(a) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (34 U.S.C. 11280(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''section 345 and''; and

(B) by striking ''$140,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013'' and inserting ''$127,421,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2020'';

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B) PERIODIC ESTIMATE.—Of the amount authorized to be appropriated under paragraph (1), such sums as may be necessary shall be made available to carry out section 345 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2020.''; and

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking ''fiscal year 2009 and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013'' and inserting ''each of fiscal years 2019 through 2020''.

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11101 et seq.) is amended by striking—

(1) section 299 (34 U.S.C. 11171); and

(2) section 505.

SA 4076. Mr. PERDUE proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 565, honoring the 40th anniversary of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Kings Bay, Georgia; as follows:

In the 19th whereas clause of the preamble, strike '', which'' and all that follows through ''United States''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. PERDUE. 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on Chinese and Russian naval activities.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.''

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.''

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Courtney Dunbar Jones, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.''

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jon Cheatwood and Allison Tinsey, both fellows in my office, and Dean Williams, detailee on my Homeland Subcommittee, be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session of the Senate.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Riya Mehta, a fellow, and Lindsay White, a detailee, on the minority staff on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee be granted floor privileges for the duration of the Congress.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to my military fellow, Juan Ramirez, for the remainder of his fellowship, through June of 2019.

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

INTERSTATE TRANSPORT ACT OF 2017

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 560, S. 1092.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1092) to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Interstate Transport Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF KNIVES.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term ''transport''—

(1) includes staying in temporary lodging overnight, common carrier misrouting or delays, stops for food, fuel, vehicle maintenance, emergencies, medical treatment, and any other activity related to the journey of a person; and

(2) does not include transport of a knife with the intent to commit an offense punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year involving the use or threatened use of force against another person, or with knowledge, or reasonable cause to believe, that such an offense is to be committed in the course of, or arising from, the journey.

(b) TRANSPORT OF KNIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of any law or any rule or regulation of a State or any political subdivision thereof, a person who is not otherwise prohibited by any Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving a knife shall be entitled to transport a knife for any lawful purpose from any place where the person may lawfully possess, carry, or transport the knife to any other place where the person may lawfully possess, carry, or transport the knife if—

(A) in the case of transport by motor vehicle—

(i) the knife is not directly accessible from the passenger compartment of the motor vehicle; or

(ii) in the case of a motor vehicle without a compartment separate from the passenger compartment, is contained in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console; and

(B) in the case of transport by means other than a motor vehicle, including any transport over land or on or through water, the knife is contained in a locked container.

(2) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not apply to the transport of a knife or tool in the cabin of a passenger aircraft subject to the rules and regulations of the Transportation Security Administration.

(c) EMERGENCY KNIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A person—

(A) may carry in the passenger compartment of a mode of transportation a knife or tool—

(i) the blades of which consist only of a blunt tipped safety blade, a guarded blade, or both; and

(ii) that is specifically designed for enabling escape in an emergency by cutting safety belts; and

(B) shall not be required to secure a knife or tool described in subparagraph (A) in a locked container.

(2) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not apply to the transport of a knife or tool in the cabin of a passenger aircraft subject to the rules and regulations of the Transportation Security Administration.

(d) NO ARREST OR DETENTION.—A person who is transporting a knife in compliance with this section may not be arrested or otherwise detained for violation of any law, rule, or regulation of a State or political subdivision of a State related to the possession, transport, or carrying of a knife, unless there is probable cause to believe that the person is not in compliance with subsection (b).

(e) CLAIM OR DEFENSE.—A person may assert this section as a claim or defense in a civil or criminal action or proceeding. When a person asserts this section as a claim or defense in a criminal proceeding, the State or political subdivision shall have the burden of proving, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the person was not in compliance with subsection (b).

(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit any right to possess, carry, or transport a knife under applicable State law.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be withdrawn and that the Thune substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 4073) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Interstate Transport Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF KNIVES.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term ''transport''—

(1) includes staying in temporary lodging overnight, common carrier misrouting or delays, stops for food, fuel, vehicle maintenance, emergencies, or medical treatment, and any other activity related to the journey of a person; and

(2) does not include transport of a knife with the intent to commit an offense punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year involving the use or threatened use of force against another person, or with knowledge, or reasonable cause to believe, that such an offense is to be committed in the course of, or arising from, the journey.

(b) TRANSPORT OF KNIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of any law or any rule or regulation of a State or any political subdivision thereof, a person who is not otherwise prohibited by any Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving

a knife shall be entitled to transport a knife for any lawful purpose from any place where the person may lawfully possess, carry, or transport the knife to any other place where the person may lawfully possess, carry, or transport the knife if—

(A) in the case of transport by motor vehicle, the knife—

(i) is not directly accessible from the passenger compartment of the motor vehicle; or

(ii) in the case of a motor vehicle without a compartment separate from the passenger compartment, is contained in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console; and

(B) in the case of transport by means other than a motor vehicle, including any transport over land or on or through water, the knife is contained in a locked container.

(2) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not apply to the transport of a knife or tool in the cabin of a passenger aircraft subject to the rules and regulations of the Transportation Security Administration.

(c) EMERGENCY KNIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A person—

(A) may carry in the passenger compartment of a mode of transportation a knife or tool—

(i) the blades of which consist only of a blunt tipped safety blade, a guarded blade, or both; and

(ii) that is specifically designed for enabling escape in an emergency by cutting safety belts; and

(B) shall not be required to secure a knife or tool described in subparagraph (A) in a locked container.

(2) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not apply to the transport of a knife or tool in the cabin of a passenger aircraft subject to the rules and regulations of the Transportation Security Administration.

(d) NO ARREST.—A person who is transporting a knife in compliance with this section may not be arrested for violation of any law, rule, or regulation of a State or political subdivision of a State related to the possession, transport, or carrying of a knife, unless there is probable cause to believe that the person is not in compliance with subsection (b).

(e) COSTS.—If a person who asserts this section as a claim or defense in a civil or criminal action or proceeding is a prevailing party on the claim or defense, the court shall award costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the person.

(f) EXPUNGEMENT.—If a person who asserts this section as a claim or defense in a criminal proceeding is a prevailing party on the claim or defense, the court shall enter an order that directs that there be expunged from all official records all references to—

(1) the arrest of the person for the offense as to which the claim or defense was asserted;

(2) the institution of any criminal proceedings against the person relating to such offense; and

(3) the results of the proceedings, if any.

(g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit any right to possess, carry, or transport a knife under applicable State law.

The bill (S. 1092), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE ACT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 581, S. 2961.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2961) to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 211 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20301) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''2,000,000'' and inserting ''3,300,000'';

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting ''improve positive outcomes for the child,'' before ''and increase''; and

(B) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (7), by striking ''could be duplicated in many jurisdictions throughout the country.'' and inserting ''have expanded dramatically throughout the United States; and''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) State chapters of children's advocacy center networks are needed to—

''(A) assist local communities in coordinating their multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and intervention services; and

''(B) provide oversight of, and training and technical assistance in, the effective delivery of evidence-informed programming.''.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 212 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20302) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraphs (3) and (6);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), (7), (8), and (9) as paragraphs (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7), respectively;

(3) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(4) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) the term 'State chapter' means a membership organization that provides technical assistance, training, coordination, grant administration, oversight, and support to local children's advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams, and communities working to implement a multidisciplinary response to child abuse in the provision of evidence-informed initiatives, including mental health counseling, forensic interviewing, multidisciplinary team coordination, and victim advocacy.''.

(c) REGIONAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS.—Section 213 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20303) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''with the Director and''

(B) by striking paragraph (2);

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively;

(D) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(E) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated—

(i) by inserting after ''mental health care professionals'' the following: '', law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, forensic interviewers, prosecutors, and victim advocates,'';

(ii) by striking ''medical'' each place that term appears; and

(iii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(F) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) collaborate with State chapters to provide training, technical assistance, coordination, and oversight to—

''(A) local children's advocacy centers; and

''(B) communities that want to develop local children's advocacy centers.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking '', in coordination with the Director,'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''the prevention, judicial handling, and treatment of child abuse and neglect; and'' and inserting ''multidisciplinary team investigation, trauma-informed interventions, and evidence-informed treatment,''; and

(iv) by striking subparagraph (C); and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''communities'' and inserting ''communities, local children's advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams, and State chapters'';

(II) in clause (i), by inserting ''and expanding'' after ''developing'';

(III) by redesignating clauses (ii) through (x) as clauses (iii) through (xi), respectively;

(IV) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

''(ii) in promoting the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children's Advocacy Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in—

''(I) organizational support and development;

''(II) programmatic evaluation; and

''(III) financial oversight of Federal funding;'';

(V) in clause (iii), as so redesignated, by striking ''a freestanding facility where interviews of and services for abused children can be provided'' and inserting ''child-friendly facilities for the investigation of, assessment of, and intervention in abuse''; and

(VI) in clause (iv), as so redesignated, by striking ''multiple'' and inserting ''duplicative''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''and interested communities'' after ''advocacy centers'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(C), by striking ''remedial counseling to'' and inserting ''evidence-informed services for'';

(B) in paragraph (3)(A)(ii), by striking ''multidisciplinary child abuse program'' and inserting ''children's advocacy center''; and

(C) in paragraph (4)(B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking '', in coordination with the Director,'';

(ii) by striking clause (iii); and

(iii) by redesignating clauses (iv) and (v) as clauses (iii) and (iv), respectively;

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking '', in coordination with the Director,'';

(B) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''and the Director''; and

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''DISCONTINUATION OF FUNDING.—'' and all that follows through ''Upon discontinuation'' and inserting the following: ''DISCONTINUATION OF FUNDING.—Upon discontinuation''; and

(5) by striking subsections (e) and (f).

(d) LOCAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS.—Section 214 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20304) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Victims of Crime, shall make grants to—

''(1) develop and enhance multidisciplinary child abuse investigations, intervention, and prosecution; and

''(2) promote the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children's Advocacy Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in programmatic evaluation and financial oversight of Federal funding.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by inserting ''HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND'' before ''CHILD PORNOGRAPHY'';

(B) by striking ''with the Director and''; and

(C) by inserting ''human trafficking and'' before ''child pornography'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''Director'' and inserting ''Administrator''; and

(ii) by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''subsections (a) and (b)''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''social service'' and inserting ''child protective service'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''the 'counseling center'' and inserting ''a 'children's advocacy center''';

(iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''sexual and serious physical abuse and neglect cases to the counseling center'' and inserting ''child abuse cases that meet designated referral criteria to the children's advocacy center'';

(iv) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) by striking ''investigative'' and inserting ''forensic''; and

(II) by striking ''social service'' and inserting ''child protective service'';

(v) by striking subparagraph (E);

(vi) by redesignating subparagraphs (F) through (J) as subparagraphs (E) through (I), respectively;

(vii) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by striking ''counseling center'' and inserting ''children's advocacy center or an agency with which there is a linkage agreement regarding the delivery of multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and intervention services'';

(viii) in subparagraph (F), as so redesignated, by striking ''minimize the number of interviews that a child victim must attend'' and inserting ''eliminate duplicative forensic interviews with a child victim'';

(ix) in subparagraph (G), as so redesignated, by striking ''multidisciplinary program'' and inserting ''children's advocacy center'';

(x) in subparagraph (H), as so redesignated, by inserting ''intervention and'' before ''judicial proceedings''; and

(xi) in subparagraph (I), as so redesignated, by striking ''Director'' and inserting ''Administrator'';

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking ''the Director'' and inserting ''the Administrator''; and

(B) by striking ''both large and small States'' and inserting ''all States that are eligible for such grants, including large and small States,''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) GRANTS TO STATE CHAPTERS FOR ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS.—In awarding grants under this section, the Administrator shall ensure that a portion of the grants is distributed to State chapters to enable State chapters to provide technical assistance, training, coordination, and oversight to other recipients of grants under this section in providing evidence-informed initiatives, including mental health counseling, forensic interviewing, multidisciplinary team coordination, and victim advocacy.''.

(e) GRANTS FOR SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.—Section 214A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20305) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''to attorneys'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''to—

''(1) attorneys and other allied professionals instrumental to the criminal prosecution of child abuse cases in State or Federal courts, for the purpose of improving the quality of criminal prosecution of such cases; and

''(2) child abuse professionals instrumental to the protection of children, intervention in child abuse cases, and treatment of victims of child abuse, for the purpose of—

''(A) improving the quality of such protection, intervention, and treatment; and

''(B) promoting the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children's Advocacy Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in programmatic evaluation and financial oversight of Federal funding.'';

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS.—

''(1) PROSECUTORS.—An organization to which a grant is made for specific training and technical assistance for prosecutors under subsection (a)(1) shall be one that has—

''(A) a broad representation of attorneys who prosecute criminal cases in State courts; and

''(B) demonstrated experience in providing training and technical assistance for prosecutors.

''(2) CHILD ABUSE PROFESSIONALS.—An organization to which a grant is made for specific training and technical assistance for child abuse professionals under subsection (a)(2) shall be one that has—

''(A) a diverse portfolio of training and technical resources for the diverse professionals responding to child abuse, including a digital library to promote evidence-informed practice; and

''(B) demonstrated experience in providing training and technical assistance for child abuse professionals, especially law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, prosecutors, forensic interviewers, medical professionals, victim advocates, and mental health professionals.''; and

(3) in subsection (c)(2), by inserting after ''shall require'' the following: '', in the case of a grant made under subsection (a)(1),''.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 214B of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20306) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''sections 213 and 214'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''sections 213 and 214, $19,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''section 214A'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''section 214A, $6,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

(g) ACCOUNTABILITY.—Section 214C of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20307) is amended—

(1) by striking ''All grants awarded'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—All grants awarded''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) REPORTING.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that—

''(1) summarizes the efforts of the Administrator to monitor and evaluate the regional children's advocacy program activities under section 213(d);

''(2) describes—

''(A) the method by which amounts are allocated to grantees and subgrantees under this subtitle, including to local children's advocacy centers, State chapters, and regional children's advocacy program centers; and

''(B) steps the Attorney General has taken to minimize duplication and overlap in the awarding of amounts under this subtitle; and

''(3) analyzes the extent to which both rural and urban populations are served under the regional children's advocacy program.''.

(h) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS RELATING TO TITLE 34, UNITED STATES CODE.—The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20301 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 212(1) (34 U.S.C. 20302), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5611(b))'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11111(b))'';

(2) in section 214(c)(1) (34 U.S.C. 20304(c)(1)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)'';

(3) in section 214A(c)(1) (34 U.S.C. 20305(c)(1)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)'';

(4) in section 217(c)(1) (34 U.S.C. 20323(c)(1)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)''; and

(5) in section 223(c) (34 U.S.C. 20333(c)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)''.

SEC. 3. IMMUNITY PROTECTIONS FOR REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE.

(a) STATE PLANS.—Section 106(b)(2)(B)(vii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(vii)) is amended to read as follows:

''(vii) provisions for immunity from civil or criminal liability under State and local laws and regulations for individuals making good faith reports of suspected or known instances of child abuse or neglect, or who otherwise provide information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good faith report of child abuse or neglect;''.

(b) FEDERAL IMMUNITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any individual making a good faith report to appropriate authorities of a suspected or known instance of child abuse or neglect, or who otherwise, in good faith, provides information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good faith report of child abuse or neglect shall not be subject to civil liability or criminal prosecution, under any Federal law, rising from making such report or providing such information or assistance.

(2) PRESUMPTION OF GOOD FAITH.—In a Federal civil action or criminal prosecution brought against a person based on the person's reporting a suspected or known instance of child abuse or neglect, or providing information or assistance with respect to such a report, as described in paragraph (1), there shall be a presumption that the person acted in good faith.

(3) COSTS.—If the defendant prevails in a Federal civil action described in paragraph (2), the court may award costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the defendant.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the Blunt amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the committee-reported substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered and made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 4074) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To adjust the authorization of appropriations)

On page 28, line 3, strike ''$19,000,000'' and insert ''$16,000,000''.

On page 28, line 7, strike ''$6,000,000'' and insert ''$5,000,000''.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2961), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2961

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 211 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20301) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''2,000,000'' and inserting ''3,300,000'';

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting ''improve positive outcomes for the child,'' before ''and increase''; and

(B) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (7), by striking ''could be duplicated in many jurisdictions throughout the country.'' and inserting ''have expanded dramatically throughout the United States; and''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) State chapters of children's advocacy center networks are needed to—

''(A) assist local communities in coordinating their multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and intervention services; and

''(B) provide oversight of, and training and technical assistance in, the effective delivery of evidence-informed programming.''.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 212 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20302) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraphs (3) and (6);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), (7), (8), and (9) as paragraphs (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7), respectively;

(3) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(4) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) the term 'State chapter' means a membership organization that provides technical assistance, training, coordination, grant administration, oversight, and support to local children's advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams, and communities working to implement a multidisciplinary response to child abuse in the provision of evidence-informed initiatives, including mental health counseling, forensic interviewing, multidisciplinary team coordination, and victim advocacy.''.

(c) REGIONAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS.—Section 213 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20303) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''with the Director and''

(B) by striking paragraph (2);

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively;

(D) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(E) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated—

(i) by inserting after ''mental health care professionals'' the following: '', law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, forensic interviewers, prosecutors, and victim advocates,'';

(ii) by striking ''medical'' each place that term appears; and

(iii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(F) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) collaborate with State chapters to provide training, technical assistance, coordination, and oversight to—

''(A) local children's advocacy centers; and

''(B) communities that want to develop local children's advocacy centers.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking '', in coordination with the Director,'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''the prevention, judicial handling, and treatment of child abuse and neglect; and'' and inserting ''multidisciplinary team investigation, trauma-informed interventions, and evidence-informed treatment,''; and

(iv) by striking subparagraph (C); and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''communities'' and inserting ''communities, local children's advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams, and State chapters'';

(II) in clause (i), by inserting ''and expanding'' after ''developing'';

(III) by redesignating clauses (ii) through (x) as clauses (iii) through (xi), respectively;

(IV) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

''(ii) in promoting the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children's Advocacy Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in—

''(I) organizational support and development;

''(II) programmatic evaluation; and

''(III) financial oversight of Federal funding;'';

(V) in clause (iii), as so redesignated, by striking ''a freestanding facility where interviews of and services for abused children can be provided'' and inserting ''child-friendly facilities for the investigation of, assessment of, and intervention in abuse''; and

(VI) in clause (iv), as so redesignated, by striking ''multiple'' and inserting ''duplicative''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''and interested communities'' after ''advocacy centers'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(C), by striking ''remedial counseling to'' and inserting ''evidence-informed services for'';

(B) in paragraph (3)(A)(ii), by striking ''multidisciplinary child abuse program'' and inserting ''children's advocacy center''; and

(C) in paragraph (4)(B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking '', in coordination with the Director,'';

(ii) by striking clause (iii); and

(iii) by redesignating clauses (iv) and (v) as clauses (iii) and (iv), respectively;

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking '', in coordination with the Director,'';

(B) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''and the Director''; and

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''DISCONTINUATION OF FUNDING.—'' and all that follows through ''Upon discontinuation'' and inserting the following: ''DISCONTINUATION OF FUNDING.—Upon discontinuation''; and

(5) by striking subsections (e) and (f).

(d) LOCAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS.—Section 214 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20304) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Victims of Crime, shall make grants to—

''(1) develop and enhance multidisciplinary child abuse investigations, intervention, and prosecution; and

''(2) promote the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children's Advocacy Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in programmatic evaluation and financial oversight of Federal funding.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by inserting ''HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND'' before ''CHILD PORNOGRAPHY'';

(B) by striking ''with the Director and''; and

(C) by inserting ''human trafficking and'' before ''child pornography'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''Director'' and inserting ''Administrator''; and

(ii) by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''subsections (a) and (b)''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''social service'' and inserting ''child protective service'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''the 'counseling center'' and inserting ''a 'children's advocacy center' '';

(iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''sexual and serious physical abuse and neglect cases to the counseling center'' and inserting ''child abuse cases that meet designated referral criteria to the children's advocacy center'';

(iv) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) by striking ''investigative'' and inserting ''forensic''; and

(II) by striking ''social service'' and inserting ''child protective service'';

(v) by striking subparagraph (E);

(vi) by redesignating subparagraphs (F) through (J) as subparagraphs (E) through (I), respectively;

(vii) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by striking ''counseling center'' and inserting ''children's advocacy center or an agency with which there is a linkage agreement regarding the delivery of multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and intervention services'';

(viii) in subparagraph (F), as so redesignated, by striking ''minimize the number of interviews that a child victim must attend'' and inserting ''eliminate duplicative forensic interviews with a child victim'';

(ix) in subparagraph (G), as so redesignated, by striking ''multidisciplinary program'' and inserting ''children's advocacy center'';

(x) in subparagraph (H), as so redesignated, by inserting ''intervention and'' before ''judicial proceedings''; and

(xi) in subparagraph (I), as so redesignated, by striking ''Director'' and inserting ''Administrator'';

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking ''the Director'' and inserting ''the Administrator''; and

(B) by striking ''both large and small States'' and inserting ''all States that are eligible for such grants, including large and small States,''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) GRANTS TO STATE CHAPTERS FOR ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS.—In awarding grants under this section, the Administrator shall ensure that a portion of the grants is distributed to State chapters to enable State chapters to provide technical assistance, training, coordination, and oversight to other recipients of grants under this section in providing evidence-informed initiatives, including mental health counseling, forensic interviewing, multidisciplinary team coordination, and victim advocacy.''.

(e) GRANTS FOR SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.—Section 214A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20305) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''to attorneys'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''to—

''(1) attorneys and other allied professionals instrumental to the criminal prosecution of child abuse cases in State or Federal courts, for the purpose of improving the quality of criminal prosecution of such cases; and

''(2) child abuse professionals instrumental to the protection of children, intervention in child abuse cases, and treatment of victims of child abuse, for the purpose of—

''(A) improving the quality of such protection, intervention, and treatment; and

''(B) promoting the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children's Advocacy Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in programmatic evaluation and financial oversight of Federal funding.'';

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS.—

''(1) PROSECUTORS.—An organization to which a grant is made for specific training and technical assistance for prosecutors under subsection (a)(1) shall be one that has—

''(A) a broad representation of attorneys who prosecute criminal cases in State courts; and

''(B) demonstrated experience in providing training and technical assistance for prosecutors.

''(2) CHILD ABUSE PROFESSIONALS.—An organization to which a grant is made for specific training and technical assistance for child abuse professionals under subsection (a)(2) shall be one that has—

''(A) a diverse portfolio of training and technical resources for the diverse professionals responding to child abuse, including a digital library to promote evidence-informed practice; and

''(B) demonstrated experience in providing training and technical assistance for child abuse professionals, especially law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, prosecutors, forensic interviewers, medical professionals, victim advocates, and mental health professionals.''; and

(3) in subsection (c)(2), by inserting after ''shall require'' the following: '', in the case of a grant made under subsection (a)(1),''.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 214B of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20306) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''sections 213 and 214'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''sections 213 and 214, $16,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''section 214A'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''section 214A, $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

(g) ACCOUNTABILITY.—Section 214C of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20307) is amended—

(1) by striking ''All grants awarded'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—All grants awarded''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) REPORTING.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that—

''(1) summarizes the efforts of the Administrator to monitor and evaluate the regional children's advocacy program activities under section 213(d);

''(2) describes—

''(A) the method by which amounts are allocated to grantees and subgrantees under this subtitle, including to local children's advocacy centers, State chapters, and regional children's advocacy program centers; and

''(B) steps the Attorney General has taken to minimize duplication and overlap in the awarding of amounts under this subtitle; and

''(3) analyzes the extent to which both rural and urban populations are served under the regional children's advocacy program.''.

(h) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS RELATING TO TITLE 34, UNITED STATES CODE.—The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20301 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 212(1) (34 U.S.C. 20302), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5611(b))'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11111(b))'';

(2) in section 214(c)(1) (34 U.S.C. 20304(c)(1)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)'';

(3) in section 214A(c)(1) (34 U.S.C. 20305(c)(1)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)'';

(4) in section 217(c)(1) (34 U.S.C. 20323(c)(1)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)''; and

(5) in section 223(c) (34 U.S.C. 20333(c)), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 5665 et seq.)'' and inserting ''(34 U.S.C. 11183, 11186)''.

SEC. 3. IMMUNITY PROTECTIONS FOR REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE.

(a) STATE PLANS.—Section 106(b)(2)(B)(vii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(vii)) is amended to read as follows:

''(vii) provisions for immunity from civil or criminal liability under State and local laws and regulations for individuals making good faith reports of suspected or known instances of child abuse or neglect, or who otherwise provide information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good faith report of child abuse or neglect;''.

(b) FEDERAL IMMUNITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any individual making a good faith report to appropriate authorities of a suspected or known instance of child abuse or neglect, or who otherwise, in good faith, provides information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good faith report of child abuse or neglect shall not be subject to civil liability or criminal prosecution, under any Federal law, rising from making such report or providing such information or assistance.

(2) PRESUMPTION OF GOOD FAITH.—In a Federal civil action or criminal prosecution brought against a person based on the person's reporting a suspected or known instance of child abuse or neglect, or providing information or assistance with respect to such a report, as described in paragraph (1), there shall be a presumption that the person acted in good faith.

(3) COSTS.—If the defendant prevails in a Federal civil action described in paragraph (2), the court may award costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the defendant.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM ACT OF 2018

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 612, H.R. 6964.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6964) to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley amendment at the desk be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 4075) was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. PERDUE. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 6964), as amended, was passed.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

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

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 695, S. 3482.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3482) to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Services for Children program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 3482) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3482

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Emergency Medical Services for Children Program Reauthorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM.

Section 1910(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300w–9(d)) is amended by inserting before the period the following: '', and $22,334,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024''.

RECIPROCAL ACCESS TO TIBET ACT OF 2018

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 701, H.R. 1872.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1872) to promote access for United States diplomats and other officials, journalists, and other citizens to Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. PERDUE. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 1872) was passed.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

21ST CENTURY INTEGRATED DIGITAL EXPERIENCE ACT

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5759 which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill, (H.R. 5759) to improve executive agency digital services, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 5759) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO THE COURTS FOR TAXPAYERS ACT

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3996 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3996) to amend title 28, United States Code, to permit other courts to transfer certain cases to United States Tax Court.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 3996) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PROMOTING AWARENESS OF MOTORCYCLE PROFILING AND ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE MOTORCYCLE COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS TO PREVENT INSTANCES OF PROFILING

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 154.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 154) promoting awareness of motorcycle profiling and encouraging collaboration and communication with the motorcycle community and law enforcement officials to prevent instances of profiling.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PERDUE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 154) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 4, 2017, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 711 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 711) designating November 2018 as ''National Runaway Prevention Month.''

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PERDUE. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 711) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 29, 2018, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 719, S. Res. 720, S. Res. 721, S. Res. 722, and S. Res. 723.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that 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 were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAVAL SUBMARINE BASE KINGS BAY IN KINGS BAY, GEORGIA

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Armed Services Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 565.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 565) honoring the 40th anniversary of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Kings Bay, Georgia.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the Perdue amendment to the preamble be considered and agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the

motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 565) was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 4076) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble) In the 19th whereas clause of the preamble, strike '', which'' and all that follows through ''United States''.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 565

Whereas, in 1954, the Department of the Army began to acquire land at Kings Bay, Georgia, to build a military ocean terminal to ship ammunition in case of a national emergency;

Whereas the facility at Kings Bay, Georgia, was completed in 1958, but since there was no immediate operational need for the installation, the base was placed in an inactive ready status;

Whereas, in 1975, during treaty negotiations between the United States and Spain, the countries agreed to move Submarine Squadron 16, the fleet ballistic missile submarine squadron, from its operational base at Rota, Spain;

Whereas after evaluating more than 60 sites along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, the Department of the Navy selected Kings Bay, Georgia, as the new home of Submarine Squadron 16;

Whereas, from January to July 1978, the first group of sailors arrived at Kings Bay, Georgia, to transfer the base from the Department of the Army to the Department of the Navy;

Whereas the Naval Submarine Support Base Kings Bay was established in a developmental status on July 1, 1978;

Whereas construction of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay was the largest peacetime construction program ever undertaken by the Department of the Navy;

Whereas, in May 1979, the Department of the Navy selected Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay as the preferred East Coast site for Ohio-class submarines;

Whereas, on October 23, 1980, the Secretary of the Navy announced Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay as the future home of the new Ohio-class submarine;

Whereas, on January 15, 1989, the first Trident ballistic missile submarine, the USS Tennessee (SSBN 734), arrived at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay;

Whereas the Coast Guard commissioned the successful Maritime Force Protection Unit, the first of its kind, on July 24, 2007, at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay to provide enhanced security for the SSBN fleet of the United States within the homeport transit area;

Whereas Camden County, Georgia, is home to 1 of 6 Coast Guard Atlantic Area Maritime Safety and Security Teams that conduct missions including counter-drug and migrant interdiction boardings and escorts for high-capacity passenger vessels;

Whereas Marine Corps Security Force Battalion Kings Bay secures strategic assets within the Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic area of responsibility in order to prevent unauthorized access or loss of control;

Whereas Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay was named the top military installation in the Department of Defense for 2007, receiving the Commander-in-Chief's Installation Excellence Award for its ability to sustain its mission, increase productivity, and enhance quality of life;

Whereas Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay is the state-of-the-art home to the Trident II Submarines of the Atlantic Fleet in St. Marys, Georgia;

Whereas Submarine Group 10 exercises operational and administrative control of Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines and guided missile submarines stationed at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay;

Whereas 6 ballistic missile submarines make up Submarine Squadron 20 and are currently assigned to Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay: USS Maryland (SSBN 738), USS Rhode Island (SSBN 740), USS Tennessee (SSBN 734), USS West Virginia (SSBN 736), USS Wyoming (SSBN 742), and USS Alaska (SSBN 732);

Whereas 2 guided missile submarines make up Submarine Squadron 16 and are currently assigned to Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay: USS Florida (SSGN 728) and USS Georgia (SSGN 729);

Whereas the Department of the Navy stores the strategic assets of the United States at the Strategic Weapons Facilities at Kings Bay, Georgia;

Whereas the Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic is responsible for assembling the D–5 missile and processing missile guidance and launcher subsystem components for the ballistic missile submarine fleet;

Whereas the Naval Submarine Support Center provides critical support services to the submarines and staffs of Submarine Squadron 16, Submarine Squadron 20, and all visiting and other assigned units, which allows the team at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay to work efficiently and effectively;

Whereas the D–5 ballistic missile is the heart of the Trident weapons system of the United States;

Whereas the D–5 Life Extension Program of the Department of the Navy will extend the life of the D–5 missiles until 2040;

Whereas the Trident Refit Facility provides timely and top-quality industrial and logistics support to Trident ballistic missile submarines of the United States;

Whereas the Trident Training Facility trains sailors in the skills necessary to operate and maintain Trident submarines and systems;

Whereas one of the largest covered dry docks of the Northern Hemisphere is located at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay;

Whereas construction of not less than 12 Columbia-class submarines is scheduled to begin in 2021, with the first submarine slated to be fully operable by 2031;

Whereas Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay is responsible for $1,142,000,000 in total economic output to the Camden County area; and

Whereas The Camden Partnership has supported Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay since its inception, and continues to promote the ability of the base to conduct current and future missions, and the ability of the community to provide a highly qualified workforce: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay on its 40th anniversary;

(2) commends the thousands of men and women who have worked and trained at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay;

(3) honors the people of Camden County and the Georgia coastal communities for their continued support of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay; and

(4) looks forward to Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay continuing its instrumental role in the strategic deterrence and national defense of the United States.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 12; further, that following the prayer and the 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 resume consideration of S.J. Res. 64 and that the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution at 12:15 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

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

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:02 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 12, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

ROBERT A. MANDELL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2022, VICE BRENT FRANKLIN NELSEN, TERM EXPIRED.

DON MUNCE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2024, VICE LORETTA CHERYL SUTLIFF, TERM EXPIRED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. ARNOLD W. BUNCH, JR.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 11, 2018:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JUSTIN GEORGE MUZINICH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

THE JUDICIARY

JONATHAN A. KOBES, OF SOUTH DAKOTA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on December 11, 2018 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF COL. CLIFFORD N. JAMES, TO BE BRIGADIER GENERAL, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON MAY 7, 2018.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. CLYDE LARSON

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to note the passing of my constituent in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District, Mr. Clyde Larson, of Hermantown. Mr. Larson was a pillar of the railroad labor community in Duluth, the Arrowhead, and throughout our state.

Across Northern Minnesota, we are all so very proud of the men and women who operate the BNSF, Canadian National, and Canadian Pacific and short-line railways. The railroad workers of America—epitomized by Clyde Larson and so many thousands of others like him—help form the foundation of our Nation's economy. Whether they are moving passengers, iron ore and steel, grain, chemicals, forest product or intermodal goods, railroad train crews work around the clock under all weather conditions. They are silent sentinels protecting the public while serving industries and operating their trains across the land.

Clyde was 62 years of age when he passed unexpectedly. Born to Dexter and Wanda Larson, master bakers and small business owners from Fridley, Minnesota, the Larson family later moved to Hermantown, where Clyde graduated from high school in 1972 and met his bride, Anne Tessier, in 1977.

After high school and vocational training, Clyde went to work for Burlington Northern Railroad (BN), and then the mighty Duluth Masabi and Iron Range Railway (DM&IR) where he worked as a conductor until being severely injured in the early 1990's. During his railroad career, Clyde was elected Local Chairman for the United Transportation Union and rose by democratic election to the position of UTU General Chairman for the DM&IR.

General Chairman Larson helped countless railroad workers and protected one of the most valuable and lucrative steel-road contracts in the United States. Brother Larson presided over the DM&IR's Carnage pension contributions to steel-road workers, in addition to ensuring each member's rights under the United States Railroad Retirement pension and disability system. Thanks to his work ethic and devotion to his UTU members, thousands of active and retired railroad workers across northern Minnesota have lived independent lives, supported our Main Street economies, and helped to make Minnesota a better place in which to live, work, and do business.

Upon the CN Railway's takeover of the DM&IR in 2009, Clyde went to work for the UTU Designated Legal Counsel firm of Hunegs, LeNeave, and Kvas, where he served and protected all railroad craft workers. Clyde worked as an expert investigator, consultant, and advocate for railroad families when they were most vulnerable. Through his work to improve safety in the railroad work place, Clyde, along with his Union Brothers and Sisters, have made America's railroads a safer place to in which to work and prosper.

In true Minnesota tradition, Clyde honored justice, common decency, and maintained civility at all times. With a dry wit and cutting sense of humor, Clyde championed fair treatment for workers and railroad families. He was tremendously generous with his own time and resources to help all of those with less. Having known Clyde Larson as a husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend, mentor, and member of the St. Lawrence Church of Duluth, Moose Lodge, United Transportation Union, and Railroad Retiree's Association, the greater Duluth and Arrowhead community moves forward as richer Americans.

Clyde Larson is survived by his loving wife Anne, sons Scott, Eric, and Corey, with their wives Jen, Lindsey and Jean, his grandchildren Dexter and Gustafson, parents Dexter and Joanne Larson, and siblings Joel, Mikkel, Karen, and Kathy, along with their spouses and extended families.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT SCOTT ''SMASH'' STURTZ

HON. AUSTIN SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, after more than twenty-one years of exceptional service to our Nation, Master Sergeant Scott A. Sturtz, United States Air Force, will soon retire from his position as First Sergeant of the 461st Operations Support Squadron, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

Master Sergeant Sturtz enlisted in 1997. After basic training, he learned to load weapons on F–15s and to perform maintenance on armament systems. He was initially assigned to the Chiefs of 335 Fighter Squadron and then the 4th Operations Support Squadron at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina. Career highlights during this period include being selected as a member of the premiere loading crew that performed nuclear load for evaluation by nuclear surety inspectors. Additionally, he was selected for promotion Below-the-Zone to Senior Airman. In 2002, he was transferred to the 51st Maintenance Operations Squadron in the Republic of Korea working with A–10C aircraft and he became one of the first airmen in the country certified to load the GBU–31 Joint Direct Attack Munition on the F–16. He returned to Seymour Johnson and was assigned to the 4th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, where he served in units with the Chiefs, the World Famous Rocketeers, and the Eagles. His vast duties included end of runway operations, supervising weapons load crews on twenty-two aircraft munitions, weapons load crew chief, weapons expediter, non-commissioned officer in charge, and unit deployment manager where he was responsible for directing mobility activities for 900 personnel in support of contingency operations across the globe. In 2015, through a rigorous process he was selected as a First Sergeant and served in the 16th Airborne Command and Control Squadron at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

Master Sergeant Sturtz has deployed around the world in his sworn duty to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. His deployments include Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, where his actions led to the delivery of 4,500 pounds of guided bombs during the Second Battle of Fallujah, and a Middle East deployment where his efforts resulted in the successful visit of President George W. Bush to the area of operation. Additionally, he has deployed for Operation ALLIED FORCE, Operation NEW DAWN, and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

Currently Master Sergeant Sturtz is First Sergeant of the 461st Operation Support Squadron and is responsible for advising the group commander and two squadron commanders on health, welfare, and professional development for 249 Air Force personnel.

It is a pleasure to recognize Master Sergeant Sturtz's successful and decorated career. On behalf of a grateful nation, I commend Master Sergeant Sturtz for his service, selfless dedication, and contributions to the security of the United States of America. I also wish to recognize the sacrifices and contributions made by Master Sergeant Sturtz's son, Jackson, his wife, Gina Sclafani, and her daughter, Sofia. His parents, Mrs. Delores K. Sturtz and United States Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran, Mr. Stuart A. Sturtz have supported their son throughout his twenty years of faithful service. We are a nation indebted to veterans, service members, and military families who give so much to defend our Constitution and way of life. I extend my best wishes to Master Sergeant Sturtz and his family on the occasion of his retirement.

RECOGNIZING LEN ALBRIGHT FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Len Albright of Bozeman, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Albright is a four-year veteran of the United States Air Force and served his country in the 55th Recon Squadron during the Vietnam War.

Mr. Albright became heavily involved in serving the veteran community following his time in the Air Force. He is Commander of American Legion Post 14, Vice President of Veterans Alliance of Southwest Montana, a Mentor Coordinator for the Veteran Eligible

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

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

Treatment Services Court, and Chairman of the Memorial Day Parade committee. He is also active in Honor Guard, Color Guard, and other veteran organizations. In addition to his work with veterans' groups, he serves as a community sports advocate and official.

Mr. Albright is the son of a World War II and Korean War veteran, and he has inspired his son and grandson to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Len Albright for his dedication and service.

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR BENJAMIN C. PALACIOS

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of an outstanding Soldier and a very dear friend, retired Command Sergeant Major Benjamin C. Palacios who passed away on November 9, 2018.

Affectionately known as Ben, Command Sergeant Major Palacios was born on November 11, 1950 on the island of Saipan in the Northern Marianas. He later moved to Guam where he graduated from George Washington High School and was drafted into the United States Army in 1969.

Ben spent the next thirty-four years in exemplary service in the Army as an armor Soldier. His duties have included diverse assignments ranging from Tank Commander to Command Sergeant Major of some of the premier organizations in the United States military. He served as the Operations Sergeant in several Armor Battalions including an assignment as a Senior Enlisted Advisor for the 50th Armored Division, New Jersey Army National Guard in 1988. In 1991, Ben deployed to Saudi Arabia in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm as the 3–69 Armor Battalion Command Sergeant Major. In 1994, Ben served as the Brigade Command Sergeant Major for the 2nd Vanguard Brigade in the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia, and in 1996 he was selected to be the 24th Infantry Division Command Sergeant Major. Following this assignment Ben served as the Command Sergeant Major for the Third Mobile Armored Corps at Fort Hood in Texas and was subsequently selected to serve as the United States Army Forces Command's Command Sergeant Major in July 1998. Ben's illustrious Army career culminated in one of the most prestigious assignments as the command sergeant major of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, United States Forces Korea and 8th United States Army in the Republic of South Korea.

On his retirement in 2003, the Republic of South Korea awarded Command Sergeant Major Palacios the Order of National Security Merit Gwanbok Medal on behalf of the President of South Korea. Ben was the first enlisted soldier to receive this prestigious medal since the end of the Korean War.

Ben's most prestigious awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Republic of Korea Order of National Security (Gwangbok) Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and Meritorious Service Medal. Some of these he was awarded more than once.

Since 2003 Ben has remained engaged in Guam and the Pacific region working for companies associated with improving the United States security posture and contributing to the local community. One of his most devoted efforts was as a member of my Veterans Advisory Council which I founded to assist my advocacy on behalf of veterans residing in Guam. His dedication and personal efforts at improving services, support, and benefits for the U.S. military veterans living on Guam was greatly appreciated and a welcome improvement to the quality of life of all veterans.

I appreciated his warm, welcoming and inclusive approach to serving our veterans and everyone he engages.

I will miss Ben and his ever-optimistic attitude. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife of 45 years Estella Kosaka Palacios, and his sons; Benjamin, Bryan, Bradley, Brent, and their families.

Rest in peace my friend.

TRIBUTE TO BENNETT ''BEN'' DRAKE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Riverside County farming and water leader Bennett ''Ben'' Drake, who passed away on Wednesday, November 7, 2018. Ben served the people of Riverside County in many ways throughout his life and he will be deeply missed.

Ben was born in Riverside, California on July 8, 1949, to Richard and Martha Drake. Ben was a graduate of Fresno State University and also a member of Class XII of the California Agricultural Leadership Program. Ben was a fifth generation farmer in Riverside County and a resident of Temecula since 1973. Ben founded Drake Enterprises, Inc., a farm management company 40 years ago. They manage 750 acres of avocados and 450 acres of winegrapes in the Temecula Valley. Ben served as past President of the Temecula Valley Winegrape Growers Association and past Chairman of the California Association of Winegrape Growers.

As a prominent farmer and water advocate, Ben played a significant role in the successful growth of the Temecula Valley Wine Country. In the 1990's, an outbreak of Pierce's Disease threatened to wipe out grape vineyards throughout the region and state. As I witnessed first-hand, Ben's leadership during the crisis made a tremendous impact and resulted in a coordinated response from local, state and federal agencies that ultimately saved the region from devastation. Ben was elected to serve on the Rancho California Water District's Board of Directors in September, 2001, and faithfully served on the Board for 17 years. For all of his many accomplishments Ben was named California Association of Winegrape Growers Leader of the Year 2013; Boy Scouts Distinguished Citizen of the Year 2014; Riverside County 4H All Star; and received the Robert M. Howie Award for Outstanding Service to Riverside Agriculture 2010.

Ben is survived by his wife of 43 years, Sharon (Clark) Drake and his children Katie (Drake) and JD Harkey, Chase Drake, Kourtney Drake, Kara (Drake) and MacLain Atkinson. I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the entire Drake family, his friends, and everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him. Although Ben may be gone, the many contributions he made in Riverside County will have a lasting impact.

CONGRATULATING JOHN NICHOLAS ''NICKY'' SMITH

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate John Nicholas ''Nicky'' Smith, Mayor of Albany in the 1st District of Kentucky, on his retirement from public office and offer my best wishes as he focuses on doing what he enjoys most—spending time with his loved ones.

As a staunch advocate for the citizens of Albany throughout his tenure, Mayor Smith secured over $27 million in grants and loans to improve the livelihood of each of his neighbors through improvements to downtown infrastructure and the expansion of vital community services. His leadership on Area Development District Boards of Directors and his chairmanship and involvement with multiple community boards and committees during his career are a testament to his fervent spirit and lifelong commitment to bettering those around him.

I join with his family and friends as well as all those who have benefited from his efforts to wish him the best in this new chapter of his life. I am grateful for his steadfast leadership and profound influence on countless residents of the 1st District of Kentucky.

HONORING JERRY WHITE

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former longtime member of my staff, Jerry White, for his work in my office and his service to our state.

Jerry started on our team during my first term in Congress, serving as my Deputy Chief of Staff in Washington, D.C. and later as the Staff Director of the Republican Policy Committee. During his time in our office, he advised me on a variety of policy issues, developed and wrote numerous bills, and managed the Republican Policy Committee. Since leaving our office, Jerry has gone on to serve as the Legislative Director for Rep. CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS and now works as the Policy Director for the House Republican Conference.

On a personal note, Jerry and I share a love of the life lessons of sports and a commitment to putting family first in our life. Jerry has been my advisor, but more importantly, I consider Jerry my friend.

I wish Jerry continued success in all that God has planned for him and his family. I

have no doubt Jerry's biggest impact on our nation is yet to come. I look forward to cheering Jerry on in those efforts.

RECOGNIZING JOHN ALEX FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Alex of Libby, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Alex served his country in the United States Air Force for more than two decades, including service in the Vietnam War. Beginning his career in 1953, he retired a Senior Master Sergeant in 1976, working as an Aircraft Jet Engine Maintenance Superintendent.

Mr. Alex's leadership and dedication to the community is evident through his many years of service at area schools as an administrator and school board member.

On Veterans Day, Mr. Alex proudly speaks to area students about his 23-year military career. According to Libby resident and schoolteacher Chrys Marchant, ''He makes everyone feel welcome and valuable in all situations.''

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending John Alex for his dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the chamber on Monday, December 10, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on roll call votes 426 and 427.

IN RECOGNITION OF RICHARD CLINE

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Richard Cline as he concludes his service on the City Council of Menlo Park. He leaves a record of passionate commitment to the priorities of housing, transportation and education.

A few years ago, as the economy was finally recovering, Councilman Cline and I visited a large development for seniors. It sits on a main entrance to the Belle Haven neighborhood. Sequoia Belle Haven offers 90 deeply discounted apartments to seniors, plus amenities such as organized events and access to public transit. It is a model that reflects the commitment of the entire city to its elderly, low income population. Councilman Cline was very proud, and rightfully so. As a member of the council, he knew many long-time Menlo Park residents who would benefit by moving to this new development.

He was also very enthusiastic about building housing at the site of an abandoned school located in Menlo Park. It appears that the district and the city have agreed that this would be a good site for faculty/staff housing, and that the site has since been cleared in preparation for future development. During his 12 years on the council, he supported the revitalization of the downtown plan which included hundreds of new housing units.

In Menlo Park, parks and recreation are treasured. Councilman Cline helped guide the city council during a period of significant construction on the Burgess Campus, the passage of bonds for a sports field, and construction of an ever-expanding bike lane system.

The City of Menlo Park is blessed with exploding economic development. As a councilmember who sat on the council through the Great Recession and who had to make very painful cuts to the city's budget in order to deliver balanced budgets for 10 of his 12 years of service, Rich Cline has seen both sides of the economic cycle. He supported tiered pensions for sustainability and worked hard with his colleagues to ensure that prudent reserves were created during times when property and sales taxes rise.

He advocated for smart growth along transportation corridors and for mitigations to the Facebook development that would put housing closer to the campus, create shuttles, and potentially reactivate a rail line across the bay to reduce vehicle traffic. At some point, long-anticipated improvements to the Willow Road overcrossing will be finalized. While Rich Cline will not be on the council when the intersection is opened, his support was vital to ensuring that this community-wide benefit is implemented.

In his elections to the council, he was variously supported by the Sierra Club and labor, community leaders and businesses. Rich Cline is a pragmatist and a respectful leader, which is part of the reason that his colleagues elected him Mayor of Menlo Park on three separate occasions.

As he retires from the council to concentrate on his business and family, we want to thank his wife Julie, and their three children, Maria, Chiara and Gina, for allowing Rich to spend so much time on public affairs during these three terms on the council. He will be missed as he leaves an indelible impact on Menlo Park. His service is an excellent example of the quality of local leadership that exists in San Mateo County, and of the strength of democracy in cities throughout America.

TRIBUTE TO MARION ASHLEY

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to our region have been exceptional. After serving 16 years on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, my good friend Marion Ashley will be stepping down.

Marion is a native of Riverside County, a member of a pioneer Perris Valley family, and has long shown his deep commitment to the people of Riverside County. He attended local schools: Perris Union High School, Riverside City College and graduated San Diego State University with a major in Business Management. Marion spent years in the private sector as a CPA with a national accounting firm, a corporate executive, a banker, and established a real estate investment firm. He also served the public as a Riverside County Planning Commissioner from 1973 to 1981, and was elected to a serve on the Board of the Eastern Municipal Water District from 1992 to 2002.

In 2002, Marion was elected to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, where he has become a respected leader on regional issues. As a County Supervisor he oversees a budget of $5.3 billion and sets public policy for nearly 2.4 million people. Marion's leadership has made a tremendous impact on a variety of initiatives critical to Riverside County's future, including the Riverside County Integrated Project, the Perris Valley Metrolink Line, and the construction of numerous public safety and transportation infrastructure projects. For the benefit of future generations, Marion and his family have donated hundreds of acres of land in the hills west of Perris to help create a permanent wildlife refuge and supported countless charitable causes.

Marion has contributed immensely to the betterment of our region and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and friend. To conclude, Mr. Speaker I want to thank Marion for his service to the Inland Empire—his dedication, insight and passion will be greatly missed.

RECOGNIZING HARRY ARMSTRONG FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Harry Armstrong of Belgrade, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Armstrong joined the United States Marine Corps in 1964 and competed in shooting sports throughout the United States for the Marine Corps Shooting Team. He completed his 12-year active and reserve duty military career in 1976, retiring with the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Since 2014, Mr. Armstrong has served as the Commandant of the Marine Corps League Robert Ellard Detachment 1050. His passion for shooting sports has led him to open a private shooting range on his ranch for veterans to gather, talk, and in some cases, heal. On the day before Memorial Day each year, Montana veterans and their families join Harry and Louise Armstrong on their ranch where they are treated to a special day in remembrance of their fallen comrades and loved ones.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Harry Armstrong for his dedication and service.

HONORING MARISSA LYNCH

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former member of my staff, Marissa Lynch, for her work in my office and her service to our state.

Marissa served as my Deputy Chief of Staff in Indiana during my first and second terms in Congress. In that role, she managed our district offices, improved our constituent outreach programs, and oversaw our Indiana-based staff. Since leaving our office, Marissa started her own consulting company and now has clients around the state.

On a personal note, I admire Marissa's commitment to her faith and family. Marissa works very hard and delivers great results. But, you always have the sense that Marissa's priorities are in the right order. Marissa is a wise advisor and loyal friend.

I want to thank Marissa for her friendship and her hard work in our office. I wish Marissa continued success in all that God has planned for her family.

HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT BORDERS EXHIBIT & ''HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM DEFENDER'' AWARD CEREMONY

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to include in the RECORD my speech at yesterday's event, ''Human Rights without Borders,'' organized by the Wei Jingsheng Foundation and the European Union Parliamentary Liaison Office. It was my privilege to receive the ''Human Rights and Freedom Defender'' award.

We must continue to shine a light on human rights abuses in China. I look forward to working with my colleagues on a bipartisan bases to continue to carry the torch for liberty in China and globally.

Thank you all so much for the invitation to this very poignant exhibit, ''Human Rights without Borders.''

Thank you to Wei Jingsheng as well as Antoine Ripoll of the European Parliament Liaison Office for so graciously hosting this very special event.

Wei, what a pleasure to see you again. I had the honor of hosting him in my district 16 years ago at the Toledo Labor Day Parade, as well as an event at the University of Toledo.

And thank you all for continuing to carry forward the flame of human rights in China, and across the world.

What an honor to receive this reward. I am truly humbled.

I would like to dedicate it to all the freedom fighters in China and across the world that are being detained, tortured, or persecuted due to their pursuit of liberty.

As you all know, human rights and democratic principles are not just for wishful thinking.

These principles are central to our nation's security because we know a more democratic world is a more secure world. We know that countries with strong human rights records are more prosperous, stable, and reliable partners to build world peace.

Tragically, the Chinese regime has a deeply troubling human rights record.

As we speak, up to one million Uyghur Muslims are languishing in concentration camps in North West China.

At least 321 Tibetans have been detained since 2012, yet heroically continue their struggle for self-determination.

Meanwhile, millions of Chinese workers toil away at penny-wages in slave conditions to benefit the Chinese regime and transnational corporations.

There is no freedom of association to form trade unions, leaving the level of occupational disease and injuries alarmingly high. And also prevents oversight of child labor and severe abuse of migrant and ethnic minority workers.

During peak production season, workers are forced to cover 80–175 overtime hours per month with little to no protections, exposed to hazardous chemicals and deadly working conditions.

More than 480 million people in China—one third of its population—live on less than $2 a day.

The lack of an independent judiciary, independent press, rule of law, and due process raise serious concerns of core principals of fundamental human rights.

With such an ancient and rich culture, the Chinese people deserve better than this brutish and crude oppression.

As Congress debated allowing China into the World Trade Organization, many argued that welcoming China into the world fold would lead to democratization. They said that a middle class would demand their rights.

Instead, we've seen more oppression and a more aggressive Chinese foreign policy that can use its new-found riches to challenge American influence abroad.

China has yet to open its markets to American goods. Our trade deficits have soared, clocking in at over $375 billion in 2017 alone and despite promises from the Trump Administration to correct this gaping imbalance.

As a result, American workers in Ohio and across the Midwest have lost thousands of jobs to corporate greed and offshoring.

Free trade with China has surely been a one-sided deal.

Just as China shows a blatant disdain for human rights and rule of law in their own country, she tramples upon international law and seeks to overturn the global rules-based order.

As a strategic competitor, she seeks to spread its propaganda and tear down the virtues of democracy. She would seek to replace the blessings of liberty and replace it with its oppressive and dark ideology.

China provides diplomatic cover and assistance to the pariah-state North Korea that threatens global security with nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles.

China fails to control illicit flows of fentanyl into the United States killing so many unsuspecting victims in my District, Northern Ohio, and across America.

While the United States takes a step back in global leadership and diplomacy, China is too eager to fill the void. We see China investing millions in developing nations in South American and Africa, spreading its undemocratic and tyrannical influence.

We watch as Chinese foreign aid and influence pays dividends in nations as they shift to recognize mainland China over a free and democratic Taiwan.

China seeks to illegally take control of international waters in the South China seaway and undertakes aggressive naval maneuvers to challenge stability in the region provided by our naval fleet.

China's global strategy and dominance is that of a sleeping dragon. But with its aggressive state-driven Belt and Road Initiative, which will invest $1 trillion on development projects globally, America can no longer tip-toe around the dragon.

As a Member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, I join my colleagues in the commitment to work to hold China accountable on its deeply disturbing human rights record.

We need to take China's failure to live up to its commitment much more seriously. We need a trade policy that creates jobs in the U.S. And we must continue to check China's revisionist and aggressive foreign policy.

Thank you all again for this great honor, and I look forward to working with you and my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to continue carrying the torch for human rights in China and globally.

RECOGNIZING DONALD BOST FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Donald Bost of Lewistown, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Bost was a member of the U.S. Navy Seabees Mobile Construction Battalion 58 in 1968 and 1969. For his service in Vietnam, he earned the National Defense Ribbon and the Vietnam Service Medal.

In Lewistown, Mr. Bost has been a steadfast contributor to numerous community and veteran projects. He is the Commander of American Legion Fergus Post 16 and has donated countless hours working on the Veterans Memorial Park and various events.

As an active member of the local Chamber of Commerce for 34 years, Mr. Bost helped boost the area's economy by working to establish the Nexus Treatment Center and Western Transportation Institute facilities in Lewistown. He readily participates in more than a dozen local business, civic, and veteran organizations, and his involvement with local historic attractions helps keep the area's tourism industry vibrant.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Donald Bost for his dedication and service.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NEW RALEIGH, N.C. HEADQUARTERS OF ADVANCE AUTO PARTS, INC.

HON. GEORGE HOLDING

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Advance Auto Parts, Inc. on the recent relocation of its headquarters to Raleigh, N.C.

I am proud that for the second straight year in a row North Carolina has topped Forbes' ''Best States for Business'' list. Our well-educated workforce and low taxes continue to attract valuable businesses to the region from all

over the world. North Carolina has cultivated one of the strongest business climates in the country and we are proud to open our doors to a wide variety of industries from retail to biotechnology.

I applaud Advance Auto Parts for its decision to expand operations in our thriving Raleigh community and am excited for the future growth opportunities companies like these bring to North Carolina every day.

HONORING KATY CANNON

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former member of my staff, Katy Cannon, for her work in my office and her service to our state.

Katy worked as part of our team in Washington, D.C., for over five years. Katy has an incredible work ethic and was a tremendous asset to our operation. She brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to our team and was someone I could rely on for advice.

On a personal note, Katy is a kind soul, with a positive spirit and consistent big smile. Katy works extremely hard, but never forgets to treat people the right way. I am proud to call her my friend.

I would also like to thank Katy for her kindness to my family and her hard work for our operation. I wish her and Matt continued success in all that remains ahead for their family.

IN RECOGNITION OF PRADEEP GUPTA

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Pradeep Gupta as he departs the South San Francisco city council. Councilman Gupta served four years during a time of enormous change in South San Francisco, and previously served for three years as a planning commissioner.

South San Francisco is a city of 67,000 with a long and colorful history. Immigrants settled in the early 1900's and were the backbone of a thriving industrial hub. The city was once home to steel mills, meat packing plants, and paint manufacturers, among many industrial enterprises. Today, South San Francisco is universally recognized as the biotechnology capital of the world, and the founding location of the biotechnology industry with Genentech's establishment in 1976 in the city's Oyster Point area.

Pradeep Gupta fits well with his city's history. In 1964, he arrived in the United States from India with a superb education and ambition, but little money. He attended Purdue and obtained his MSEE in 1966 and his PhD in Electrical Engineering in 1969. He had a successful engineering career around the globe working with Southern California Edison, the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), and as a consultant to USAID and the World Bank on international energy projects. Ultimately, Pradeep and his wife, Kumkum, settled in South San Francisco.

Councilman Gupta is a scientist at heart, and a leader in growing the connections between industry and local schools. He initiated the Steering Committee on Biotechnology, Workforce and Education. He worked hard with the Genentech Foundation so that a new $7.9 million biotechnology laboratory at South San Francisco High School could be approved and constructed. Today's students in South San Francisco schools come from around the globe. Councilman Gupta is living proof that America thrives when its immigrants have opportunity. Extending this lesson to others, and using his position on the council for educational advocacy, is a passion of Councilman Gupta.

Population growth is rarely without conflict. Historically, South San Francisco has extended the hand of welcome to new arrivals and allowed for the construction of ample housing at affordable prices. In recent years, global capital flowing into the biotechnology sector has brought explosive employment growth to the east side of the city. Councilman Gupta was far-sighted enough to welcome new, high density housing in the city's core and around the train station so that employees could find homes near their jobs. On numerous occasions over the years, Councilman Gupta remarked to me or to my staff about how troubled he was by the hardships created by skyrocketing rental and homeownership costs. He can be proud that developments near the core and near the BART station around Chestnut and the El Camino Real will allow many families to settle and work in the community.

San Mateo County is one of a few communities to have created its own electricity aggregator. Peninsula Clean Energy delivers greener, less expensive electricity than the existing utility. Councilman Gupta, with his extensive history in the industry, was an invaluable contributor to the effort to bring this service to San Mateo County residents.

Among his many responsibilities on the council, he has served as a board member of the Association of Bay Area Governments, as the Chair of the Economic Strategy Group, as Mayor in 2017, and as a board member of the C/CAG Resource Management and Climate Protection Committee. He performs all these official duties while also being a loving father to his children Seema and Susheem, and a loving grandfather to grandson David and granddaughters Riya, Raveena, and Nadia.

I closing, I want to remark upon the goodwill and grace of Pradeep Gupta. He is my friend, and I've known him to be passionate, but I've never seen him cross. I've known him to be energetic, but he's always organized. His constituents recognize him as highly educated but nonetheless a man who easily relates to others. In short, he is a quintessential leader of South San Francisco—outgoing, responsive to community needs, and deeply devoted to his family. As he closes this chapter in his life, others will open.

I spent my childhood in this city, and despite all of the outward change the community remains rooted in family, faith and country. In sum, South San Francisco, the Industrial City, is a place of generous, loving people vigorously engaged in the enterprise of building the United States of America. Pradeep Gupta will be remembered by his neighbors and friends as a master builder.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN TAVAGLIONE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to our region have been exceptional. After serving 24 years on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, my good friend John Tavaglione will be stepping down.

John is a fourth generation resident of Riverside County and has dedicated much of his life to improving the Inland Empire region. John received his bachelor's degree in business administration from California Baptist University and is a proud U.S. Army veteran. His professional career spanned nearly 25 years as a commercial real estate executive. Prior to his election to the Board of Supervisors, he served on the Riverside City Council and was a member of the Riverside Public Utilities Commission. In 1994, John was elected to represent the Second District on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, John has been credited for his leadership in regional transportation issues, community and economic development, parks and open space preservation, and for his strong fiscal and organizational management. In 2010, John was selected to serve as President of the California State Association of Counties by California's 58 counties. Over the years, John and his wife Jan have graciously helped to send hundreds of students to college by hosting an annual fundraiser where all proceeds go towards scholarships for graduating high school seniors in his district.

John has contributed immensely to the betterment of our region and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and my friend. To conclude, Mr. Speaker I want to thank John for his service to the Inland Empire—his dedication, insight and passion will be greatly missed.

HONORING KATHY NICKEL FOR HER TIRELESS SERVICE IN ADDRESSING THE OPIOID CRISIS

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our Brookings Fellow, Kathy Nickel. I am sad to say that her last day in my office is today, December 14th. I thank Kathy for her work on addressing the opioid crisis. Her service to the people of New Hampshire and the United States of America is truly appreciated.

Kathy, like many of us, is personally affected by the opioid epidemic. Her desire to make a positive impact in our nation's struggle with this ''disease of the brain'' brought her to Washington from her home in Oxford, Ohio. An accomplished employee for the Environmental Protection Agency, she brought a passion and perspective that is greatly needed here in Washington.

As you might expect, Kathy was a wonderful liaison to families and community leaders

grappling with the crisis at home. The compassion she embodied brought people together not in grief but with the hope that this crisis can be solved, together. I was proud to have her represent me at a national conference on drug misuse in correctional settings and Kathy demonstrated her ability to bring people together.

But, she will also leave an important legislative legacy for my office. She crafted legislation that would improve the delivery of medication-assisted treatment in correctional settings. Through her work on this issue, Kathy went above and beyond merely crafting said legislation—she brought together disparate stakeholders to champion the bill. The Corrections Public Health and Community Re-entry Act will be one of my top priorities for the next Congress.

Moreover, she started what will be an important issue for the 116th Congress to consider—whether to eliminate a half-century old prohibition on the use of Medicaid in a correctional setting. Her work on uncovering the negative impacts to what is known as the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion may prove transformational. Few fellows can say they have personally crafted such impressive legislation.

Kathy was a fantastic team member. Her kindness and positive attitude will be missed in our office. I wish her the best of luck in her next endeavor with the EPA. I thank her again for her dedication and service.

HONORING TIM HAWKINS

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a longtime former member of my staff, Tim Hawkins, for his work in my office and his service to our state.

Tim is a dedicated public servant who has worked diligently on behalf of the people of the 6th District. During his time as a Congressional staffer, Tim has helped countless individuals navigate the complex federal bureaucracy and receive the help they need. He was instrumental in developing the Lawrenceburg job fair and continuing the long tradition of the Muncie job fair. Since leaving our office, Tim has worked as a Government Relations Administrator with the State of Indiana, earned a law degree, and now works as an Associate at Jeff Jinks Law.

On a personal note, Timmy is my friend. We share a love for the life lessons of sports and a commitment to family. I want to thank Tim for his friendship and his hard work in our office. I wish him continued success in all that God has planned for Tim and his family. I will be cheering Tim on every step of the way.

RECOGNIZING MICAH FINK FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Micah Fink of Manhattan, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Fink served with the U.S. Navy SEALs in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other conflict zones, receiving the Bronze Star and other honors for his actions. In his 10 years as a Navy SEAL, Mr. Fink conducted operations for United States Pacific Command, United States Central Command, and National Tasking Deployment using land and undersea mobility platforms.

In Manhattan, Mr. Fink founded Heroes and Horses, a non-profit organization that seeks to help veterans coping with PTSD. Mr. Fink and his organization take veterans into the Montana wilderness where they are challenged to perform under pressure during weeks-long excursions. The challenge of a trying environment without the combat element allows veterans to reclaim those parts of themselves they left behind in war, Mr. Fink says.

Mr. Fink's tireless efforts have aided veterans who may need a unique way to heal from the aftermath of war.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Micah Fink for his dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote on December 10, 2018 for Roll Call Vote 426 and Roll Call Vote 427. Had I been present, my vote would have been the following: Yea on Roll Call Vote 426 and Yea on 427.

TRIBUTE TO RANDY RECORD

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to my good friend Randy Record. At the end of the year, Randy will be stepping down after serving four years as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Metropolitan is a regional wholesaler and the largest distributor of treated drinking water in the United States.

As a Riverside County native, Randy has been active in the San Jacinto farming community for over three decades. In addition, Randy currently owns and operates a wine grape vineyard in the Central Coast with his wife and two daughters. Randy is currently an executive committee member of the Southern California Leadership Council, as well as a member of the Riverside County Farm Bureau, the California Association of Winegrape Growers, the Monday Morning Group of Western Riverside County, and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

In 2001, Randy was elected to serve on the Eastern Municipal Water District's Board of Directors. Just two years later, Randy was chosen to represent Eastern on Metropolitan's Board. Randy's path followed in the footsteps of his father, Clayton A. Record, Jr., who served as Eastern's representative to Metropolitan's Board from June 1999 to January 2001. As both a past president of the Association of California Water Agencies and, more recently, as Chairman of Metropolitan's Board, Randy has demonstrated tremendous leadership in addressing California's unending list of water challenges. The proposed California WaterFix project is one of the most ambitious water infrastructure projects in the history of our state, if not the nation. The project's goal of providing a reliable and affordable source of water to tens of millions of California families and businesses will play a major role in shaping the future of our state. Randy's leadership on this project has been instrumental in moving the project forward.

Without Randy's tireless advocacy and the strong relationships he's developed over the years throughout the state, projects like the WaterFix and Metropolitan's other policy objectives simply would not be possible. As Randy's friend and as his colleague in the water policy arena, I am incredibly proud of the many accomplishments he's achieved during his tenure as Metropolitan's Chairman. Randy will continue to serve on the Board for both Eastern and Metropolitan, and I look forward to our continued work together to provide California with water solutions.

RECOGNIZING STEPHEN GARRISON FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Stephen Garrison of Helena, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Garrison served in the U.S. Army from 1975 to 2005 in the Judge Advocate General's Corps and saw duty during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Mr. Garrison received numerous honors for outstanding service and achievement in the Army, including the Legion of Merit, the Army Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Meritorious Service Medal. He completed his 30-year military career as an Army Colonel.

Mr. Garrison spends countless hours working for Montana Joining Community Forces, a community coalition made up of veteran service providers and organizations committed to aiding service members and their families. Often at his own expense, Mr. Garrison has helped veterans in danger of becoming homeless. He has also staged successful interventions for veterans dealing with substance abuse and used his legal expertise to help veterans navigate the justice system.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Stephen Garrison for his dedication and service.

IN RECOGNITION OF LIZA NORMANDY

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Liza Normandy for her five years of service on the South San Francisco City Council, including this year as the Mayor. Liza is firmly committed to keeping South San Francisco diverse and thriving so that all residents can live, work and eventually retire in this San Francisco Peninsula town of 67,000.

Mayor Normandy has been a strong advocate for affordable housing, solutions to the gridlock on our roads, infrastructure upgrades, youth and senior programs and fiscal responsibility. During her tenure on the council she served on the Community Development Block Grant Subcommittee, the Downtown Subcommittee, the Financial/Budget/Audit/Investment Subcommittee, the Harbor District Liaison Subcommittee and the South San Francisco School District Liaison Subcommittee. She also represented South City on the Airport Land Use Committee, the Housing Our People Effectively (HOPE) Leadership Committee, the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance, the SFO Airport Community Roundtable, the San Mateo County Emergency Services Council and the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust (HEART) of San Mateo County.

As a proud mother of two, Thomas and Ariel, Liza has also been a tireless champion of education. She served on the South San Francisco Unified School District Board of Trustees from 2006 to 2013, two of them as president. Her focus was on preparing our students for successful and productive careers in the 21st century by modernizing school sites, promoting STEM and arts education, and balancing budgets. Liza understands full well that education is the foundation for the success of our future generations.

Liza was the first Asian-American elected to the school board, the second Asian-American elected to the city council, and only the third woman to serve on the council. For the last two years, she spearheaded the South San Francisco Women's Networking Forum, a series of evening forums designed to motivate women to get involved in local government. During the same period, Liza became an ordained minister and officiated seven weddings.

Originally from Pusan, Korea, Liza immigrated to the U.S. and graduated from Jefferson High School in 1991. She is currently pursuing a degree in Human and Social Sciences.

With that many professional obligations, it is hard to imagine where Liza finds any spare time to volunteer but she does give her energy and expertise to the South San Francisco Asian Alliance, of which she is a founding member, the Police Athletic League Boosters, Friends of the Library, the Historical Society and Friends of Parks & Recreation, among others.

Liza departs from the council to pursue her current position as CEO of the South San Francisco Chamber of Commerce which will allow her to stay actively involved in our community. Her goal to improve the quality of life for all residents of South City hasn't changed and we will continue to benefit from her leadership and engagement.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members of the House of Representatives to join me in thanking Liza Normandy for her twelve years of public service to South San Franciscans of all ages, backgrounds and cultures. I commend her for her contributions and wish her well in her future endeavors.

HONORING LIZ BRAUN

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former member of my staff, Liz Braun, for her work in my office and her service to our state.

Liz worked on our team for nearly three years, serving as Communications Director. In that role, she developed and executed a national and statewide communications strategy, was responsible for all office media relations, and served as my spokesperson. Since leaving our office, Liz has gone on to serve as the Communications Director for Chairman JEB HENSARLING and now works as Press Secretary and Spokesperson for Secretary Betsy DeVos at the U.S. Department of Education.

On a personal note, I admire Liz's commitment to her family. Liz works very hard and delivers great results. But, you always have the sense that Liz's priorities are in the right order.

I would like to thank Liz for her friendship and hard work in our office. I wish her and her husband Mike continued success in all that God has planned for their family. I have no doubt Liz's biggest impact on our nation is yet to come.

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS CONGRESS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Texas was its own republic from 1836 to 1845. Just like any other republic, the young country had a legislature, outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of Texas. The Congress of the Republic of Texas was based on the United States Congress. Both were bicameral and had a similar committee structure and age requirements to be elected.

Throughout its short history, the Nation of Texas had nine congresses. The first Congress gaveled in on October 3, 1836 in Columbia, Texas. In November of 1839, the Texas Congress met for the first and only time in Austin. However, Austin was considered too dangerous of a meeting place because it was on the western frontier and more exposed to Native Americans, so the Republic's Congress would meet in Houston and Washington-on-the-Brazos between 1842 and 1845.

After Texas was admitted to the Union in 1845, Austin was reaffirmed as the capitol of Texas. The first capitol building in Austin was completed in 1855 but burnt down in 1881. The next capitol building, which is still where the state legislature meets, was dedicated in 1888. Texans are quick to point out that the Texas Capitol is 15 feet taller than the United States Capitol.

To belabor the point, the San Jacinto Monument that honors the victory and independence of Texas from Mexico, is taller than the similar Washington Monument.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING HAROLD ''PETE'' GODTLAND FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Harold ''Pete'' Godtland of Butte, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and dedication to his community.

Mr. Godtland served in the United States Army during World War II as a member of the 7th Infantry Division in the Pacific Ocean theater. Mr. Godtland fought at the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, persevering alongside his fellow infantrymen in the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific theater of World War II. Mr. Godtland remained with the Army until 1946, returning home from his posting in Korea following the end of World War II.

Mr. Godtland routinely honors his fellow veterans as a bugler at military funerals as a member of United Veterans Council's Honor Guard. He has further lent his musical talents to St. Timothy's Memorial Chapel Summer Music Festival at Georgetown Lake, and has been a member of the Butte Symphony. He also volunteers his time and expertise as an architect helping with various community projects such as the Butte Carousel and swimming pool.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Pete Godtland for his dedication and service.

HONORING MAYOR TERESA ''TITA'' SMITH

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the distinguished career of the Honorable City of Orange Mayor Teresa ''Tita'' Smith, who is a lifelong resident of her hometown: Orange, California. Mayor Smith is an experienced community leader who began her service to the community in 1986 when she founded the Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA), which works to preserve the historic neighborhoods in the City of Orange. Mayor Smith has been recognized twice by OTPA, winning the Spirit of Old Towne Award in 2000 and Volunteer of the Year in 2006.

Her involvement in the City of Orange continued when she was appointed to the Orange Centennial Committee in 1988, the East Orange Advisory Committee in 1990, and served

as the chairperson of the Planning Commission in 1992.

Mayor Smith's commitment to the City of Orange is evident by the thousands of hours she has given to the community. She is the Founding President of the Pitcher Park Community Foundation, served on the Orange Planning Commission for over ten years, dedicated 33 years to volunteering at the Orange International Street Fair, and has served on the Young Women's Christian Association Advisory Board; a program dedicated to empowering women and young girls on an economic and social level.

Other deserved awards of Mayor Smith are the 2009 Commerce Award from the Orange Chamber of Commerce and the William T. Glassell Award from the Orange Community Historical Society in 2011.

Her passion and love for Orange lead her to serve on the Orange City Council in 2004, as Mayor Pro Tem from January 2009 to February 2012, and Mayor from 2012 to 2018.

Mayor Smith will be dearly missed as she completes her term on the Orange City Council as Mayor on Tuesday, December 11, 2018. Her heart belongs to the City of Orange and I thank her for her dedicated service throughout the years.

IN RECOGNITION OF KIRSTEN KEITH

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Kirsten Keith, a great community leader and personal friend, for her eight years of outstanding service on the Menlo Park City Council, two terms as Mayor. Kirsten decided to run for city council in 2010 during one the worst years of the Great Recession when the city and the region were in distress. Her willingness to step up to serve her community during tough times exemplifies her unwavering commitment and determination to help others.

Kirsten was instrumental in steering Menlo Park's budget from deficit, due to the Great Recession, into recovery. She served on the Finance and Audit Committee and the Business Development Council Subcommittee and she represented Menlo Park in the Association of Bay Area Governments.

She and her council colleagues hired nowformer city manager Alex McIntyre to build a 21st century organization. Today, Menlo Park has a population of 34,000 people. Facebook, its largest employer with 15,000 employees, moved to the city in 2011 when Kirsten was Mayor the first time. The city is also home to financial and investment powerhouses such as Intuit, numerous major venture capital firms, and the Stanford National Accelerator Laboratory.

In recent years, the explosion in employment outpaced the construction of residential units and has led in part to our housing crisis and gridlock on our roads. Eighty percent of the traffic in Menlo Park neither begins nor ends within its borders. Kirsten has been a fierce advocate for affordable housing and improvements to reduce traffic congestion, notably supporting transit-oriented housing along the El Camino Real.

Kirsten's tenure on the council is the continuation of more than two decades of public service and volunteering for numerous organizations in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. She was appointed to the San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women in 1996 where she served for eight years, two as chair. In 1997, she joined the board of the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo and continues to serve on the Fundraising Luncheon Committee. She served on the Community Mediation Services Committee, the Housing Committee and the Planning Commission. She also joined the boards of Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA), the Service League of San Mateo County, the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA), the Dumbarton Rail Policy Committee, the County of Santa Clara Community Resources Group for Stanford University, the Grand Boulevard Task Force, and the San Francisquito Joint Powers Authority. She represents Menlo Park on the Caltrain Modernization Local Policy Group.

As you can surmise from this long list, Kirsten's energy is inexhaustible. She is always the first to raise her hand to volunteer or tackle an issue—and she does it with a warm smile on her face.

Kirsten earned her B.A. in Political Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara and her J.D. in Law with Public Interest Law Award from Golden Gate University, School of Law. As an attorney, she has practiced immigration and family law and has made it her mission for twenty years to defend indigent clients in criminal court.

While Kirsten's time on the council is coming to an end, I know she will continue to stay engaged as a community leader and fight for justice and a better quality of life for all residents of our region. She will also have a little more time for her beloved husband John and daughter Claire and son Liam, who allowed Kirsten to spend countless hours in city council and committee meetings, serving the public.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in thanking an outstanding community leader and colleague Kirsten Keith for her stellar service to the residents of Menlo Park. She can look back to 2010 when her hometown was crumbling under the pressure of the recession and feel proud that it is today a thriving city. Her contributions have left an indelible mark and will be felt for years to come.

RECOGNIZING MIGUEL GONZALEZ FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Miguel Gonzalez of Billings, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Gonzalez began his military service in 1980 as an infantryman in the United States Army. He served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and concluded his military career in 2009 due to injury. For his meritorious conduct and heroic acts during his time of service, Mr. Gonzalez was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.

In 2015, Mr. Gonzalez started Warrior Wishes Montana, a volunteer organization that supports former service members. The organization repairs homes and vehicles, and provides furniture, financial assistance, food, clothing and comfort to veterans and their families. Even while working through his own medical issues, Mr. Gonzalez remains dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of others. Colleague Megan Burgoni of the Montana VA notes glowingly that Mr. Gonzalez ''has devoted his heart, his time, and his resources to connecting and honoring our local veterans.''

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Miguel Gonzalez for his dedication and service.

HONORING QUINCY CUNNINGHAM

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a longtime member of my staff, Quincy Cunningham, for his work in my office and his service to our state.

Quincy worked as Special Projects Coordinator in our Indiana office for two years. He is an invaluable member of our team and always delivers when tasked with an assignment. Since leaving our office, Quincy has gone on to work for Congressman-Elect Jim Baird as his campaign manager.

On personal note, Quincy and I share a love of the life lessons of sports and a commitment to faith and family. Quincy has been my advisor, but more importantly, I consider Quincy my friend. I am grateful for his patience in our countless hours traveling the state.

I wish Quincy continued success in all that God has planned for him and his family. I have no doubt Quincy's biggest impact on our state and nation are yet to come. I look forward to cheering Quincy on in those efforts.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT SAFETY REGULATIONS RELATED TO AMPHIBIOUS PASSENGER VESSELS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill to implement safety regulations for amphibious passenger vessels, including those known as duck boats. These safety recommendations were made by federal agencies to address known problems associated with duck boats that have resulted in far too many injuries and fatalities.

I became aware of these problems when my constituents, the Coleman family, were involved in a horrible duck boat accident on July

19, 2018 in Branson, Missouri. Tia Coleman was one of only two survivors from her family of 11, losing her husband Glenn and her children Reece (nine years old), Evan (seven years old), and Arya (one year old). Tia's 13 year old nephew, Donovan Coleman, was the other surviving family member, losing his mother Angela, his younger brother Maxwell (two years old), his uncles Ervin (76 years old) and Butch (70 years old), and his aunt Belinda (69 years old). Boarding a duck boat on Table Rock Lake started out as a fun outing for family members but turned into an unspeakable tragedy when the boat capsized and sank. Seventeen of the 31 passengers on board were killed.

Investigations by state and federal authorities are still underway and lawsuits are pending over the specifics of this incident. But there is a long record of problems associated with duck boat operations that can be addressed now. Since 1999 more than 40 people have died in duck boats accidents, the vast majority of them from drowning when the vessel sinks. In 2002, the Natonal Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued recommendations to improve the safety of the vessels in cases of flooding or sinking, but little has been done to implement those measures. We know from these past incidents that more can be done to make these vessels safe. Congress does not need to wait to act.

While we wait to learn more about the specific circumstances and causes that led to the tragedy on Table Rock Lake, this legislation would implement the NTSB's past recommendations to improve the ability of duck boats (officially referred to as ''amphibious passenger vessels'') to stay afloat in a flooding or sinking situation.

Specifically, this bill would direct the Coast Guard to issue regulations within 180 days to require operators of amphibious passenger vessels to retrofit their vessels to provide reserve buoyancy. Vessel operators would have no longer than two years to comply with the requirements.

While vessel operators work to comply with the reserve buoyancy requirements, this bill directs them to implement interim measures to improve vessel safety, including:

a. Remove canopies from vessels for waterborne operations, or replacing canopies with structures that do not restrict escape in the event of flooding or sinking;

b. If canopies are removed, require that all passengers wear a personal flotation device while the vessel is on the water;

c. Permanently close all unnecessary access plugs and reduce through-hull penetrations to the minimum number and size necessary;

d. Install independently-powered electric bilge pumps;

e. Install not fewer than four independently-powered bilge alarms;

f. Mandate inspection of vessels in water after each through-hull penetration;

g. Verify watertight integrity of vessels in the water at the outset of each waterborne departure; and

h. Otherwise comply with existing Coast Guard regulations related to the inspection, configuration, and operation of such vessels.

Those vessels that do not meet the 180-day deadline to implement interim safety measures, as well as those that do not meet the two-year deadline to install reserve buoyancy systems, would be prohibited from operating on U.S. waterways until they are in compliance.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill to make commonsense corrections to the persistent safety problems facing duck boats so that no other family must face the kind of tragedy faced by my constituents on Table Rock Lake. I want to thank my colleague, Senator MCCASKILL, for introducing the companion measure, S. 3301, and I urge the House to support this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF GENEVIEVE SHIROMA

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Genevieve Shiroma as she retires from her post as Board Member of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Shiroma for her leadership and commitment to the residents of Ward 4 and all of California.

Elected to the SMUD Board in November 1998, Ms. Shiroma has served the many residents in her region, Ward 4. During her tenure, she has been elected as president of the Board four times, indicating the impressive work she has accomplished since her first election.

Since graduating from University of California, Davis with a bachelor's degree in Material Science and Engineering, Ms. Shiroma has achieved an illustrious career in local and state government and has long been an advocate for policies benefiting all Californians. With over two decades of experience at the California Air Resources Board, Ms. Shiroma has excelled in her field and has been an important leader in improving air quality programs and regulations, which has undoubtedly improved the health and well being of Californians. In addition to her work with the State and the SMUD Board, Ms. Shiroma has also been serving on the Agricultural Labor Relations Board for the State of California since 1999.

Ms. Shiroma is also a civic leader in our region, lending her time to numerous non-profit organizations. She has served on the Boards of the Sierra-Curtis Neighborhood Association, United Way California Capital Region, B Street Theatre, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, and the Friends Committee for My Sister's House. Ms. Shiroma is also a Senior Fellow with the American Leadership Forum Mountain Valley Chapter.

Mr. Speaker, as family, friends and fellow SMUD Board Members join to celebrate Ms. Shiroma's successful and impactful career, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring her exemplary leadership and contribution to our community.

HONORING DALE BUWALDA

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a longtime member of my staff, Dale Buwalda, for his work in my office and his service to our state.

Dale has been on our team for nearly four years now, serving as our Field Director in Indiana. Over the years, he has represented our office at hundreds of events around Indiana, helped organize and plan the Muncie and Lawrenceburg job fairs, and has helped numerous individuals navigate the federal bureaucracy and receive the help they need.

On a personal note, I've known Dale for almost twenty years. He is one of my favorite people in Indiana politics. I admire Dale's loyalty, intellect, and positive spirit. Dale is the kind of leader who strengthens any team.

I want to thank Dale for his friendship and his hard work in our office. I wish him continued success in all that God has planned for Dale and his family.

RECOGNIZING ELECTION WINNERS

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the following local winners of this November's elections for positions covering all or part of the Fifteenth Congressional District of California, which I have the honor of representing. I look forward to working with them on behalf of the East Bay over the coming years.

State Senate, 10th District: Bob Wieckowski

State Assembly, 16th District: Rebecca Bauer-Kahan

State Assembly, 20th District: Bill Quirk

Alameda County Assessor: Phong La

Pleasanton Mayor: Jerry Thorne

Pleasanton City Council: Kathy Narum, Julie Testa

Dublin Mayor: David Gregory Haubert

Dublin City Council: Jean Josey, Shawn Kumagai

Livermore Mayor: John E. Marchand

Livermore City Council: Bob Woerner, Trish Munro

Fremont City Council, District 1: Teresa Keng

Fremont City Council, District 2: Rick Jones

Fremont City Council, District 3: Jenny Kassan

Fremont City Council, District 4: Yang Shao

Hayward Mayor: Barbara Halliday

Hayward City Council: Aisha Wahab, Sara Lamnin

San Leandro Mayor: Pauline Russo Cutter

San Leandro City Council, District 1: Deborah Cox

Union City City Council: Emily Duncan, Jamie Patino, Pat D. Gacoscos

San Ramon Mayor: Bill Clarkson

San Ramon City Council: David E. ''Dave'' Hudson, Sabina Zafar

Danville Town Council: Karen G. Stepper, Robert Storer

Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) Director, At-Large: Joel Young

AC Transit District Director, Ward 4: Mark Williams

AC Transit District Director, Ward 5: Diane Shaw

Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Director, District 4: Robert Raburn

BART Director, District 6: Liz Ames

Dublin-San Ramon Services District Directors: Ann Marie Johnson, Georgean Vonheeder-Leopold

East Bay Municipal Utility District, Ward 7: Frank Mellon

East Bay Regional Park District Director, Ward 5: Ayn Wieskamp

Eden Township Healthcare District Directors: Mariellen Faria, Roxann V. Lewis, Gordon Galvan

Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (CCD) Trustee, Area 2: Linda Granger

Chabot-Las Positas CCD Trustee, Area 3: Genevieve Randolph

Dublin Unified School District (USD) Governing Board Member, Area 2: Megan Rouse

Dublin USD Governing Board Member, Area 5: Dan Cherrier

Fremont USD Board Members: Dianne Jones, Larry Sweeney

Hayward USD Board Members: April Oquenda, Ken Rawdon

Livermore Valley Joint USD Board Members: Craig Bueno, Anne E. White, Emily Prusso

New Haven USD Governing Board Members: Linda Canlas, Sarabjit Kaur Cheema

RECOGNIZING EILEEN GREB FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Eileen Greb of Butte, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for her service to her country and leadership in her community.

Mrs. Greb answered the call to serve in 1968 as a nurse in the United States Navy, where she cared for American servicemen and women at home and abroad. Mrs. Greb left active duty in 1984 but remained in the Individual Ready Reserve program until 1997, finishing her military career with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Mrs. Greb also answered the call to serve her community through numerous civic and veterans organizations in Butte. She serves as Chaplain for Silver Bow American Legion Post 1 and has been an officer in the local and state chapters of the Disabled American Veterans. Mrs. Greb has been a dedicated advocate for the Southwest Montana Veterans Home, which is slated for construction in 2019 after a long campaign to secure funding. On top of all this, she still finds time to assist in giving flu shots and working in her local YMCA's Medical Exercise Program.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Eileen Greb for her dedication and service.

TRIBUTE TO HERBERT ''HERB'' SPIEGEL

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to my good friend Herbert "Herb" Spiegel, who passed away in California on Sunday, December 2, 2018. Herb, a devoted family man, served his nation in World War II, and volunteered with many organizations in his community. He will be deeply missed.

Herb and his family escaped war-torn Germany in May of 1939, immigrating to the United States and settling in New York. He served in the U.S. Navy as a Seabee in Kodiak, Alaska during World War II, and was honorably discharged in 1946. He met Flora Hirsch on a New Year's weekend in 1950 and had a whirlwind courtship, proposing on their first date. After she said yes on the second date, they were married on May 23, 1951. They returned to Kodiak as he continued to work as a civilian electrician with the Navy.

The Spiegels would eventually relocate to Corona, California, where they would raise a family and become active members of the community. Herb founded Corona Industrial Electric, Inc. and has been an active member of the National Electrical Contractors Association. Herb retired in 1994, after receiving numerous awards and recognitions in the electrical contracting industry, and became actively immersed in the local community. Herb had remained active with the Corona Chamber of Commerce; Corona Host Lions; Corona Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks; a member of the Masonic Lodge as a Master Mason, and Shriner; Navy League and an active member and founder of Congregation Beth Shalom of Corona. I have seen firsthand how Herb's tireless passion for his family, community service and giving back has contributed immensely to the betterment of the community of Corona. Additionally, Herb was a co-founder and creator of a holocaust education forum to share and preserve the story of his life and other holocaust survivors with young adults in Southern California.

Herb is survived by three sons: Sam, Bobby, and Marc; seven grandchildren: Tanya, Rebecca, Rachel, Isaac, Josh, Jacob and Aaron; great grandson RJ, and many nieces and nephews from around the globe. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the Spiegel family, his friends, and everyone fortunate enough to know Herb. Although Herb may be gone, the many contributions he made to his country, community and family will have a lasting impact.

IN RECOGNITION OF PETER OHTAKI

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Peter Ohtaki of Menlo Park who is departing the city council after eight years in service to its residents. In 2010, Peter Ohtaki filed to run for the council. These were some of the worst years of the Great Recession, and the city's budget was in distress. It would have been easy for Peter to wait for a less challenging time to run, but instead he stepped up to serve his community. He came in first among six candidates for three seats. He was subsequently re-elected in 2014 and has served twice as Mayor.

From 2007 through 2010, Peter was also elected to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District board of directors and served as the President in 2010. Peter served on the Finance Committee and oversaw a balanced $32 million budget at the district. With Peter's leadership and financial background, the district paid down 78 percent of its $13 million pension obligation, saving the district millions in interest costs.

The recession of 2010 was a heavy blow to the city's finances, but since that time the recovery of the national economy has brought traffic to a standstill at commute hours. There are no easy or inexpensive choices regarding traffic in a city growing due to global innovation and the physical expansion of this globe's pre-eminent social media company, Facebook. As Peter Ohtaki noted, 80 percent of all traffic in the city neither begins nor ends within its borders.

To improve mobility, he supported an undercrossing at the Ravenswood/El Camino Real intersection so that residents could bypass the wait at Caltrain. He supported housing along the transit corridor and improvements to signs so that traffic would be less likely to cut through the Allied Arts and Belle Haven neighborhoods. He was a strong supporter of the Downtown Specific Plan that will allow the city's businesses and tax base to thrive. Residents may take a short drive downtown instead of going to surrounding communities for services.

During his terms in office, Mayor Ohtaki was also known for his respect for all during public meetings, his commitment to community safety and improved emergency response capacities, his devotion to balanced budgets and prudent reserves, and his willingness to work with the fire protection district to enhance protection for all residents.

Peter grew up in Menlo Park, attending both La Entrada Middle School and Woodside High School. He graduated with a B.A. in Economics, magna cum laude, from Harvard University and an MBA from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business. Peter and his wife Julie have three children, Robby, Nicolee and Trey, in Menlo Park public schools. Now that he is leaving public life, he may spend more time with his family. We deeply appreciate their dedication to public life and are grateful that they allowed Peter to serve despite the sacrifices in time that every family endures when someone serves in public office.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Menlo Park are highly educated, passionate about their beliefs, and deeply engaged in national and local public affairs. Peter is a stellar example of that. He may look back at where he started—with the budget in tatters and basic services in retreat—and relish that he helped guide Menlo Park through recovery and into prosperity. I wish him well in his next adventure during the years ahead.

HONORING ROBERT GOAD

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former member of my staff, Robert Goad, for his work in my office and his service to our state.

Rob has been on our team from the very beginning and has worked in a variety of capacities, both in our Indiana and Washington, D.C. offices. As a senior member of my policy team, Rob was responsible for advising me on a variety of issues including education, financial services, transportation, and natural resources. He spearheaded the creation of the Congressional School Choice Caucus and developed landmark legislation expanding parental choice in education. Since leaving our office, Rob has gone on to serve as a Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, focusing on education.

On a personal note, Rob Goad is my friend. We share a love for the life lessons of sports and a commitment to family. I want to thank Rob for his patience, friendship and hard work in our office. I wish him continued success in all that God has planned for him and his family. No doubt, Rob's biggest impact on our state and Nation is yet to come. I will be cheering Rob on every step of the way.

CELEBRATING CATHY HURWIT FOR A LIFETIME OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the most important people in my life for the last twenty years, my treasured friend and Chief of Staff, Cathy Hurwit. After two decades of working by my side, supporting, counseling, directing, and making all things happen, Cathy is retiring at the end of this year.

I think it says a lot about Cathy that she began her service to our county right out of college as a VISTA volunteer. Having never previously been west of the Hudson, she spent a formative year working on a migrant housing project in Davis and Weber Counties in Utah. Her project fixed up homes, developed a community health center, and worked with the children. That year set the stage for Cathy's never-ending commitment to do everything she could to make life better for everyday people.

Cathy Hurwit is well known on Capitol Hill as one of the most knowledgeable, savvy, brilliant, literate, helpful, visionary, hardworking, effective, strategic and relentless progressive leaders. She is the go-to person for staff and members inside the Congress as well as advocates, constituents and lobbyists outside. She is a skilled organizer who knows how to move a progressive agenda.

Cathy's history on the Hill began forty years ago. She served on the staff of Congressman Toby Moffett (D–CT) as Energy Policy Director from 1976 to 1979. She then worked as advisor to the Subcommittee on Environment, Energy and Natural Resources of the House Government Operations Committee from 1979 to 1982, followed later by two years for Congressman (now Senator) ED MARKEY (D–MA) from 1987 to 1989 as his Legislative Director.

Cathy then left the Hill to become the Legislative Director for Citizen Action, a multi-issue coalition of progressive organizations from 1988 to 1997, overseeing campaigns that blocked President Reagan's efforts to deregulate natural gas—while passing legislation to protect homeowners from utility shutoffs, winning worker and community ''right to know'' about toxic emissions and promoted Patients' Bill of Rights in Congress and around the country. Through that period, I became friends with Cathy through our mutual work with our Illinois affiliate.

The American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, one of the great public employee unions in our country, hired Cathy as their Legislative Affairs Specialist from 1997 to 1999—until I was able to lure her back to the Hill as my Chief of Staff. By then she had vowed never again to work in Congress, but I am grateful that she came back to get me started, and even more grateful that she stayed!

Cathy has built and led incredible staffs in our office over the last twenty years. At the heart are my Deputy Chief of Staff, Kim Muzeroll, who is the glue that holds our D.C. office together, and Leslie Combs, my fabulous District Director who oversees a renowned constituent service operation. Along with Cathy, they make up a team of powerful women who have been in charge of our staff since my very first day in Congress.

Alumni of our office have served in the White House, as Chief of Staff to NANCY PELOSI and others, as Deputies to Cabinet Secretaries, and major leaders in not-for-profit and labor organizations. All of them benefited greatly from Cathy's mentoring and still consider themselves part of Team Schakowsky.

As I write this Extension for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, I still find it impossible to imagine future sessions without Cathy Hurwit right next to me, strategizing about how to move our progressive agenda forward. Her expertise in health care made it possible for me to write portions of the Affordable Care Act. Opportunities like that will hopefully come again soon. Cathy tells me that she will still be available to help, and I will be certain to test that. She remembers all the complicated details of so many issues and bills, the struggles and the victories, the names of all the players on every side of the issues. Her institutional memory is exhaustive. (There are some people who should hope that Cathy does not write a book!)

Even when she leaves, Cathy will be a force to be reckoned with. She has a lifelong commitment to social justice and to working for progressive change. I am sad that this phase is over knowing I have a lot more to learn from Cathy. My precious friend, as you leave the Rayburn Building, know that you have dramatically improved so many individual lives, including mine. And, more importantly, that you have made life better for millions of people who, through your work, now have access to health care and hope for a better future.

Cathy will be deeply missed in our office and throughout the Hill. I look forward to maintaining our partnership in the ongoing struggles for justice, equality and peace. From the bottom of my heart, I thank her for her service.

RECOGNIZING CHRIS GRUDZINSKI FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chris Grudzinski of Billings, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Grudzinski served as an infantryman in the United States Army from 1996 to 2009. During his second combat tour in Iraq, Mr. Grudzinski was wounded in action and awarded the Purple Heart.

After his military career, Mr. Grudzinski returned to Montana and co-founded the Montana Veteran's Meat Locker in 2017 with his wife, Kristin. The non-profit food pantry served more 7,500 pounds of meat to over 450 Montana veterans in its first year alone.

Mr. Grudzinski is attending Montana State University Billings with the goal of serving veterans and others as a licensed counselor, using outdoor adventures as a form of therapy. At MSUB, Mr. Grudzinski serves as a Peer Mentor and veterans representative volunteer, assisting veterans with educational and financial needs.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Chris Grudzinski for his dedication and passion to serve.

IN RECOGNITION OF CUB SCOUT FAMILY PACK 210

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Cub Scout Family Pack 210, the first Sabbath Observant Kosher Family Cub Scout Pack in the nation.

Cub Scout Family Pack 210 was formed in conjunction with the Jewish War Veterans Post 210, the Grand Canyon Council and the National Jewish Committee on Scouting. The pack is open to Jewish boys and girls, and children of all faiths. Cubs will get to work on the values of good citizenship, character development and physical fitness.

I thank the leaders of Cub Scout Family Pack 210 for providing an inclusive space where children will experience enriching activities and grow into their best future selves. I look forward to the many future accomplishments of Cub Scout Family Pack 210 and the positive impact they will have on the community.

HONORING ASHLEY GUTWEIN

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former member of my staff, Ashley Gutwein, for her work in my office and her service to our state.

Ashley served as Senior Counsel for more than a year in our Washington, D.C. office, handling my judiciary, financial services, national security, intelligence, foreign affairs, and armed services legislative portfolios. Before that, she was part of our office in Indiana during my first run for Congress. Ashley's dedication to our team has been outstanding, and it's been a pleasure getting to work with her over the years.

On a personal note, Ashley is a positive spirit, talented thinker and loyal friend, with a smile that lights up any room. I am grateful for her friendship and look forward to cheering Ashley on as her career, no doubt, continues to prosper.

HEZBOLLAH AND IRAN ARE PREPARING FOR WAR ON ISRAEL

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the terrorist group Hezbollah and their Iranian patrons are preparing for war against our Israeli allies. We know this because Israel discovered at least two tunnels crossing into their territory from Lebanon. These tunnels are not for smuggling or any other purpose. They are for the sole purpose of enabling terrorists to sneak into Israel for attacks. This is just more evidence that Hezbollah and Iran are committed to Israel's destruction. We, as Israel's strongest allies, must act to prevent this.

For more than two decades Hezbollah and Iran have been building an arsenal of weapons tailored specifically for eradicating the Jewish State. The attack tunnels recently unearthed are just the latest addition to this growing arsenal. But like many of Hezbollah's weapons, these tunnels are not to challenge Israel's military but to kill its civilians. Despite this fact, no Lebanese leaders have condemned these tunnels or called for their destruction. This is unacceptable.

One of the fundamental responsibilities of a state is to live at peace with its neighbors. Lebanon, however, allows terrorists to stockpile weapons and build attack tunnels in order to wage war on its southern neighbor. If the war that Hezbollah and Iran want comes, it will be the Lebanese people who suffer. During the last war, only twelve years ago, over a thousand Lebanese civilians were killed in the crossfire. Today, with Hezbollah building attack tunnels and weapon stockpiles under homes and civilian structures, it is inevitable that this will happen again.

It is time that the international community and Lebanese government act. For too long they have bullied our friends in Israel while terrorists like Hezbollah prepare to commit mass murder. The warning signs are clear. These tunnels show that it is Hezbollah and Iran who are the aggressors.

All who stay silent now must accept that the blood will be on their hands when war erupts.

And that's just the way it is.

UPON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF LARRY PATTERSON, CITY MANAGER OF SAN MATEO

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Larry Patterson as he departs his position of City Manager after 18 years of stellar service in that role and as Public Works Director for the residents of San Mateo. His retirement has been planned for a while, but this does not make his departure any easier for those of us who've known this man for decades.

Larry has a reputation for taking on the toughest tasks of city governance. Thanks in great part to his efforts, the city's former racetrack, Bay Meadows, has been transformed into a 21st century hub of high technology, housing and transportation-related businesses. Where ponies once trotted, Survey Monkeys now play. While many councils and staff contributed to this transformation, the roads, sewers, water, and rail station placement were heavily influenced by the expert vision of Larry Patterson.

San Mateo has several areas that flood. Larry was a champion of these residents through many years of heavy rains or drought. Every City Manager or Public Works Director must also be cognizant of the federal Clean Water Act and the responsibilities of the city under that law. In alliance with Foster City, Larry Patterson devoted countless hours to the development and construction of a $1 billion + wastewater treatment plant improvement project that will soon allow residents to comply with federal law and to protect our environment for decades to come.

Some little boys really don't grow up, and Larry Patterson's interest in transportation—including trains and roads—illustrates that phenomenon wonderfully. Under Larry's stewardship, and in alliance with Caltrain, San Mateo replaced four rail bridges including one that had long given expensive haircuts to oversized trucks. During his tenure, the city began planning for the impacts ofhigh speed rail and brought the grade separation project at 25th Avenue into construction. The intersection of Highway 92 and El Camino Real was a proverbial gleam in the eye of most San Mateo leadership, but Larry Patterson pushed forward over years and ultimately, in alliance with his highly capable staff, created an interchange that replaced a confusing cloverleaf with a safe intersection that efficiently serves the entire county.

Larry is not all about roads, bridges and rail. He's also a man of the people. San Mateo's Spanish-speaking residents increasingly have their voices heard in city hall because Larry began a program, in alliance with the San Mateo Adult School, to teach Spanish speakers in the city about city government. I should also note his service to the people of Half Moon Bay while on the City Council during the 1990's. It was an extraordinary time in that city's history. As a city manager Larry is, in effect, a ''two-fer'' for any city councilmember because he's walked in their shoes.

In the past year or so, Larry embarked upon a special assignment, in part at my request. He leads a countywide effort to create a flood and sea level rise resilience district. This district, once formed, will permit San Mateo County to play in the big leagues by securing Army Corps and other federal and state funding. San Mateo County is ground zero in California for sea level rise. Larry waded into this difficult discussion so that future generations in San Mateo County would not have to wade across incoming tides to get to their homes and places of work.

Mr. Speaker, San Mateo has been well served by Larry Patterson. He became City Manager at a time when the economy was accelerating, but he also worked as a senior manager during the darkest days of this nation's recession. He navigated public challenges brilliantly during his years with the city and has now earned a standing ovation for his good humor and great accomplishments across decades. He leaves behind a strong team and a grateful city council and community. He personifies the term public service. We wish Larry Patterson well in the years ahead. He is an outstanding leader, friend, and American.

HONORING EMILY DANIELS SPAULDING

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former member of my staff, Emily Daniels Spaulding, for her work in my office and her service to our state.

Emily worked in my Indiana office for nearly a year, serving as one of my most senior staffers. Emily has an incredible work ethic and was a tremendous asset to our organization. She brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to our team and was someone I could rely on for on the ground political advice.

On a personal note, I admire Emily's commitment to her faith and family. Emily works very hard and delivers great results. But, you always have the sense that Emily's priorities are in the right order.

I want to thank Emily for her friendship and her hard work in our office. I wish her and Brian continued success in all that God has planned for her family.

POSTMASTER FRAZIER B. BAKER POST OFFICE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7230, a bill I sponsored to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 226 West Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina, as the ''Postmaster

Frazier B. Baker Post Office''. This bill pays a tribute to a true American hero.

Frazier B. Baker was appointed Postmaster of Effingham, South Carolina in 1892 by President Benjamin Harrison, and in 1897, he was appointed Postmaster of Lake City, South Carolina by President William McKinley.

After Baker was appointed Postmaster of Lake City, local citizens in the predominantly white community subjected his family to months of hostility. The post office mysteriously burned down, and multiple gunshots were fired at him. Residents filed numerous complaints regarding his performance as postmaster, but federal postal administrators determined the allegations were unsubstantiated.

After relocating the post office to his family's home following the previous arson, a lynch mob set fire to it the morning of February 22, 1898. The mob aimed their guns at the home, killing Baker and his two-year-old daughter Julia and injuring his wife and three of his five surviving children. The attack sparked media attention, public uproar, and fundraising efforts on behalf of the Baker family.

Although the state of South Carolina failed to prosecute the mob; federal prosecutors and postal administrators took on the murder investigation. Thirteen men were arrested and charged with twenty-four criminal counts including ''a conspiracy to injure and oppress Frazier B. Baker in the free exercise'' of his civil rights. The trial began on April 10, 1899 in Charleston, South Carolina with an all-white jury which acquitted three and deadlocked on the remaining accused. The judge declared a mistrial and federal prosecutors did not reopen the case.

Justice was never served for Frazier B. Baker and his family. Designating the U.S. Post Office located at 226 West Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina in his honor is a fitting tribute to his memory.

I thank my colleagues in the South Carolina delegation for their unanimous support of this bill. I urge its passage by the House to honor this outstanding South Carolinian and great American.

IN RECOGNITION OF BILL SLATON

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Bill Slaton as he retires from his post as Board Member of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Slaton for his leadership and commitment to the residents of Ward 7 and all of California.

Mr. Slaton was elected to the SMUD Board in November 2002 and has been a diligent leader and representative for the many residents in Ward 7. As a testament to his dedication, Mr. Slaton has served as the Board president three times.

Mr. Slaton's career began after he graduated from the University of Texas with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. His career in the Sacramento region has been a testament to public service. For years, he served on the Policy Makers Council (PMC) of the American Public Power Association and acted as a strong advocate for customers of more than the 2,000 public power agencies. Additionally, he has sat on the board of directors for two community banks where he was instrumental in structuring financing for information technology projects utilized by public agencies. In 2012, Mr. Slaton continued his work in advocation for Californians when he was appointed by Governor Brown to the California Public Employees Retirement System Board of Administration.

Since he has lived in the Greater Sacramento Region, Mr. Slaton has been an inspiring leader for our faith-based community and all who live in the greater region. He served as the chairman of the board of KVIE–Channel 6 and has been a beloved member of Point West Rotary. As a leader in our robust faith community, Mr. Slaton acted as the president of the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region and is a co-founder of the Jewish Community Foundation of the West.

Mr. Speaker, as family, friends and fellow SMUD Board Members gather to celebrate Mr. Slaton's inspiring career, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring his dedication to the Board and to our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN SEYBERT

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor John Seybert who is leaving the city council of Redwood community, he has served as a councilmember since 2009. He also served as Mayor from 2015 to 2017. His public service began in 2001 when he joined the Planning Commission. When the Great Recession arrived, John stepped up to the challenge as he joined the city council and was immediately confronted with difficult choices to make in the city's budget. His candidacy for council was a very important act of leadership during a time of great stress.

John is passionate about people, buildings, and the quality of life of city residents. He initially moved to Redwood City to lead the development of housing for his then-employer, and he never departed from that commitment to people and their basic needs. Under the leadership of John and his fellow councilmembers, they devised a way to encourage housing development in the downtown that has led to an increase of thousands in the city's core.

Where once the city's downtown was known locally for its bleak storefronts and failing attractions, today's downtown Redwood City is vibrant, bustling and attractive to families and to young people alike. From the major cinema to the history museum to the entry of major employers such as Box.com, John has played a decisive role in ensuring that Broadway moved from darkened storefronts into a blaze of prosperous businesses and nighttime lights and joyous visitors.

I want to note that it takes an especially dedicated local official to join the board of directors of a wastewater treatment entity. John joined with relish and brought his building experience to bear on the board of the Silicon Valley Clean Water Agency. During his service, major upgrades of the system were commenced or completed and the agency's finances remained sound despite the challenges of a recession and the ever-present threat of litigation.

John also served on the council's utilities committee, personnel committee, city-owned property committee, and the 101/Woodside Road Interchange Committee. He served on the Airport Land Use Committee, the Belmont/Redwood Shores School District Committee, and on the board of our local housing nonprofit, HEART.

In his regular work, John is the facilities manager for our public transit agency, SamTrans. His professional and public work are only made possible by the support of his wife, Donna, as well as his daughters Jessi, Heather and Megan, and his granddaughter, Molly. John's life is full by any measure.

As we take the measure of departing city councilmember John Seybert, I want to note that he's been a thoughtful and respectful colleague and representative. It may be difficult to serve in public life during our modern era, but John has demonstrated that service may be performed in such a manner as to build the public's confidence in the institution of local government. The residents of Redwood City and the county owe John Seybert thanks for his example, and we wish him well as he removes himself from the dais to begin the next phase of his life, that of private citizen deeply dedicated to the public's best interests.

HONORING PRESIDENT GEORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH

SPEECH OF

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 10, 2018

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of President George Herbert Walker Bush. A patriot and family man, the 41st President of the United States served his country honorably throughout his decades of public service. From the House of Representatives to the White House, he was a man of character who instilled strong conservative values in his leadership.

In 1942, just 6 months after Pearl Harbor, the loss of life and destruction motivated the future president to join the Navy on his 18th birthday. He would become one of the youngest aviators in our country's history; having completed his training, he was commissioned just three days before turning 19 years old. In 1944, he and his crew would partake in the Battle of the Philippine Sea, a crucial battle of WWII that disabled Japan's ability to conduct large-scale aircraft carrier operations. At just 19 years old, he risked his life and took a stand for democracy, a part of the greatest generation who heard and answered the call of duty.

Piloting his own airplane, a Grumman TBF Avenger, the young aviator and his crew took heavy fire near the Bonin Islands during a bombing run. His airplane was damaged and the engine caught fire as he attempted to maneuver away from the fight after successfully dropping his payload. Unfortunately, he was the only aviator to escape with his life of those shot down during that bombing raid. Awaiting rescue in the waters of the Pacific after his

plane went down, George H.W. Bush would emerge from this profound experience further motivated to give back to his country and would go on to serve in many capacities to our nation's benefit. He always questioned that day, and why he was the one to survive, and I quote

''Why had I been spared and what did God have in store for me? In my own view there's got to be some kind of destiny and I was being spared for something on Earth.''

It was during the Second World War where he met the love his life, Barbara Pierce, and they would have 6 beautiful children together. After the war George H.W. Bush enrolled in Yale, graduating early in an accelerated economics program while captain of the baseball team. He would go on to play in the first two Collegiate World Series as a first baseman. Upon graduation, the family relocated to West Texas where he began in the oil industry working his way up from an equipment salesman to president of his own company. Young and ambitious, Mr. Bush would begin his political career in the 1960s with the Harris County Republican party, and the rest is history.

George H.W. Bush was an inspiration and role model to so many wanting to join public service and make our country a better place, including myself. A member of the Texas State House at the time of his presidency, it was a privilege to see a fellow Texan so passionate and determined to leave our country a better place than when he started. His presidential legacy began on January 20, 1989, when he addressed the country as our 41st President. In his inaugural address, he spoke about the tremendous power placed into the hands of the president. His first act was asking the country to join him in prayer where he emphasized the importance of wielding this incredible power bestowed upon him to help people, and he embodied these words throughout his tenure.

Reflecting upon the major accomplishments of President George H.W. Bush, one of his defining moments was signing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law in 1990. The ADA enacted protections and vital reforms for those with physical and/or mental disabilities. His son, President George W. Bush, would later sign the ADA Amendments Act into law in 2008. It expanded the definition of disability and increased protections for many others.

Another notable event of George H.W. Bush's presidency was his leadership during the Gulf War. Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, had invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990 and occupied most of the country. The events quickly escalated while President Bush began to rally support from our allies across the world, forming a unified front against Iraq's aggressive actions. In January of 1991, U.S. involvement in the Gulf War began with an extensive aerial bombardment, and proceeded into an intensive ground campaign that resulted in the liberation of Kuwait in late February of 1991. President Bush saw the incredible threat to freedom and democracy that Saddam Hussein presented, and knew that the military might of the United States was necessary to stifle the Iraqi army's advancements, and free Kuwait of potential tyranny.

While I could continue down the long list of his accomplishments and incalculable contributions, George H.W. Bush made a real difference at home and abroad. He understood the strength of community and wanted to use the power of the people to help each other and solve community issues as part of his Thousand Points of Lights Theme. Our nation is lucky to have had such a sensible man serve as our President. God Bless President George H.W. Bush and the positive impact he made for so many along the way.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring the lasting legacy and distinguished service of President George Herbert Walker Bush.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 2, Agriculture Improvement Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7389–S7454

Measures Introduced: Four bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 3734–3740, and S. Res. 719–723. **Page S7431**

Measures Reported:

S. 2369, to authorize aboriginal subsistence whaling pursuant to the regulations of the International Whaling Commission. (S. Rept. No. 115–425)

Report to accompany S. 90, to survey the gradient boundary along the Red River in the States of Oklahoma and Texas. (S. Rept. No. 115–426)

Report to accompany S. 441, to designate the Organ Mountains and other public land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System in the State of New Mexico. (S. Rept. No. 115–427)

Report to accompany S. 569, to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations. (S. Rept. No. 115–428)

Report to accompany S. 2160, to establish a pilot program under which the Chief of the Forest Service may use alternative dispute resolution in lieu of judicial review of certain projects. (S. Rept. No. 115–429)

S. 2773, to improve the management of driftnet fishing, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–430)

Report to accompany S. 3562, to amend the Small Business Act to modify the method for prescribing size standards for business concerns. (S. Rept. No. 115–431) **Page S7431**

Measures Passed:

Interstate Transport Act: Senate passed S. 1092, to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions, after withdrawing the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7448–49**

Perdue (for Thune/Nelson) Amendment No. 4073, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7448–49**

Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act: Senate passed S. 2961, to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7449–52**

Perdue (for Blunt/Coons) Amendment No. 4074, to adjust the authorization of appropriations. **Pages S7449–52**

Juvenile Justice Reform Act: Senate passed H.R. 6964, to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S7452**

Perdue (for Grassley) Amendment No. 4075, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7452**

Emergency Medical Services for Children Program Reauthorization Act: Senate passed S. 3482, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Services for Children program. **Pages S7452–53**

Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act: Senate passed H.R. 1872, to promote access for United States diplomats and other officials, journalists, and other citizens to Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China. **Page S7453**

21st Century IDEA: Senate passed H.R. 5759, to improve executive agency digital services. **Page S7453**

Protecting Access to the Courts for Taxpayers Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3996, to amend title 28, United States Code, to permit other courts

to transfer certain cases to United States Tax Court, and the bill was then passed. Page S7453

Promoting Awareness of Motorcycle Profiling: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 154, promoting awareness of motorcycle profiling and encouraging collaboration and communication with the motorcycle community and law enforcement officials to prevent instances of profiling, and the resolution was then agreed to. Page S7453

National Runaway Prevention Month: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 711, designating November 2018 as "National Runaway Prevention Month", and the resolution was then agreed to. Page S7453

Wreaths Across America Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 719, designating December 15, 2018, as "Wreaths Across America Day". Page S7453

Mercy Hospital and Medical Center Shooting: Senate agreed to S. Res. 720, expressing the condolences of the Senate and honoring the memory of the victims of the shooting at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, on November 19, 2018. Page S7453

National Chemistry Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 721, designating the week beginning on October 21, 2018, as "National Chemistry Week". Page S7453

Day of the Deployed: Senate agreed to S. Res. 722, designating October 26, 2018, as "Day of the Deployed". Page S7453

American College of Emergency Physicians 50th Anniversary: Senate agreed to S. Res. 723, congratulating the American College of Emergency Physicians on its 50th anniversary. Page S7453

Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay 40th Anniversary: Committee on Armed Services was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 565, honoring the 40th anniversary of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Kings Bay, Georgia, and the resolution was then agreed to, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: Pages S7453–54

Perdue Amendment No. 4076, to amend the preamble. Pages S7453–54

Measures Considered:

Returns by Exempt and Certain Non-Exempt Organizations—Agreement: Senate began consideration of S.J. Res. 64, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to "Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain Non-Exempt Organizations", after agreeing to the motion to proceed. Pages S7412–24

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the joint resolution at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, December 12, 2018, and that Senate vote on adoption of the joint resolution at 12:15 p.m. Page S7454

Conference Reports:

Agriculture Improvement Act—Conference Report: By 87 yeas to 13 nays (Vote No. 259), Senate agreed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 2, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023. Pages S7406–12

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 55 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. EX. 257), Justin George Muzinich, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. Pages S7391–95

By 51 yeas to 50 nays, Vice President voting yea (Vote No. EX. 258), Jonathan A. Kobes, of South Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit. Page S7405

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Robert A. Mandell, of Florida, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2022.

Don Munce, of Florida, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2024.

1 Air Force nomination in the rank of general. Page S7454

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:

1 Air Force nomination in the rank of general. Page S7454

Messages from the House: Pages S7429–30

Measures Referred: Page S7429

Executive Communications: Pages S7430–31

Petitions and Memorials: Page S7431

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S7431–32

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S7432–35

Additional Statements: Page S7429

Amendments Submitted: Pages S7437–48

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S7448

Privileges of the Floor: Page S7448

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—259) Pages S7395, S7405, S7411

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10:03 a.m. and adjourned at 8:02 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 12, 2018. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7454.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

CHINESE AND RUSSIAN NAVAL ACTIVITIES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower received a closed briefing on recent Chinese and Russian naval activities from Vice Admiral Matthew J. Kohler, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare/Director of Naval Intelligence, and Lieutenant General Lori E. Reynolds, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Information, both of the Department of Defense.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Securities and Exchange Commission, after receiving testimony from Jay Clayton, Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission.

NOMINATION

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Courtney Dunbar Jones, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Kaine, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OVERSIGHT

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine Customs and Border Protection, after receiving testimony from Kevin K. McAleenan, Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 17 public bills, H.R. 7247–7263, and 4 resolutions, H.J. Res. 144 and H. Res. 1175 and 1177–1178, were introduced. **Pages H10102–03**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H10104**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 350, to exclude vehicles used solely for competition from certain provisions of the Clean Air Act, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–1073); and

H. Res. 1176, providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–1074). **Page H10102**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Thompson (PA) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H10031**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:49 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H10036**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program Modernization Act: S. 943, amended, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an accurate comprehensive student count for the purposes of calculating formula allocations for programs under the Johnson-O'Malley Act; **Pages H10039–41**

Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act: H.R. 6140, amended, to require the Secretary of Energy to establish and carry out a program to support the availability of HA–LEU for domestic commercial use; **Pages H10041–43**

Improving Medicaid Programs and Opportunities for Eligible Beneficiaries Act: H.R. 7217, to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing coordinated care for children with complex medical conditions through a health home, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 400 yeas to 11 nays, Roll No. 428; **Pages H10043–53, H10083**

Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2018: S. 2465, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a sickle cell

disease prevention and treatment demonstration program and to provide for sickle cell disease research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment;

Pages H10052–54

Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Reauthorization Act of 2018: S. 3029, to revise and extend the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act (PREEMIE Act), by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 406 yeas to 3 nays, Roll No. 429;

Pages H10054–57, H10083–84

Traumatic Brain Injury Program Reauthorization Act of 2018: H.R. 6615, amended, to reauthorize the Traumatic Brain Injury program;

Pages H10057–58

Preventing Maternal Deaths Act: H.R. 1318, amended, to support States in their work to save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and in the postpartum period, to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes for pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, to identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers; **Pages H10058–61**

Recognizing that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance serves as a linchpin of regional stability and bilateral security, and exemplifies the broad and deep military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties shared between the United States and the Republic of Korea: H. Res. 1149, recognizing that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance serves as a linchpin of regional stability and bilateral security, and exemplifies the broad and deep military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties shared between the United States and the Republic of Korea; **Pages H10065–68**

Reaffirming the strong commitment of the United States to the countries and territories of the Pacific Islands region: H. Res. 1157, reaffirming the strong commitment of the United States to the countries and territories of the Pacific Islands region;

Pages H10068–70

Condemning the Assad regime and its backers for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria: H. Res. 1165, condemning the Assad regime and its backers for their continued support of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria; **Pages H10070–73**

Expressing opposition to the completion of Nord Stream II: H. Res. 1035, amended, expressing opposition to the completion of Nord Stream II; and

Pages H10073–75

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to Ukraine: H. Res. 1162, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to Ukraine. **Pages H10075–76**

Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1918, to oppose loans at international financial institutions for the Government of Nicaragua unless the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps to hold free, fair, and transparent elections. **Pages H10077–78**

Sanctioning Hizballah's Illicit Use of Civilians as Defenseless Shields Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 3342, to impose sanctions on foreign persons that are responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights by reason of the use by Hizballah of civilians as human shields. **Pages H10078–79**

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the 85th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932–1933, known as the Holodomor, should serve as a reminder of repressive Soviet policies against the people of Ukraine: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Res. 931, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the 85th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932–1933, known as the Holodomor, should serve as a reminder of repressive Soviet policies against the people of Ukraine, as amended by Representative Royce. **Pages H10079–80**

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 907 Fourth Avenue in Lake Odessa, Michigan, as the "Donna Sauers Besko Post Office": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 1850, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 907 Fourth Avenue in Lake Odessa, Michigan, as the "Donna Sauers Besko Post Office".

Page H10080

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3s101 Rockwell Street in Warrenville, Illinois, as the "Corporal Jeffery Allen Williams Post Office Building": The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 4407, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3s101 Rockwell Street in Warrenville, Illinois, as the "Corporal Jeffery Allen Williams Post Office Building". **Page H10080**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service

located at 3s101 Rockwell Street in Warrenville, Illinois, as the 'Corporal Jeffrey Allen Williams Post Office Building'.". Page H10080

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 6th Street in Hawthorne, Nevada, as the "Sergeant Kenneth Eric Bostic Post Office": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 5205, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 6th Street in Hawthorne, Nevada, as the "Sergeant Kenneth Eric Bostic Post Office". Page H10080

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 108 North Macon Street in Bevier, Missouri, as the "SO2 Navy SEAL Adam Olin Smith Post Office": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 5475, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 108 North Macon Street in Bevier, Missouri, as the "SO2 Navy SEAL Adam Olin Smith Post Office". Pages H10080–81

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 51 Willow Street in Lynn, Massachusetts, as the "Thomas P. Costin, Jr. Post Office Building": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 6059, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 51 Willow Street in Lynn, Massachusetts, as the "Thomas P. Costin, Jr. Post Office Building". Page H10081

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5707 South Cass Avenue in Westmont, Illinois, as the "James William Robinson Jr. Memorial Post Office Building": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 6167, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5707 South Cass Avenue in Westmont, Illinois, as the "James William Robinson Jr. Memorial Post Office Building". Page H10081

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, as the "Veterans Memorial Post Office": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 6335, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, as the "Veterans Memorial Post Office", as amended by Representative Mitchell. Page H10081

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 322 Main Street in Oakville, Connecticut, as the 'Oakville Veterans Memorial Post Office' ". Page H10081

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Miller Street in Plattsburgh, New York, as the "Ross Bouyea Post Office Building": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 6930, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Miller Street in Plattsburgh, New York, as the "Ross Bouyea Post Office Building". Page H10081

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 413 Washington Avenue in Belleville, New Jersey, as the "Private Henry Svehla Post Office Building": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass S. 3209, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 413 Washington Avenue in Belleville, New Jersey, as the "Private Henry Svehla Post Office Building". Pages H10081–82

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 12th Street Lobby in Columbus, Georgia, as the "Richard W. Williams Chapter of the Triple Nickles (555th P.I.A.) Post Office": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass S. 3237, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 12th Street Lobby in Columbus, Georgia, as the "Richard W. Williams Chapter of the Triple Nickles (555th P.I.A.) Post Office". Page H10082

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 226 West Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina, as the "Postmaster Frazier B. Baker Post Office": The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 7230, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 226 West Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina, as the "Postmaster Frazier B. Baker Post Office". Page H10082

Amending Public Law 115–217 to change the address of the postal facility designated by such Public Law in honor of Sergeant First Class Alwyn Crendall Cashe: The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 7243, to amend Public Law 115–217 to change the address of the postal facility designated by such Public Law in honor of Sergeant First Class Alwyn Crendall Cashe. Page H10082

Honoring the life of President George Herbert Walker Bush: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Res. 1172, honoring the life of President George Herbert Walker Bush. Page H10082–83

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following

measure. Consideration began Monday, December 10th.

Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Land Transfer Act: S. 825, to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium located in Sitka, Alaska, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 403 yeas to 3 nays, Roll No. 430. **Pages H10084–85**

Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and pass S. 3119, to allow for the taking of sea lions on the Columbia River and its tributaries to protect endangered and threatened species of salmon and other nonlisted fish species. **Pages H10085–86**

Commission on International Religious Freedom—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following individual on the part of the House to the Commission on International Religious Freedom for a term ending May 14, 2020: Ms. Anurima Bhargava of Chicago, Illinois, to succeed Mr. Daniel I. Mark. **Page H10086**

Suspension—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Calling on the Government of Burma to release Burmese journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo sentenced to seven years imprisonment after investigating attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces: H. Res. 1091, amended, calling on the Government of Burma to release Burmese journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo sentenced to seven years imprisonment after investigating attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces. **Pages H10061–65**

Recess: The House recessed at 7:47 p.m. and reconvened at 8:05 p.m. **Page H10101**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H10092.

Quorum Calls Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H10083, H10083–84, and H10084–85. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Committee Meetings

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STRUCTURE, INVESTMENTS, AND APPLICATIONS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing entitled ''Department of Defense's Artificial Intelligence Structure, Investments, and Applications''. Testimony was heard from Lisa Porter, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Department of Defense; and Dana Deasy, Chief Information Officer, Department of Defense.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled ''Discussion Draft: The 21st Century Transportation Fuels Act''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IMPLEMENTING THE 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT: AN UPDATE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Implementing the 21st Century Cures Act: An Update from the Office of the National Coordinator''. Testimony was heard from Donald Rucker, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, Department of Health and Human Services.

RAY BAUM'S ACT: A BIPARTISAN FOUNDATION FOR BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''RAY BAUM'S Act: A Bipartisan Foundation for Bridging the Digital Divide''. Testimony was heard from pubic witnesses.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF FASB'S CURRENT EXPECTED CREDIT LOSS (CECL) ACCOUNTING STANDARD ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE ECONOMY

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit held a hearing entitled ''Assessing the Impact of FASB's Current Expected Credit Loss (CECL) Accounting Standard on Financial Institutions and the Economy''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: EXAMINING GOOGLE AND ITS DATA COLLECTION, USE, AND FILTERING PRACTICES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Transparency and Accountability: Examining Google and its Data Collection, Use, and Filtering Practices''. Testimony was heard from a public witness.

EXAMINING 'BACKDOOR' SPENDING BY FEDERAL AGENCIES

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs held a hearing entitled ''Examining 'Backdoor' Spending by

Federal Agencies''. Testimony was heard from Tranchau T. Nguyen, Director of Strategic Issues, Government Accountability Office; Julia C. Matta, Managing Associate General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE AGRICULTURE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 2, the ''Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018''. The Committee granted, by voice vote, a rule providing for the consideration of the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 2. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read. The rule provides that the previous question shall be considered as ordered without intervention of any motion except one hour of debate and one motion to recommit if applicable. Debate on the conference report is divided pursuant to clause 8(d) of rule XXII. In section 2, the rule provides the provisions of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546) shall not apply during the remainder of the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress to a concurrent resolution introduced pursuant to section 5 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544) with respect to Yemen. Testimony was heard from Chairman Conaway and Representative Peterson.

Joint Meetings

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission concluded a hearing to examine religious freedom in Eurasia, after receiving testimony from former Senator Sam Brownback, Ambassador At Large for International Religious Freedom, Department of State.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, to hold hearings to examine implications of China's presence and investment in Africa, 9:30 a.m., SR–232A.

Subcommittee on SeaPower, with the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, to hold hearings to examine Navy and Marine Corps readiness, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, to hold closed hearings to examine United States force posture in the Indo-Pacific region, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, to hold hearings to examine S. 2395, to amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the provision of technical assistance under the Preserve America Program and to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into partnerships with communities adjacent to units of the National Park System to leverage local cultural heritage tourism assets, S. 2895 and H.R. 5613, bills to designate the Quindaro Townsite National Historic Landmark, S. 3291, to reauthorize the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route, S. 3439 and H.R. 5532, bills to redesignate the Reconstruction Era National Monument as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, S. 3468, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 3505, to provide for partnerships among State and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance the visitor experience at nationally significant battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War, S. 3527 and H.R. 5585, bills to extend the authorization for the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission, S. 3533, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain river segments within the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 3545, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve home health payment reforms under the Medicare program, S. 3571 and H.R. 5420, bills to authorize the acquisition of land for addition to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in the State of New York, S. 3646, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to accept certain properties in the State of Missouri, S. 3609 and H.R. 801, bills to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Route 66 National Historic Trail, S. 3659, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an ''American World War II Heritage City'', H.R. 1220, to establish the Adams Memorial Commission to carry out the provisions of Public Law 107–62, H.R. 3607, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish fees for medical services provided in units of the National Park System, H.R. 3961, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Kissimmee River and its tributaries in the State of Florida for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, H.R. 5005, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System, H.R. 5706, to establish the Pearl Harbor National Memorial in the State of Hawai'i and the Honouliuli National Historic Site in the State of Hawai'i, H.R. 6077, recognizing the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York, H.R. 6599, to modify

the application of temporary limited appointment regulations to the National Park Service, and H.R. 6687, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to manage the Point Reyes National Seashore in the State of California consistently with Congress' long-standing intent to continue to authorize working dairies and ranches on agricultural property as part of the seashore's unique historic, cultural, scenic and natural values, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the missing and murdered, focusing on confronting the silent crisis in Indian country, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine China's non-traditional espionage against the United States, focusing on the threat and potential policy responses, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration, to hold hearings to examine transnational cartels and border security, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Security Clearance Processing Status Report'', 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing entitled ''Mandating a $15 Minimum Wage: Consequences for Workers and Small Businesses'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled ''Public Private Partnerships for Federal Energy Management'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Examining the Availability of SAFE Kits at Hospitals in the United States'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade, hearing entitled ''Evaluating the Effectiveness of the International Financial Institutions'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Development, Diplomacy, and Defense: Promoting U.S. Interests in Africa'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, hearing entitled ''Oversight Hearing for the Antitrust Enforcement Agencies (Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Competition and the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division)'', 2 p.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Information Technology; and Subcommittee on Government Operations, joint hearing entitled ''Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) Scorecard 7.0'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Full Committee, markup on General Services Administration Capital Investment and Leasing Program Resolutions, 10 a.m., 2253 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Is VA Ready for Full Implementation of Appeals Reform?'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 12

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of S.J. Res. 64, Returns by Exempt and Certain Non-Exempt Organizations, and vote on adoption of the joint resolution at 12:15 p.m.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

10 a.m., Wednesday, December 12

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Begin consideration of the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 2—Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Bordallo, Madeleine Z., Guam, E1636
Calvert, Ken, Calif., E1636, E1637, E1639, E1640, E1644
Carson, André, Ind., E1642
Clyburn, James E., S.C., E1646
Comer, James, Ky., E1636
Correa, J. Luis, Calif., E1641
Gianforte, Greg, Mont., E1635, E1637, E1637, E1638, E1640, E1640, E1641, E1642, E1644, E1645
Gonzalez, Vicente, Tex., E1640
Gutiérrez, Luis V., Ill., E1637
Holding, George, N.C., E1638
Kaptur, Marcy, Ohio, E1638
Kuster, Ann M., N.H., E1639
Marchant, Kenny, Tex., E1647
Matsui, Doris O., Calif., E1643, E1647
Messer, Luke, Ind., E1636, E1638, E1639, E1640, E1641, E1642, E1643, E1645, E1646, E1646
Nolan, Richard M., Minn., E1635
Poe, Ted, Tex., E1641, E1646
Schakowsky, Janice D., Ill., E1645
Scott, Austin, Ga., E1635
Sinema, Kyrsten, Ariz., E1645
Speier, Jackie, Calif., E1637, E1639, E1641, E1642, E1644, E1646, E1647
Swalwell, Eric, Calif., E1643

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