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No. 208

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

December 9, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, 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, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AMERICANS NEED BILL OF RIGHTS BACK

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, every American needs to see Angela Marsden's tearful video as she pours out her frustrations as a small restaurant owner in Los Angeles.

Forced to drastically curtail her business during California's brutal shutdowns, she took out an \$80,000 loan to meet all the expensive requirements

to move her dining outside and salvage what was left of her life's work.

Instead, authorities arbitrarily changed the rules and shut her down again, a death sentence for her 10-year-old restaurant. Yet, the same authorities permitted a film production company to offer the very same outdoor dining across the very same parking lot the day she had to close her business.

"I am losing everything," she says through her tears. "Everything I own is being taken away from me."

In Staten Island, police hauled a restaurant owner away in handcuffs for desperately trying to reopen his establishment just across the tracks from other restaurants where dining was allowed under precisely the same conditions.

When asked to explain these capricious standards, California's Governor Gavin Newsom smirked: Oh, I am deeply empathetic.

Well, that must be a load off of their minds.

The Fifth Amendment in our Bill of Rights specifically protects Americans from being deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. Where are those rights today?

Congress is now discussing how to provide relief for the thousands of small business owners, their employees, and the families that depend on them who have been crushed by these reckless edicts.

As usual, politicians measure their empathy by how much they are willing to spend of other people's money.

But the fine point of the matter is this: Government cannot support the economy for any significant period of time because government does not finance the economy. It is the economy that finances the government. When you shut down the economy, you shut down the revenues that go to the government.

The only genuine relief from the COVID lockdowns is to end the COVID

lockdowns. Why is it so hard for some people to understand that? By now, it ought to be obvious that the lockdowns have failed to contain this virus.

After 9 months of this unprecedented experiment in social engineering, the virus continues to spread. Common sense should tell us that the more infectious a virus and the deeper it has already penetrated into a population, the less effective mass isolation will be.

The plight of Angela Marsden and countless victims of these policies tell us clearly what we are very effectively accomplishing. We are destroying our society.

We have set in motion countless avoidable deaths by suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, deferred health treatments, deferred health screenings, and poverty that will stalk us for many years to come. We have robbed our youth of a year of their educations.

Nearly half of American retailers say they are now in imminent danger of permanently closing. Forbes magazine reports: "The number one worry on most small business owners' mind now is the threat of more government-mandated business closures."

Eleven million Americans who had jobs in February no longer have those jobs today.

Modern science and its many breakthroughs in immunology, epidemiology, and virology have given us advanced treatments and vaccines unparalleled in human history. But science is grotesquely incompetent to reorder human societies or to change the laws of human nature, nor does it give officials the omniscience to know what is best for every person in every circumstance, nor does it give them the right to wantonly destroy people's lives and livelihoods. After all, medicine's most ancient command is: First, do no harm.

We have arbitrarily and indiscriminately destroyed the life's work and

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

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



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life's dreams of millions of Americans like Angela Marsden. We have made the most sacred right of Americans to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness into a hollow and bitter mockery.

The American people don't need the Governor's empathy, and they don't need politicians' handouts. They need a government that protects their right to make a living and to lead their own lives according to their own best judgment.

They need their Bill of Rights back, and above all, they need their freedom back.

FAREWELL TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say good-bye to this body as my time serving the Fourth Congressional District of Massachusetts comes to a close.

This job has been an honor. We have come quite a long way since my first days in the Capitol when I had an AP reporter following me around for the day, and I got so lost trying to find the House floor that I ended up in the Longworth parking garage.

Luckily, things have mostly improved from there:

Seeing my name on that office door for the first time;

Keeping company with giants that I grew up idolizing, like John Lewis, Eliseo Medina, and Dolores Huerta;

Having the honor of responding to Donald Trump's first State of the Union from Diman Regional Voc-Tech in mighty Fall River, Massachusetts.

There are a few people who I would not be here without.

To my wife, Lauren: Thank you for serving alongside me, for the sacrifices that you made and the heart that you gave to this job, too. Tell Ellie and James that dad has breakfast, bath, and school drop-off duty for the next 15 years or so.

To the Massachusetts delegation: I loved serving with you. I loved learning from you. There is no team I would rather have been in the trenches with every day.

To my constituents back home: I am so grateful for the trust that you put in me. My proudest moments were when you allowed me to bring your voice to this Chamber, when I could carry what you felt in Taunton or Attleboro or Fall River or Milford to this floor. Thank you for the privilege that you afforded me. I will see you back home soon.

Finally, to the staff members who worked and thought and fought and talked and wrote and served alongside me over the course of the last 8 years; you all are the heroes behind my story. There will never be words for my gratitude for everything that you took on every single day—and so many nights—

to ensure that we did this job right. I will miss not seeing all of your faces quite so often.

Mr. Speaker, I leave this body proud and hopeful because here is what I know: that we are a complicated and messy country, that we violated our founding promises before the ink was dry. We boldly declared, "We the people," and promptly defined "we" as rich, White, Protestant men. We staked out moral high ground of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and paid for it with human bondage, abuse, and suffering that we carry to this day.

But embedded in that history is a slow and stubborn story that every generation shares, a journey to heal those wounds, an understanding fought and bled for over time that we are in this mess together whether we like it or not.

Our arc isn't clean, but it is clear that each generation expands that definition of "we." We suffer setbacks. We get pushed off track and sometimes can't feel that progress. We fight amongst ourselves. But still, generation after generation, we expand.

And that is the counterweight to the great lie of these times, that the American pie is finite; that for my family to survive, yours must suffer; that the richest Nation on Earth is somehow plagued by scarcity rather than greed.

Loosening that lie's grip on our country is the work of our generation—for people who feel unseen, unheard, and unrepresented; for the most in need of assistance and protection, justice and opportunity, who have been told by their government that there is no room or money or time or will.

And that injustice is a reality etched in stone rather than a deliberate choice by those in power about who is worthy and who is not.

I hope that in the months and years ahead, this body can help change that, that we will err on the side of expansion, of inclusion, acceptance, equity, and grace, because history makes clear that the only true error is when we do the absolute opposite.

Our future is big and bright, but it will take everything and everyone to reach it. I hope that a new generation of Americans will rise knowing that the people's House stands tall for them.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an honor. God bless and Godspeed.

DEMOCRATIC ELECTION THEFT EXPERT DESCRIBES HOW HE DOES IT

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, this is my sixth speech in a series on voter fraud, election theft, and the Presidential election.

Today, I cite an August 29, 2020, New York Post article that quotes extensively from a New Jersey professional Democrat election theft expert's description of how he steals elections

using the en masse mailed ballot voting system.

The election theft expert states he puts a real ballot into "the copy machine, and it comes out the same way."

"But the return envelopes are 'more secure than the ballot. You could never re-create the envelope.'"

So envelopes had to be collected from real voters. The election theft expert adds: "He would have his operatives fan out, going house to house, convincing voters to let them mail completed ballots on their behalf as a public service. The fraudster and his minions would then take the sealed envelopes home and hold them over boiling water."

For those unaware, the process of collecting ballots from voters, it is called ballot harvesting and is legal in some States but illegal in others.

The election theft expert continues: "You have to steam it to loosen the glue."

"He then would remove the real ballot, place the counterfeit ballot inside the signed certificate, and reseal the envelope. 'Five minutes per ballot tops,' is how long he says it takes to steal a vote."

The election theft expert adds that "sometimes postal employees are in on the scam. 'You have a postman who is a rabid anti-Trump guy, and he is working in Bedminster or some Republican stronghold. He can take those filled-out ballots, and knowing 95 percent are going to a Republican, he can just throw those in the garbage.'"

"In some cases, mail carriers were members of his 'work crew' and would sift ballots from the mail and hand them over to the operative."

□ 1015

The election theft expert continues: "With mail-in ballots, partisans from both parties hash out and count ballots at the local board of elections—debating which ballots make the cut and which need to be thrown out because of irregularities."

"Any ballots offered up by him or his operation would come with a bent corner along the voter certificate—which contains the voter signature—so Democratic board of election counters would know the fix was in and not to object."

The New York Post describes his vote theft methods as "organizationally, his voter fraud schemes in the Garden State and elsewhere resembled Mafia organizations, with a boss—usually the campaign manager—handing off the day-to-day managing of the mob soldiers to underboss—him. The actual candidate was usually kept in the dark deliberately so they could maintain 'plausible deniability.'"

This Democrat election theft expert stunningly helps expose the sordid underbelly of voter fraud and election theft that riddles America's election system and too often makes official election results inaccurate and unreliable.

As my prior speeches have detailed, voting in American elections by illegal

aliens and other noncitizens so out of control that Joe Biden openly solicited the illegal alien bloc vote and support with the promise of amnesty and citizenship if they helped him get elected President.

Further, en masse ballot mail-out schemes are illegal because they violate Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution and Congress' ensuing legislation that designates one 24-hour day as the election day. More to the point, Congress could have but did not create an election week, an election month, or an election season.

Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming, compelling, and irrefutable evidence leads to but one conclusion: If only lawful votes cast by eligible American citizens are counted, President Trump handily won the electoral college and reelection.

Hence, on January 6, 2021, provided the required one Senator joins me, I will object to and vote to reject electoral college submissions of Nevada, Georgia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and all other States whose election systems are so badly flawed as to render their vote submissions unreliable, untrustworthy, and unworthy of acceptance.

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

FIXING A BROKEN WASHINGTON MEANS BRIDGING PARTISAN DIVIDES

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

Mr. MCADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say farewell to this institution that I have been so lucky and honored to serve.

I want to first thank my wife, Julie, for supporting my career in public service for the past 12 years and for these last 2 years while I have been a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. It is an understatement to say that I could not have done this job without her, both in terms of her unconditional love and support, for taking care of our family while I have traveled back and forth to Washington, and as a thought partner, sounding board, strategic adviser, moral conscience, and North Star. Any time that I was faced with a politically difficult dilemma, she would tell me to follow my conscience and stand for what I believe in.

I want to also thank my four children: James, Kate, Robert, and Isaac: Your humor, love, and support have kept me going even when things get tough. Thank you for allowing me to pursue this great adventure, and I am looking forward to more evenings at home with the four of you.

I also want to thank my staff. I know that I have had one of the best staffs on Capitol Hill, and it is a testament to their hard work and their perseverance

that we were able to accomplish as much as we did. So to Nichole, Tiffany, Alyson, Eric, Michelle, Andrea, Chris, Brennen, Julianne, Katie, Christian, Marcus, Hannah, and Stephanie, thank you.

To the people of Utah who granted to me this opportunity, thank you.

I also thank my House colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, for your ideas, for our constructive disagreements. For those who shared my desire to work together to find solutions to our challenges, I am grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I packed up my Washington, D.C., office this week with mixed emotions: pride in the work that I accomplished to support Utah's hard-working families, but frustrated at what did not get done. Nothing captures it quite like the failure to deliver to date much-needed emergency relief due to the coronavirus.

We see this catastrophe happening in Utah and around the country. People are dying; people are sick; people are hurting economically; small businesses are on the brink of failure, and many have already failed. It is time for each and every one of us to step forward and to do our part.

It is long past time for Congress to put the partisanship and politics aside and to do its job, to get it done and to show results. A bill that does not pass the House and Senate and get signed by the President means nothing to struggling businesses or to a struggling family.

The partisan divide has taken a toll on public confidence in government's ability to meet the challenges we were elected to solve. Americans recognize their distrust of the Federal Government and each other is a problem that gets in the way of solving tough issues. A new type of polarization is gripping the country.

As one researcher noted: "This level of political divisiveness on both sides creates a feedback loop of hatred and leaves the U.S. open to manipulation by foreign powers that wish to further these internal rifts."

I have tried to counter that in my public service by walking a centrist path: to heal and to listen where I can, to hear from all sides, and to find common ground.

I believe it is important to elect people willing to work across the aisle, people like me who build bridges rather than fan the flames. I have seen this work, whether it is working with Republicans to counter the alarming rise in the rate of suicide or traveling to our southern border to get agreement for emergency food, housing, and medical aid for refugees fleeing violence and danger in their home countries. Once you learn that people in both parties agree on both humanitarian treatment and securing the border, efforts can focus on ironing out the details.

I was proud to represent Utah's Fourth Congressional District during the 116th Congress, serving my community, my State, and my country as an

elected Representative in the people's House. This was a great honor and a privilege. I am glad to have carried out their good ideas across the finish line, including four bills expected to be signed into law.

I have built relationships with Republicans and Democrats that led to success on clean air, stopping child trafficking, preventing suicide, and recovering investment savings for hard-working seniors cheated by fraudsters.

My wish this holiday season for those who serve next year in Congress is to be less partisan and more like Utahns who see the best in each other, who work together, roll up their sleeves, and solve problems together for the good of everyone.

Godspeed, and may God bless the United States of America.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF OFFICER ANDY ORNELAS

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

Mr. GARCÍA of California. Mr. Speaker, while most Americans were sitting down to dinner and enjoying a relaxing evening with their families on November 23, a young California Highway Patrol officer by the name of Andy Ornelas was on duty in the bucolic city of Palmdale.

At 7:05 p.m., a vehicle turned directly into the path of Officer Ornelas' motorcycle, causing a terrible accident. After a valiant fight for his life, Andy succumbed to his injuries and passed away 9 days later on December 2.

I rise today to pay tribute to this precious hero who was taken from this world too soon.

Men and women like Officer Ornelas make sacrifices and face danger on a daily basis while we, the average citizens of this beautiful country and the beneficiaries of their service, remain wrapped in the warmth of the security blanket which they provide.

While he was alive, we didn't thank Officer Ornelas enough. We didn't appreciate him enough, and we certainly didn't support him enough.

As a society, we need to remember that these precious guardians of peace and security that they provide are subjected to dangers that the average American cannot fathom. While they are alive, we need to honor our first responders more.

Andy did things right. He did things for the right reason. He worked hard, he played hard, and he loved his friends and his family with purity and intensity. We were all blessed to have him on his watch.

My deepest condolences and prayers go out to Andy's family. His mom and dad, his brother and uncle are all law enforcement officers. His wife, Taylor, now, more than ever, needs the full support of her Nation, the support of her State, and the support of her community.

Andy is with God, and, Taylor, we are with you. At all times, we are at your

disposal to support you in any way that we can.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BOB KELLAR

Mr. GARCÍA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend who is retiring after nearly six decades of noble and loyal service to our Nation and to our State of California.

Today, Mr. Bob Kellar is officially retiring from the Santa Clarita City Council after more than 20 years in that role. During his tenure, he also served as mayor four times.

Before his time on the city council, Bob Kellar also served our community as an LAPD officer for 25 years, and before that, he was a Green Beret in the U.S. Army.

His list of accomplishments and leadership roles in our community is too long to list here today. In the end, it is his kind character, his humble comportment, and his playful sense of humor that makes this patriot and public servant so special.

I want to also thank Bob's wife, Kathy, for making so many sacrifices in support of our community and country.

Bob, I am proud to call you my friend, and I am honored to know you. Sir, you are one of the best Americans I have met. Congratulations on your retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF GENERAL CHUCK YEAGER

Mr. GARCÍA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of an American legend and aviation pioneer, General Chuck Yeager, who passed away this past Monday, December 7.

Daring to be the first to break the sound barrier over California's Mojave Desert, General Yeager achieved aviation history in 1947 and launched the modern jet age. He did what many thought was impossible, and he did it over the skies of my district.

But his dedication to our Nation and contribution to aeronautical sciences was greater than this one crowning achievement. He served in World War II as a fighter ace, shooting down 13 German planes—5 in one day.

In 1953, he set a world speed record by flying at nearly 2½ times the speed of sound.

From commanding the school training astronauts at Edwards Air Force Base, to flying 127 missions as commander of a fighter wing in Vietnam, to testing a Russian MiG-15 obtained from a defector, Chuck Yeager's service to country and advancement of aviation never stopped throughout his lifetime.

These accomplishments might have seemed unlikely in the beginning. Possessing only a high school degree and becoming sick riding in his first military flight as a passenger, he might have seemed an unlikely milestone maker in military aviation. But, as he said in his memoir: "All I know is I worked my tail off learning to learn how to fly, and worked hard at it all the way."

As a fighter pilot myself, this is difficult for me to say, but Chuck Yeager was truly the best fighter pilot this world has seen. Hard work, determination, bravery, and service made Chuck Yeager a role model and a uniquely American hero.

May God bless Chuck Yeager, his family, and the Nation that he served, and I hope Chuck is up there in Heaven setting more records.

HONORING ROB STRAIN

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for a couple of purposes today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Rob Strain, a friend and constituent who is retiring as president of Ball Aerospace, headquartered in Colorado.

Rob first joined Ball Aerospace in 2012, after serving as director of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. At Goddard, Rob's strong oversight and leadership skills contributed to the success of more than 13 missions, as he was able to blend technical and programmatic solutions while under intense congressional and agency scrutiny.

Rob has a hands-on managerial style and a collaborative nature, which makes him a critical contributor on mission teams and not just the person in charge.

Rob helped devise and execute a smooth transition from the flawed tri-agency NPOESS program for the Nation's next-generation polar weather satellites to the NASA/NOAA Joint Polar Satellite System, JPSS, based at Goddard to ensure the continuity of these critical weather satellite observations. The significance of his thoughtful, effective leadership during the program's transition cannot be overstated.

Rob also served a key role for the final space shuttle servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope. The mission encountered a major programmatic challenge from a prelaunch computer failure 1 month before the scheduled launch. In this "failure is not an option" moment, Rob brought together the government and industry expertise to fix the problem, ensured the team stayed on track, and minimized scheduled impacts. The result was a successful servicing mission, extending Hubble's incredible contributions to our scientific community as we approach 31 years in service.

Prior to joining NASA, Rob led the Space Department of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, where he was integral to the successful development, launch, and operations of the New Horizons spacecraft to Pluto. New Horizons overcame numerous technical and instrument availability issues to meet an extremely tight planetary launch window and successfully flew by Pluto in 2015.

Through his career at Ball Aerospace, Rob has been a strong champion for diversity and inclusion across his teams and empowering all members of the team to be themselves and contribute to the success of the business and the mission. Despite the success Rob has achieved in his career, he remains an incredibly approachable and humble person. Rob remains accessible to individuals at all career levels, actively seeking their input and making them feel valued.

Rob, I will miss your dry sense of humor, which often brought levity to serious meetings and tense situations. Thank you for your friendship and your work on behalf of the aerospace community, Colorado, and the Nation. I wish you the best in your retirement.

□ 1030

ELECTION RESULTS WERE FAIR

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the second purpose I rise today is to respond to one of my friends who is questioning the validity of the election. He couldn't be more wrong. The gentleman from Alabama and I work on legislation together. We cosponsored a bill that was just signed. But with respect to his allegations and the allegations of attorneys that there has been major fraud in this election, I can tell you that they couldn't be more wrong. There is not a shred of evidence.

I would say to my friend, under the Constitution—under Article I, Section 1.4—the States are in charge of their elections. And under the section concerning the Presidency, Article II, Section 4, we choose when we hear from the electors of the electoral college—which will be January 6. But citing a New York Post article of an unnamed Democrat, who supposedly is an expert in elections, certainly is not evidence.

In the cases across the country, there has been no evidence, and case after case has been thrown out, as they deserve to be thrown out. In fact, the Supreme Court just threw out a case yesterday concerning claims against Pennsylvania and its election process.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand how these attorneys can bring these cases without facing sanctions by the various courts for bringing frivolous, vexatious, and abusive litigation. This election was fair. There have been many instances where they are trying to find some level of fraud. No fraud has been found. Joe Biden is the President-elect, and we will make him President on January 20, when the inauguration occurs.

HONORING RETIRED COLONEL GARY CLARK

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

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a Florida 15th District resident and local hero: Retired U.S. Air Force Colonel Gary Clark.

Mr. Speaker, for 26 years, Gary wore his uniform proudly and defended our

way of life. From Vietnam to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to Desert Storm, Gary's leadership as a commander and director played a key role in our force readiness policies.

Despite this distinguished career, Gary was just getting started. He served on the National Board of Directors of the Military Officers Association, as vice chair of the Florida Veterans Foundation, as chair of the Polk County Veterans Council, as chairman of the Flight to Honor Polk, and serves on the James A. Haley VA Hospital Advisory Board, among others.

On a personal level, he has also aided my office and those of my two predecessors with the military service academies nomination process—his deep insight and knowledge have helped numerous students throughout the years who also proudly served our country. And just this past September, Gary joined the 8th class to enter the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, it is Americans like Gary who have sacrificed their time, their talents, and their treasures for both this Nation and their neighbors. When I see an American flag, I think of Gary, and I am so proud to call him my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Gary for his service; and to many more years ahead, I salute him.

REMEMBERING BISHOP MATTHEW WILLIAMS

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the passing of Bishop Matthew Williams, a longtime community and faith leader from our district, and a personal inspiration to me.

Bishop Williams was born in March of 1956, in Lakeland, Florida, the son of the late elder Matthew Williams, Sr., and the late Mother Louise Williams. He graduated from my alma mater, Brandon High School, in 1974, and attended Hillsborough Community College. Yet, at the age of 17, and during a period of national unrest, he accepted Christ as his personal Savior and, in 1982, became a full-time minister at Brown Memorial Church of God in Christ, forever impacting countless lives in our community.

Not only was Bishop Williams always available to help anyone in need, he always was a source of strength and guidance to his peers. Given his dedication to his neighbors and faith, it is no surprise that he was elected to the Church of God in Christ's General Board, the highest executive and administrative board within his denomination.

Mr. Speaker, our community and my family extend our deepest sympathies to the Williams' family, especially to his wife, Gayle, and his daughter, Deniece. Though, he will be missed, we know that he still lives in the presence of Almighty God and awaits our next meeting.

WAR ON COVID-19

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY. I represent the Ninth Congressional District of Illinois, and I am here on this auspicious day to stand up for the people of the Ninth Congressional District who are suffering right now under this pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, we know that already we have seen the deaths of 286,000 people, rivaling the total number of people who have died in World War II. We are at war with this virus. Fifteen-plus million Americans have contracted this virus. But it is not only the suffering of people and the families of people who have died and the people who have this terrible disease, but it is also an issue for the rest of Americans who are suffering right now.

Mr. Speaker, like every other Member of Congress, I am sure that you are getting the calls that I am getting; people—adults—who are weeping into the telephone and telling us about their fears, the suffering that their families are facing, the loss of jobs.

A man called crying, saying, "I can't pay my rent. I have lost my job. I am so afraid that, along with my family, we are going to be out on the street."

A woman called somewhat embarrassed to tell us that she cannot put food on the table for her children. We directed her to a food bank. Think of that; in the richest country in the world, that she had to rely on a food bank to be able to feed her family.

Mr. Speaker, in this country today, 1 out of 4 of our children is considered—what we say—food insecure.

What does that mean?

It means that they don't know where their next meal is going to come from. This is shameful.

People who are facing—the day after Christmas—losing their unemployment benefits. In Illinois, that is half a million people. Around the country, that is 16.4 million people who may be without any source of sustenance.

Mr. Speaker, this is America. We need to save our people. So we need to come to an agreement, and we need to come to it soon because people are desperate right now.

Mr. Speaker, the things that we need to do:

Number one, I believe that we need to send a check to every family. They need money in their pockets.

And where is that money going to go?

It is going to go right out into the community, helping all the small businesses that we are so concerned about. That \$1,200 check that people got earlier in the year was a lifesaver, and we should do something similar right now.

Mr. Speaker, we need to extend those unemployment insurance benefits. Our economy actually was somewhat thriving when they were getting \$600 a week to keep their families going. I am not necessarily asking for that amount of money, but we should continue the unemployment insurance benefits. Again, that money goes right out into the economy.

And then we have to end the idea of some sort of a liability shield. In many ways, it is really a get-out-of-jail-free card for companies that don't have to take care of their employees when they get sick.

Mr. Speaker, 48 million workers put their own lives in danger every day and suit up and go out into the world taking care of our elderly, working in hospitals, working in grocery stores, loading our shelves, and taking our money when we leave. These people deserve help, and the employer should not be freed from any kind of liability.

Mr. Speaker, we need the State and local money, and we need help for small businesses. We can do that. We must do that.

CONGRATULATING DAVID SHOAR

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate David Shoar on a well-deserved retirement from a 40-year, lifelong career from law enforcement. David has been with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office since being elected sheriff there in 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. That is 16 long years of faithful service to the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office.

He has been an outstanding leader for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and initiated many innovations during his tenure. Sheriff Shoar actually began his law enforcement career with the St. Augustine Police Department in 1981, serving as a patrol officer before being promoted to sergeant in 1991.

Because of his leadership, knowledge, skills, and abilities, in 2000, he was appointed as chief of police, following successful stints as operations commander and administrative services commander. Just 4 years later, in 2004, he would then begin his career as sheriff of St. Johns County.

Mr. Speaker, that is when I really came to know Sheriff Shoar, during the Florida Sheriffs Association's new sheriffs school. Although we both attended an earlier training class in Wakulla Springs and really had gotten to be close friends, it was at this new sheriff's training that I truly began to appreciate Sheriff Shoar's intelligence and his insights.

Sheriff Shoar is also a decorated soldier in the Florida National Guard, later retiring as a major after 24 years of service to our Nation and our State. He served in the Gulf War and led North Florida's recovery efforts following Hurricanes Andrew and Opal. His public service record and leadership in northeast Florida is truly second to none.

Mr. Speaker, all of Sheriff Shoar's awards and accolades are too numerous to list, but they do include the America's Most Wanted National First Responder Award, the American Legion's Top Cop Award, the Catholic Charities

of St. Johns County Good Samaritan Award, the Salvation Army's Gus Craig Award, and the prestigious Colonel Ed Taylor Award from the St. Johns County Veteran's Council for his many years of dedication to our Nation's veterans.

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In addition to his many successes in law enforcement, military service, and community service, Sheriff Shoar also holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of North Florida and an honorary doctorate of law degree from Flagler College.

During his 40 years of service, Sheriff Shoar made a positive difference in his community, his country, his agency, and the lives of many people, including my own.

His life reminds me of a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you lived and lived well.

Sheriff Shoar, David, my friend, you have made a difference and lived well.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Florida, I wish David well in his retirement and thank him for dedicating his life to the safety of our community and our Nation.

MASKS SAVE LIVES

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask a simple question: When did we stop looking out for each other?

We used to be a country that reserved its highest and best celebration for those who sacrificed for us. That is why we honor Nathan Hale of Connecticut and Rosie the Riveter and the crew and passengers of Flight 93. It is why we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, to honor a man that gave his life to make us a better people, to make us a better Nation. They sacrificed and did the hard things so that we could have the blessings of freedom and prosperity.

Two days ago, Mr. Speaker, we remembered the start of World War II. 400,000 Americans died in that war, 290,000 in combat. Tom and Alleta Sullivan of Waterloo, Iowa, gave their sons in that war, all five of them. George Sullivan, Frank Sullivan, Joseph Sullivan, Madison Sullivan, and Albert Leo Sullivan, all five sons killed in the South Pacific in 1942, all five of them given for us.

Every single day, nurses, ER doctors, janitors, and delivery people take huge risks for us. For 2½ centuries, Americans have done what was asked of them and more. We serve on juries. We pay our taxes. We have been drafted into the military.

Why? We do these things not because we necessarily want to do them, but because we recognize that we have inherited freedoms, liberty, and pros-

perity from others who secured them for us. We understand that freedom and prosperity aren't gifts to be taken for granted, to be exalted above what we owe each other. They are blessings to be paid forward and to be fought for.

So what about this? What about this mask?

And what about this? "Mask off for freedom." Really?

This is a flimsy piece of cloth. It is uncomfortable. It is inconvenient. But it saves lives. It saves others.

When did we stop looking out for each other? You are not being asked to turn over your children, your five boys. You are not being asked to ration sugar or to have meatless Mondays. You are not even being asked to serve a week on a jury. You are being asked to wear a piece of cloth on your face to protect others.

Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to offer those who believe that COVID is a hoax or that masks don't save lives. All I can do is pray for them when they meet the souls of those for whom they would not make the smallest of sacrifices.

What I can do is remind us what makes us great as a people. It is not our wealth or our power. It is what we are willing to do for each other. What makes us great is what we are willing to offer up to each other, the small things that we owe each other and the inconceivable sacrifice upon which all of this is built.

At our best, what are we capable of doing for each other? Ask Tom and Alleta Sullivan.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF MRS. SUSAN DAY

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

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mrs. Susan Day, a beloved teacher in the Corpus Christi community who passed away on October 5, 2020.

Mrs. Day was a passionate and dedicated educator at Calallen High School who retired this past May after 36 years of service to our community. Students and parents alike described her as devoted, energetic, and inspiring. She would challenge her students with quality education while encouraging them with her enthusiasm and charm.

The students of Calallen High School tell stories of the many experiences she gave them, including coaching the Calallen Challenge Team to three wins in the local TV quiz show.

The English department chose to recognize her with a plaque declaring the English hallway, a place she had spent so much time with her students, to be the Susan Day Hallway.

Susan Day was an amazing member of our community who has touched the lives of hundreds of students, parents, and teachers.

I offer my condolences to her family, friends, and students as they grieve the

loss of a great woman. She will be fondly remembered by all for the investment and impact she has made in the lives of so many students.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR INDEPENDENT RESTAURANTS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, time is running out for America's 500,000 independent restaurants and their 11 million employees. This is the hardest-hit sector of our economy.

We began our morning hour today listening to our friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), and it is the lead editorial in the New York Times, focusing on the crisis for these restaurants.

Independent restaurants are holding on literally by their fingertips. They are facing a new wave of restrictions that are necessary to deal with the COVID crisis that is rising.

The talk of expanding the Paycheck Protection Program, the PPP, absolutely misses the mark. It didn't work initially when it was introduced for the restaurants, and it won't work now.

They can't afford to wait for warmer weather in the spring or a vaccine in the summer. They don't need more debt. They need a lifeline now. Otherwise, we could see the loss of up to 80 percent of our independent restaurants that form the very fabric of our neighborhoods.

Luckily, there is a solution. My RESTAURANTS Act has already passed the House. It is a program that won't add to the deficit. In fact, it will actually provide more money to the Government. The cost is \$120 billion, but the economic analysis suggests that it will save \$248 billion.

Think about it for a moment. That is logical because, instead of adding massive unemployment costs, having restaurants defaulting on their mortgages, being evicted because they are unable to pay rent, and the ripple effect throughout the vast supply chain for independent restaurants, from farmers, ranchers, and people who supply linen, for a few months of support from the RESTAURANTS Act, it will enable them to have limited operation, be paying rent, or keeping current with their mortgages, until later in next year when they can return to normal operations. It is imperative that we deal directly with putting money in their hands.

Last week, former Vice President Biden, President-Elect Biden, said restaurants need grants, not loans. Secretary of the Treasury Mnuchin said restaurants need grants; they don't need loans.

We have a solution that is available. The RESTAURANTS Act, as I said, has already passed the House of Representatives. Over half the Senate has co-sponsored this legislation.

As we have heard from President-Elect Biden, it should not be a loan; it should be a guarantee. Secretary Mnuchin said restaurants need grants; they don't need loans. The House should follow up, but not with expanding PPP, more cumbersome loans. Send them that lifeline. Keep independent restaurants in business. Protect their 11 million employees and literally the very fabric of our community.

DEESE, ESG, AND STAKEHOLDER CAPITALISM

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again sound the alarm about an increasing danger to retail investors and retirement savers across the country.

We have seen in recent years a trend of asset managers, banks, and other financial institutions prioritizing political and social causes over investment returns, potentially compromising the long-term financial security of their customers.

We have seen companies cede the primacy of shareholders to so-called stakeholders, endangering the long-standing corporate governance principle of directors' and officers' fiduciary duty.

Corporate leaders continue to accede to the calls from the extreme left to shun certain industries, deprioritize financial growth, and comply with a radical corporate governance reform agenda out of fear of being publicly shamed.

I fear that, if left unchecked, this trend will accelerate in the coming years, as government continues to pressure financial institutions to be agents of social change at the expense of savers, customers, and shareholders. Without a strong defense of free and fair market principles, we risk witnessing a decline in American economic exceptionalism that will have long-term material impacts on our constituents.

Earlier this month, former Vice President Biden announced that he would appoint Brian Deese as the chairman of the National Economic Council. Mr. Deese will join the administration from his current post as the head of sustainable investing at BlackRock. In that capacity, he serves as a leading proponent of BlackRock's environmental, social, and governance, or ESG, investing strategy.

BlackRock has been perhaps the most vocal asset manager on restricting access to capital for legally operating fossil energy businesses and limiting choices for their investors based on misguided public relations goals. This, in part, is attributable to the efforts of Mr. Deese, who has orchestrated the curious investment strategy of actively alienating an entire sector of the American economy, the U.S. energy sector, and the millions of jobs it supports, while at the same time en-

thusiastically providing access to capital to Chinese businesses which threaten American competitiveness and national security.

The appointment of Mr. Deese is a harbinger of things to come. It showcases that, unless we act, we will be on the path to socialism, where the primary goal of a corporation is not long-term growth or hiring more people or providing products and services to the American people, but instead to satisfy the most vocal detractors of corporate America.

So-called stakeholder capitalism, or the left's ideals for it, takes for granted the laws of supply and demand and discounts the market forces that govern businesses' success or failure.

Shareholder primacy is not about elevating the select few. It is about establishing metric-based accountability for corporate leaders to ensure that they are operating efficiently and effectively. That efficacy and productivity then, in turn, benefits employees, communities, and suppliers.

In today's market, a company cannot be successful without a focus on these other constituencies. But it must, first and foremost, make a profit to be viable.

Caring about broader social concerns, treating employees, suppliers, and customers well and ethically, and engaging in philanthropy within the community may all engender social support for a corporation, and in that sense, it may advance long-term shareholder value maximization. But that is not the paradigm those on the far left are urging the business community to adopt. Instead, they want a new paradigm, a paradigm that subordinates the interests of shareholders to the whims of stakeholders who have no ownership interest in the corporation whatsoever.

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Replacing the focus on shareholder value with a focus on stakeholder interests unrelated to the core business of the corporation would not only authorize officers and directors to breach their fiduciary duties to the owners of the corporation, it would, in the long-term, undermine the corporation's ability to advance the interests of employees, suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders.

The socialists think that shareholder value maximization is always inconsistent with other stakeholder interests. The opposite is often true.

I believe we are only scratching the surface of how the radical left hopes to remake corporate America in its socialist image. We must act diligently to preserve the spirit of free enterprise, promote healthy economic growth, and protect the long-term interests of investors.

With Brian Deese departing from BlackRock, perhaps that firm can re-evaluate its obligation to the investors who entrust their assets to them to prioritize returns over political errands, to focus on maximizing share-

holder value, instead of groveling before radical environmentalists, socialists, and the extreme far left.

EXPRESSING DEEP GRATITUDE FOR PRIVILEGE OF SERVING IN CONGRESS

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

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the individuals, families, and communities of California's 21st District, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the privilege of being here today.

I am the son of immigrants who, I am sure, never imagined that their son would become a Member of Congress.

Like my late father, I first started in chemical engineering, but my career diverged when my wife, Kathy, and I moved to the Central Valley some 20 years ago in order for her to start and pursue her medical career, taking care of some of the most critically ill children in one of the most deserving regions in America.

Mr. Speaker, the best thing I can say about myself is I am married to her, Kathy Murphy.

For me, I began volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, and from there, I can directly trace my path to where I stand before you today as a Member of Congress, as a public servant. It is has been an honor and a privilege to serve.

There is nothing more rewarding in life than serving others. As the late Martin Luther King, Jr. said and professed: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'"

One of my favorite family stories was about my grandmother, my lola, in the Philippines, right after World War II, in Manila. She saw that there was a segment of our troops who were being discriminated against. They didn't have anyplace to go when they got off duty, no place to hang out and have a drink or a meal or just hang out with their buddies. So my grandmother, she took it upon herself to open the first and only social club for African-American troops there in Manila.

Now, my grandmother didn't know or even ever speak to or meet our friend the late John Lewis, but they were cut from the same cloth. They lived by the belief that, if you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up; you have to say something; you have to do something. My grandmother did something.

That sense of social justice was passed along to my mom, Perla deCastro, my children's lola, who became one of the State of Nevada's first equal opportunity officers.

I am so proud of my children, Molly, Joe, Thomas, and Jack, who are considering serving others in the Peace Corps, the Foreign Service, and the Armed Forces.

For 2 years, I have been so grateful and so proud of my staff here in Washington, D.C., and back home in California. They made a positive difference in the lives of all the people of the 21st District. From the 27 bills we passed, to the \$700 million of water infrastructure that we got passed through the House, to the over \$3.5 million that we got returned back to over 300 constituents, they were known to be productive, effective, and capable.

Thank you to my team. You are a shining example of the adage, to be successful, surround yourself by people who are smarter than you.

I want to thank all the House staff for making this place work, the Capitol Police for keeping us safe, the ladies in the cloakroom who kept us fed, the staff at the gym who kept us in shape; and to our leaders—STENY, NANCY, JIM, and HAKEEM—our Caucus is in good hands.

Thank you to all the interns who served in both my D.C. and district offices. I am proud that you are considering a life and a career in public service.

I am invigorated by the young men and women who want to make a positive difference. They are making it happen, being the change they want to see in their own communities.

My proudest moment as a Member of Congress was that day that we passed H.R. 6, the Dream and Promise Act. A young woman from the Central Valley who came out to witness the passage of that act said to me afterwards: Thank you, Congressman COX. You finally make me feel as if somebody cares.

Beyond the legislation we worked on, my measure of success was to provide an example that, if you care, advocate and work on the issues that matter to you, your voice will be heard here in Washington. I do care, and I look forward to continuing to fight to make a positive difference in the lives of all Central Valley residents.

And we have to fight, Mr. Speaker. Democracies aren't taken away; they are given away. I am proud of the role I have played to save our democracy: first, in 2018, by taking back control of the House, and this year, in helping win the White House. It brings a smile to my face to be able to say President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect HARRIS.

But there is a lot more work to do to ensure our democracy. Let's all recall our pledge to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Let us recall that the Framers of the Constitution established Congress first. We are Article I, supreme amongst the three branches of the government. The power of the people resides in the Congress, not the White House.

As this will be my final speech for the 116th Congress, I want to say, unequivocally, I am proud to be a Democrat.

Now, sometimes our party is not great at messaging. We try to make

every voice heard, and sometimes we pay a price for that at the ballot box. But here are a few truths that I am happy to sing from the rooftops:

The Democratic Party has always been the party of working people and their families.

The fact is, there is only one party that has consistently fought to win healthcare for your family.

There is only party that will suffer the political consequences of telling America the truth about COVID.

We are the party of purpose. I was proud to run and serve under our banner.

I look forward to the Biden-Harris Democratic House and Democratic Senate. We will get back to work fighting for the people.

CONDEMNING ACTIONS OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

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

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to unequivocally condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the actions of the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI.

Just last week, referring to her obstruction of bipartisan targeted relief bills that we could have voted on on this floor, she said: "Don't characterize what we did before as a mistake. . . . That was not a mistake; it was a decision." When asked what had changed, why she is finally coming to the table on COVID relief, her response was simple: A new President.

We have known for months that Speaker PELOSI was holding the American people hostage for political gain. I have said it; my colleagues have said it.

While Americans suffered under unscientific, foolish lockdowns, PELOSI withheld relief for political purposes—not policy purposes, but political purposes.

But we now have a full admission. She said the quiet part out loud.

This was never about what was best for the American people, never about honest policy disagreement. It was about preventing President Trump from getting any credit. It was about politics.

Speaker PELOSI made a simple calculation. She bet that, if she could keep Congress from reaching a deal on COVID relief, that would hurt President Trump and Republicans and give her more power.

Even when Members of her own party asked her to bring commonsense, standalone bipartisan relief measures to the House floor that would easily become law, she refused. She would say over and over again that nothing is better than something.

She was being honest. She honestly believed that nothing was better than something.

But better for who? Not for the American people, that is for sure.

She believed that nothing was better than something for her and her party. It is hard to imagine a more awful and heartless strategy.

What is worse, Speaker PELOSI does all of this while people in her home State suffer from unscientific, unconstitutional lockdowns that Democrat leaders in California are forcing upon their citizens.

These lockdowns are not based in science, never have been. Study after study shows they yield little, if any, benefits, but they impose extreme costs on the small businesses suffering under them.

Do you know what else? The Democrat leaders making these executive orders, they know this, too, because they are violating their own guidelines. The Speaker of the House couldn't even let a pesky little lockdown get in the way of a haircut appointment, even though those same lockdowns destroy the lives of her constituents.

We have all seen the heartbreaking video of Angela Marsden, the owner of the Pineapple Hill Saloon and Grill in Los Angeles. Everyone should have to watch that testimony, as Democrats shut down her outdoor—outdoor—dining while a Hollywood studio sets up shop right next door.

She represents millions of Americans suffering who have taken note of the hypocrisy of these lockdowns, of the double standards as big businesses can operate freely while small businesses are shamed into submission and told, wrongly, that they are the ones who must sacrifice to slow the spread, that the demise of the business they spent their whole lives building is the price to pay because "if it just saves one life."

But this is unscientific nonsense and we all know it. Study after study shows outdoor dining is safe, that outbreaks are not occurring because of our small businesses: our gyms, our restaurants, our salons. And yet these small businesses are in the crosshairs of the cowardly politicians across the country.

This madness has to stop. This arbitrary application of executive orders is deeply, deeply unconstitutional.

Justice Gorsuch recently stated: "There is no world in which the Constitution tolerates color-coded executive edicts that reopen liquor stores and bike shops, but shutter churches, synagogues, and mosques."

Americans have had enough. It is time to stand up against the hypocrisy of these so-called leaders deliberately harming the citizens they claim to represent and to condemn the deeply partisan actions of the Speaker of this House.

COMPARING WEALTH IN BLACK HOMES AND BUSINESSES

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

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a couple of items of importance. I rise today to speak about wealth in Black homes and businesses.

According to the Brookings Institution, the net worth of a typical White family is nearly 10 times that of a Black family.

According to the Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative, the numbers in my home city of Atlanta and the other eight cities in the district, College Park, East Point, Decatur, Hapeville, Lake City, Forest Park, Morrow, and Brookhaven, are slightly better, but no less concerning.

The median household income of a White family is \$83,722, compared to \$28,105 for a Black family.

Sixty-nine percent of the Black families are liquid asset poor, compared to 22 percent of White families.

The average African-American-owned business is valued at \$58,085, while the average value of a White business is \$658,264.

There are many reasons for these disparities, starting foremost with America's original sin: slavery. And descendants of African slaves in District Five expect restorative financial justice in the form of reparations.

We also know that a reason the problem persists well into the 21st century is the availability of capital to Black-owned businesses and the success of Black banks. The higher the circulation of dollars in the community, the greater the economic stability and opportunities for economic growth.

According to the University of Georgia's Selig Center for Economic Growth, money circulates one time within the African-American community, compared to more than six times in the Latinx community, nine times in the Asian community, and an unlimited amount of times within the White community.

A Black Star Project study on the racial wealth gap calculates that a dollar circulates 6 hours in the Black community, 20 days in the Jewish community, and 30 days in the Asian community. Black people have an estimated \$1.3 trillion gross national income, but only 2 percent is recirculated in the Black community.

Keeping Black dollars in the Black community is harder than it sounds. In her TEDx Talk about the impact of Black dollars being spent outside of the Black community, author and activist Maggie Anderson shares a story about an empowerment experiment during which her family attempted to purchase Black-made products from Black-owned businesses for 1 year.

Anderson uncovered a discouraging picture of a vast economic divide. She discusses how L'Oreal owns one of the largest Black beauty brands in the world. SoftSheen-Carson, demonstrating a White-owned business profiting from a market of exclusively Black buyers.

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She estimates that up to 80 percent of the revenue of White-owned Hennessy cognac comes from Black consumers, but the company has no Black

distributors or suppliers and does not advertise in Black-owned media.

The Empowerment Experiment resulted in a landmark study conducted by Steven Rogers at the Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management, which proved how supporting Black-owned businesses can benefit the Black community, as well as the American economy as a whole.

In Anderson's book, "Our Black Year: One Family's Quest to Buy Black in America's Racially Divided Economy," she notes that if Black spending with Black businesses rose from the current 3 percent to 10 percent it could create a million new jobs and provide economic security to countless Black households.

Lack of access to financial services is not just a symptom of America's racial wealth gap; it is also a cause. Without the ability to efficiently save, invest, and ensure against risks, many Black families struggle to translate the income they earn to genuine generational wealth.

Based on data from the Federal Reserve's Survey of Consumer Finance, the typical Black family has only 10 cents for every dollar held by the typical White family.

This wealth gap dates back to the decades after emancipation and has remained stubbornly persistent. Redlining, a practice that designates Black communities as unfavorable for home loans and business investment, reduces property values and increases interest rates in many neighborhoods, trends that have impacted African Americans for a century.

Largely excluded from the generous financial incentives of the New Deal, the Black community was boxed out of the country's post World War II boom that vastly expanded the American middle class.

Despite laws prohibiting loan discrimination on the basis of race, the Congressional Black Caucus still calls on regulatory agencies to improve enforcement at a national level. Black and Latinx home buyers are significantly more likely than Whites to be turned down for a conventional mortgage loan.

A recent analysis from Zillow shows that in 2016, nearly 21 percent of Black applicants were denied a conventional loan, while 15.5 of Latinx were. And in 2016, Asian applicants were denied a conventional loan in 10.4 percent of cases—slightly more than the national average—and Whites in only 8.1 percent of cases.

According to a New America report, many banks also hinder Black wealth creation with discriminatory practices in service offerings.

In communities of color, banks charge more for opening and maintaining basic, entry-level checking accounts.

The minimum opening deposit is higher in majority Black neighborhoods, \$80.60, and in neighborhoods without a racial majority, \$97, than in White neighborhoods, \$68.50.

The solution is that there is a need to help support MDIs and CDFIs but not only with deposits.

Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent issue. I urge my colleagues in this Chamber to consider the dictates of this statement and act to help all Americans realize their American Dream.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF KEVIN FITZPATRICK

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, it is with a mixture of some sadness, but mostly appreciation, that I come to the floor today to recognize the contributions of my staff director at the Small Business Committee, Kevin Fitzpatrick, who is retiring at the end of this Congress. Kevin and I have worked together for a quarter century now, and he is the last remaining member of my original staff when I was first sworn into Congress back in 1995.

While I am happy for Kevin that he will soon have more time to spend with his lovely wife, Pam, and his wonderful children, Spike, Katie, and Elizabeth, he will be impossible to replace. Over the years, Kevin has played an integral role in nearly every legislative accomplishment we have achieved for Ohio's First Congressional District and for the American people.

Kevin Fitzpatrick is the kind of person who can build an instant rapport with anyone, a skill that is extremely valuable in politics. Whether it is a family here from back home in Cincinnati, a foreign dignitary, or even a political opponent, Kevin is always ready with a disarming story that puts others at ease.

Although he has worked on the Hill for a long time, Kevin's roots are back in Ohio. He grew up with his loving family in Shelby, Ohio, and graduated from Miami University back in the days when not only the Washington professional football team but also Miami were known as the Redskins.

Kevin nearly became a candidate for office himself when he was asked to consider running against a then young Ohio State Representative named SHERROD BROWN. Had he not decided against it, Kevin might well be serving with me here in the House, rather than having this speech given in his honor today.

I am actually the third Congressman Kevin has worked for. His first job in Washington was for legendary Ohio conservative Congressman John Ashbrook, who interestingly ran against Richard Nixon in the Republican Presidential primary in 1972.

Later, Kevin worked for Congressman Duncan Hunter, Sr. on the Republican Research Committee, which was part of leadership at the time.

When I ran and won my seat in Congress in 1994 in the Republican revolution, I was a Washington outsider and so were most of my supporters. I desperately needed someone who knew not

only Ohio, but also had the experience and understood how to get things done here in Washington. And that made Kevin Fitzpatrick a natural fit as my legislative director.

I have served on three committees during my 25 years here in Congress: Foreign Affairs, Judiciary, and Small Business. Kevin has had a profound impact on my policy agenda on all three committees over the years.

On Foreign Affairs, we have worked on more issues than I could possibly relate here, but some of our most significant accomplishments have been in advancing the relationship between the United States and our democratic ally, Taiwan, in the face of the existential threat posed by communist China. Kevin was instrumental in helping me create the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, along with former Congressmen Robert Wexler, Dana Rohrabacher, and then-Representative, now Senator SHERROD BROWN.

Over the years, we have pushed many pro-democracy and pro-Taiwan initiatives, one of the most significant being the Taiwan Travel Act, which will now allow diplomatic visits between top U.S. and Taiwanese officials.

Judiciary. Throughout his life, Kevin has been a warrior for the unborn. He has played a significant role in the promotion of pro-life legislative initiatives. Those efforts ultimately led to the most significant Federal pro-life legislation enacted since the infamous Roe v. Wade decision, the Federal ban on partial birth abortion signed into law by President Bush back in 2003 and ultimately upheld to be constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. Kevin was front and center in those efforts, and I know he is as proud of that accomplishment as I am.

In recent years, Kevin has led the Small Business Committee as my staff director. In that role, Kevin has put together what I believe to be the best committee staff on the Hill: Jan Oliver, Joe Hartz, Rob Yavor, Delia Barr, Allison Kerman, Vivian Ling, and Rachel Emmons.

Perhaps the greatest testament to Kevin's leadership occurred earlier this year with the creation and implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP. This critical program saved millions of small businesses across America that would otherwise have gone under during the COVID-19 pandemic, and most importantly saved over 50 million jobs.

Finally, during the course of Kevin Fitzpatrick's career, he has hired, trained, and mentored so many people currently working both on and off the Hill. He has shared his knowledge, his experience, and his commitment to improving our country with each and every one of them.

It will now be their turn to teach new staff members how to make the people's House truly work for the people.

They couldn't have had a better teacher, a better mentor, or a better example than Kevin Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Kevin for his service, his dedication, and his friendship. He will be missed.

THE NIGHTMARE IS ALMOST OVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to declare that our 4-year public nightmare is almost at an end.

Next month, Joe Biden will be sworn in as the 46th President after an honest, free, and fair election, and an ugly chapter in America's history will be over.

No more governing by tweet. No more constant lies. No more insulting our Nation while praising our enemies. No more incompetent family members conducting national policy. No more gross profiteering off of the Presidency. No more children in cages. No more promoting of white supremacy. No more attacks on American institutions like the FBI, the courts, schools, and the post office and so many others. No more payoffs. No more conspiracy theories. No more recounting ballots. And a future with no more coronavirus, hopefully.

For the last 4 years, we have been told to make America great. When Joseph R. Biden is sworn in as President of the United States, we can say that we finally did.

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

ELECTION THOUGHTS

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, we just wrapped up an election here, and we were told this election was about hatred and bias. I don't really know any haters on my campaign, and I don't think there is this huge amount of bias, in general, in this country that some people tried to make this election about.

Recently, I did have a woman come up to me from my district talking about real bias and perhaps hatred in America. She talked about her children who went to college. Her and her husband got married before they had children, and both worked hard and made an average income. Both of her kids had about 30 or \$40,000 in student loan debt, and she had good kids who were working hard to pay off that debt.

But she felt that if her and her husband had not gotten married, the government probably would have given them something they couldn't get as married and working people. Her kids may have gotten \$30,000 plus in Pell Grants, and they were probably eligible for other grants. At least in the State of Wisconsin you would receive similar State grants, as well as be eligible for a work study program.

Unfortunately, her kids were not eligible for that, and at least she feels they are being significantly discriminated against, and hatred is being displayed by the American Government. Here is real hatred and real bias.

Is she right? Is there really U.S. Government hatred and bias against people who got married?

How did this happen? I have talked about this issue before, and people imply that maybe it happened by mistake, not just the Pell Grant program, but other government assistance programs just inadvertently sprung up and punished people who got married.

However, in this election I had a little bit of an eye-opener.

In this election we had Black Lives Matter get involved. If you read the website, which was eventually scrubbed or taken down in part about two months ago with a month left to go in the campaign, on its website it said, first of all, two of its three co-founders were trained Marxists, and secondly, it said one of their goals was to disrupt the western-prescribed nuclear family structure.

First of all, I think they are a little bit historically inaccurate. I think there are all sorts of cultures in the world, other than just European cultures, in which you have a wife and a husband and kids. But nevertheless, they clearly consider it a problem. And it doesn't surprise me that this group would have this on their website that they consider it a problem, since they were founded by two Marxists.

And when I think of Marxists, I think of three things: First of all, of course, I think of Socialism and the fact that government should own everything, and we shouldn't have lots of different people own lots of different businesses or different rental units or what have you. They want everything controlled by the government.

The other two things I always think of when I think of Marxism is: First of all, they hate God. And whether you are talking about countries in which Marxists take over, be it Red China, Vietnam, Russia, they follow Karl Marx in saying abolition of religion is demanded for the true happiness of people. So when I associate Marxism and people associating with such a group, I associate the hatred for God.

But the other thing we have got to remember is Karl Marx himself was very antifamily, and that is why I assume on the website it appeared that Black Lives Matter wants to disrupt the western-prescribed nuclear family.

So here is a group that I am sure cheers programs which penalizes people who are married and discriminates in favor of people who aren't married. And to my surprise, people did not run from this group.

To me, every politician should say for some groups, I am not going to ask for your help. Years ago, when I was in the State legislature, I fought the drug companies who I think are over-drugging our kids. I fought the drug companies who I think were prescribing too

many opiates, which were leading to deaths, and so, I don't take money from the prescription drug companies. I don't take money from the payday lenders because I think it is a horrible service, and they rip people off. I have known people who got cancer. I don't take money from the cigarette companies.

So you don't have to take support from everybody who is willing to support you. But when Black Lives Matter puts on their website, we disrupt the western-prescribed nuclear family, and we have an American government right now which, to me, is discriminating against couples who are married, you have to wonder, was this by chance, or are these people who want to set up government programs to discriminate against families?

□ 1130

I would like to give people a chance to publicize this problem in hearings and see if there's something we can do about this problem.

So I have asked the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, which has something to do with programs like Pell grants, to have a hearing and see whether my constituent is right: Are we really, in the United States Government, expressing strong bias against couples who are married, and penalizing them?

I have forwarded a request like this to the chairman of the committee.

I think it is a problem that has been out there ever since Lyndon Johnson, in the 1960s, began his war on the family.

I personally think he was the worst President in this country's history, and it is not just because he declared war on the family. He did a bad job in prosecuting the Vietnam war, his personal life was a hodgepodge, but of all the bad things he did, I think his programs aimed at destroying the family was the worst thing.

So I guess to illustrate that Members of the other party are also a little bit concerned about these programs that penalize what they refer to as the traditional western family, though it is the traditional family used by people who are not western European at all, I would like to ask for such a hearing.

HONORING NEW YORK STATE SENATOR BETTY LITTLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of New York State Senator Betty Little, an extraordinarily dedicated and effective public servant for the north country, to congratulate her on her upcoming retirement.

Betty has dedicated decades of her life to representing the hardworking families of upstate New York, both during her time in the New York State Assembly and the State Senate.

Senator Little first began her career in public service at the local level, and served in many capacities while also working as a teacher before her election to the New York State Assembly in 1995. She was later elected to the State Senate in 2002.

Betty has accomplished countless legislative results over the years, expanding benefits for military families, saving hardworking taxpayer dollars, protecting jobs in the Adirondacks, and always standing up for the people of the north country.

While petite in stature, Betty is truly a giant among public servants.

Senator Little sought election to public office as a working mother, a time when this was a lot harder and less in vogue. She quietly shattered innumerable glass ceilings and paved the way for generations of women to come.

I am proud to call Betty Little a legislative partner, a role model, and a dear friend.

I offer Betty my most sincere congratulations and gratitude, and I wish her and her family all the best in this next chapter.

It is my privilege to highlight her accomplishments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Lord of us all, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Send Your spirit of wisdom upon the Members of the people's House as they move toward the completion of their work in the 116th Congress. After a long year of stress in our Nation, due to a plague which continues to swell, give them the resolve to address the needs of all our citizens and communities.

Bless those many heroic men and women who continue to labor, at great danger to themselves, to care for those who suffer from COVID. Bring healing to those who do suffer, and comfort those who mourn the loss of so much this past year. Lord, have mercy.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 4(a) of House Resolution 967, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina 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 PRO TEMPORE

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

HONORING THE LEGACY OF DANIEL MILLER

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Daniel Miller, the eldest of six children, from Galesburg, Illinois.

A member of the varsity football team, his principal described him as "always smiling" and "caring about everyone."

In 2004, he joined the Air Force and continued to lead as a senior airman. With great courage, he defused explosive devices and worked with chemical and biological weapons.

On January 7, 2007, Senior Airman Miller, Senior Airman Elizabeth A. Loncki, and Technical Sergeant Timothy R. Weiner all made the ultimate sacrifice, attempting to defuse a car bomb in Iraq.

Our Nation will never be able to repay them, but it is our duty to remember their service. It is my honor today to commemorate the service of Senior Airman Miller with the dedication of the U.S. Post Office on East Main Street in Galesburg, Illinois, as the Senior Airman Daniel Miller Post Office Building.

STUDENT DEBT

(Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address the crippling cost of student debt.

Although my Democratic colleagues and I agree substantially on the issue, we disagree substantially on the solution. We need to cure the disease, not just put a Band-Aid on it.

Absolving student debt or making college free altogether does not address

the problem. It just passes the debt on to people who have responsibly paid off their student loans, while encouraging the reckless spending on administrative bloat in higher education.

From 1988 to 2018, the average tuition and fees at public 4-year institutions tripled and more than doubled at private 4-year institutions. We have seen an explosion of vice presidents, counselors, diversity coaches, and all types of administrative staff who have nothing to do with giving their students a means of finding employment.

Why? Because they can. The money flows freely from the Federal Government, and they know that—all at the expense of the student.

So rather than climbing walls, lazy rivers, and so-called safe spaces and then asking for bailouts, universities should be cutting costs and focusing on educating their students. This frivolous spending has ruined many young people's futures, and that is how we address the calamity of student debt.

COVID-19 RELIEF

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

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the American people and the people of Michigan need our help. They need Congress to pass a COVID relief package, and failing to reach a deal would be a shameful dereliction of duty here in the Congress.

Just yesterday, my State confirmed its 10,000th death. I have hospitals in my district that are at 98 percent capacity, and local businesses face oblivion.

The images of Americans in their cars lining up for hours to pick up their Thanksgiving meal should be seared into our memories. Make no mistake. These food lines are modern-day bread lines, and it is our job to do something about it.

Platitudes won't feed a family, and empty words won't get folks together for the holidays. Frankly, it is a slap in the face to ICU nurses, our small business owners, and frontline workers doing everything they can do to weather the crisis.

It is a slap in the face to the nurse in East Lansing who wrote to my office pleading for economic relief. Her husband had to stop working in the spring to take care of their kids, and every day she gets up worried she might bring COVID home to them. They are getting behind on their bills, on their rent, and they are taking out loans against their retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the leaders of both parties and of both Chambers to witness these stories, do their jobs, and reach a deal, even if it is not perfect.

FAREWELL TO MAJOR JEREMY TILLMAN

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for Major Jeremy E. Tillman, who has been serving in the Washington office of the Second Congressional District of South Carolina from the Army for the past year as a Defense fellow.

Major Tillman has been deployed twice: to the Republic of Korea and to Iraq. He is the recipient of the Purple Heart, the Bronze Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Combat Action Badge, the Army Commendation Medal, and many other deserved awards.

Major Tillman has been essential to the office over the past year. He has worked to solidify important legislation in the National Defense Authorization Act, NDAA, including modification of body armor for female troops.

I am thankful for his commitment to America. I wish him well and the best for his future.

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

I appreciate President Donald Trump as a champion for our military for peace through strength.

CONGRATULATING RABBI SERNOVITZ

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

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I am so excited to be here on the floor today to congratulate Rabbi Larry Sernovitz on becoming the senior rabbi of Temple Kol Emeth in Marietta, Georgia.

In just the few short months that I have known the rabbi, he has been instrumental in helping to spread our shared message of God's love for all people and *tikkun olam*.

"*Tikkun olam*" translates to "repair of the world," and I know that, together, our community in Georgia will help build bridges to a better and more just tomorrow.

I congratulate the rabbi on his new mission from God. Our community is blessed to have been gifted a leader like him.

I hope that, if he or his congregation ever need assistance from my office, they don't hesitate to call upon us. I truly look forward to working with the rabbi and the Jewish community in Georgia for many years to come, and I wish them all a happy and blessed Hannukah season.

FAREWELL SHUWANZA GOFF

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, having served as both the majority and minority floor leader, I have understood the pressure of the job. Scheduling the floor, handling procedural fights, and

getting legislation passed is truly 24-hour, 7-day-a-week work. And on the other side of the aisle, no one knows that better than Shuwanza Goff.

It has been my privilege to get to know her during her 12 years on the Hill, the last 7 of which as floor director for Leader HOYER. Without a doubt, she has done this job as well as or better than any staffer I have ever known. She has put in her time and effort to build strong working relationships with Members and staff on both sides of the aisle.

Shuwanza has earned our respect because of her skills, her work ethic, and her expertise on the floor. There are times I have lost the debate because of her expertise.

I certainly like to think that we have tested her abilities over the past 2 years with some of our motions to recommit. There are times that I have heard, and it has been conveyed to me, the differences of opinion with me in the strongest of terms, but never did she ever do it in a personal way.

The House is better because of her service.

But even if we haven't made her job easy, we always knew we had to be prepared, because we saw the impact that her expertise could have.

Many a time to many of us, people across this country ask if we have friends on both sides of the aisle. I refer to Shuwanza as my friend. She will be my adversary, but she is my friend. She has my respect because she earned it. She has my friendship because she has earned it. She has respect from both sides of the aisle because of the way she carries her life and the character of who she is.

She has left an impression on this side of the aisle, and I can tell you she has certainly left an impression on this institution.

We get elected and we come here, but her character is one of having a servant's heart and of caring for this Nation. There are things that divide us in our philosophy, but we are not divided because we are Americans. We do not divide ourselves because we care to serve.

I know Shuwanza believes in a more perfect Union because of the devotion that she has had and despite the times and frustration that this body can give, but she does it because of what she believes in.

Finally, Shuwanza, speaking as a father, I know that you have brought immense joy and pride to your parents and to your sister along the way. I know they have rooted for you and watched every step of your career, a career that has seen you walk in the well of the House of Representatives on a daily basis and serve as a trusted adviser to our Nation's leaders, and you have done it well. My hope for you is that you do not give that up, that you continue to serve the Nation that you love so greatly.

On behalf of myself, my team, and the Republican Conference, I want to

say thank you. There are times I wouldn't say thank you that you beat me on the floor, but I respected how hard you worked at it. I am a better Member because you made me prepare more, knowing you were on the other side.

I thank you for your counsel and for your friendship. You will be missed on this floor, but we will still be friends.

□ 1215

COVID RELIEF PACKAGE

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to implore my colleagues to come together and pass a COVID relief bill that will help communities that are still struggling to recover from this pandemic.

Since the beginning of December, over 150 people a day have died from COVID-19 in Illinois. Across the Midwest, heat maps are glowing red with the increased rates of transmissions and deaths. We cannot wait any longer. Families and small businesses are looking for Congress to act. Time and time again, we have seen the House take action, only to have the GOP Senate ignore the crisis facing this country. The increase in empty chairs around kitchen tables and vacant storefronts will only continue if we do not take decisive action.

Mr. Speaker, a recent study found that 1 in 3 African Americans know someone close to them who died of COVID-19. I fall into this category, as I lost my uncle in May, and I know many of my constituents do as well. Something has to be done. People need money now to meet their expenses. Businesses need support now to continue operating, and State and local governments need assistance now to provide services. Inaction is not an option.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, I say Happy Hanukkah to all our Jewish friends.

RECOGNIZING CUBA'S PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the brave action of the pro-democracy leaders in Cuba and the brutal repression that they face as a result of their demands for freedom.

For example, in the last few weeks, the San Isidro Movement has stepped up its calls for freedom and the release of all political prisoners. Their protests include such dangerous activities as poetry readings and sit-ins. And for that, these young rappers, artists, and writers have faced arbitrary arrests, harassment, and abuse.

Mr. Speaker, some remain in prison, which is why many activists have

begun a hunger strike in protest. But despite the brutal repression in Cuba, the pro-democracy movement is growing. Mothers, scientists, and so many others have joined its calls for freedom and the release of political prisoners.

I commend President Trump and his administration for their solidarity with the Cuban people in imposing serious sanctions against the Cuban dictatorship. We must all stand with the brave pro-democracy activists in Cuba, who are risking their lives at this very moment, and join them in their pleas for freedom and the immediate unconditional release of all political prisoners.

IN HONOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, FREE THE PANCHEN LAMA

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on Human Rights Day, we mark the adoption of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Speaker, 72 years ago, China was among the countries committing itself to the principle that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." In this spirit, I call on the Chinese Government to release Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama.

In May of 1995, only days after Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was chosen to serve as the 11th Panchen Lama, the Chinese Government kidnapped him and his family. The outside world has neither seen nor heard from them since. Chinese authorities tell the world that the Panchen Lama and his family are safe, and they say that they are well, but they refuse to allow anyone to visit and verify his well-being.

Mr. Speaker, the Universal Declaration enshrines the rights to liberty and religious freedom and precludes arbitrary detention. China should honor its international obligations by freeing the true Panchen Lama.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHARLES ELLZY

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a very special human being, Mr. Charles Ellzy, who our community lost earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, Charles was a proud graduate of Bensalem High School and Temple University.

In 1963, Charles met the love of his life, Rosia. They would go on to have two children, Samantha and Vincent.

Charles dedicated his entire life to bettering our community. He spent over 25 years working for the Department of Defense in Philadelphia, and Charles was also the president of the Lin-Park Civic Association.

Under his leadership, the LPCA established a community baseball league, organized fundraising events, and collaborated with Betz Laboratories to create the Lin-Park Betz Scholarship.

Mr. Speaker, Charles also served for years as a deacon at the Linconia Tabernacle Christian Center in Bensalem. His connection and love for God fueled his complete and total dedication to others.

And in August, the Bensalem Township Council unanimously passed a resolution renaming Warren Avenue to Charles Ellzy Way in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, I had the honor of joining Charles' family and congregants of the Linconia Tabernacle Christian Center for the unveiling of such a fitting tribute to an amazing man.

Mr. Speaker, we are extremely grateful for Charles' contributions, for his 80 years of life, and may the spirit of his generosity and service continue to inspire our community. Charles is now reaping the reward of a life he spent serving others.

RECOGNIZING COLORADO'S FIREFIGHTERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my heartfelt gratitude to our Colorado firefighters and first responders.

This year in Colorado, in my district, we have experienced a devastating and relentless wildfire season; the Cameron Peak fire in Larimer County, the East Troublesome fire in Grand County, the Calwood fire, and the Williams Fork fire.

With over a half a million acres burned, Colorado has experienced great loss, damage, and destruction. For months, our firefighters and first responders have worked around the clock to save lives, save homes, and to protect our communities. We know this work is not easy, especially in the midst of a pandemic, and we are so grateful for the service, the sacrifice, and the commitment of our firefighters, our first responders, our local emergency management officials and law enforcement in Grand County, in Larimer County, in Boulder County, and across the State of Colorado.

Together, we will rebuild and we will continue to work together. Thank you for your work. We are so incredibly grateful.

CONGRATULATING ROBERT E. JAMES, II

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Savannah native, Robert E. James, II, of

Carver State Bank on his election as chair of the National Bankers Association.

The National Bankers Association is based in Washington, D.C., and has represented minority-owned and women-owned banks in the U.S. since 1927.

Mr. James wears many hats. He serves Carver State Bank as its director of Strategic Initiatives and is a member of its board of directors; is a partner at the law firm, Golden Holley James, LLP; and is president of Coastal Legacy Group, LLC, which is a real estate development and consulting firm he founded in 2004.

When he was earning his law degree at Harvard, he received a legal training scholarship and was elected president of Harvard Black Law Students Association, as well. By stepping up to the plate to lead the National Bankers Association, he has demonstrated his dedication to serving his community and contributing to the success of the American banking industry as a whole.

Congratulations, again, on this great accomplishment. Mr. Speaker, I wish Mr. James the very best.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I know that we will be discussing COVID-19, and I cannot stand on this floor without ever mentioning that we must help the American people.

But today I stand on this floor to acknowledge the existence of the Electoral College.

Mr. Speaker, many Americans are unfamiliar with this very interesting fixture in law. Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution gives us the Electoral College. But let me be very clear. In the next couple of days, many States will certify those who have voted. The Electoral College will meet, by the Constitution, on December 14. Most State legislators have indicated that the electors are to vote the popular vote. All of the battleground States have certified that the next President and Vice President of the United States are Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS.

What is my plea today?

My plea today is for us to harmoniously join together in recognizing the value of this Constitution, the sanctity of democracy, and to proceed as a House and Senate to embrace this election and the victors.

Why?

Because the Nation needs us, and the Constitution says so.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to us working together.

CONGRATULATING REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL CONAWAY ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank, celebrate, and congratulate my friend and colleague, MIKE CONAWAY, who will be leaving us to enjoy his much-deserved retirement.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a tremendous privilege and honor to serve under MIKE's leadership throughout my time on the Committee on Agriculture, and I am grateful to have worked with such a tireless advocate for rural America.

MIKE's leadership on the 2018 farm bill was particularly impressive, which marked the first time in nearly 30 years that a farm bill was enacted in the same year that it was introduced. I continue to be inspired by MIKE's principles in leadership outside of committee work as well. I have been lucky enough to share many Wednesday mornings with him as a brother of faith during Bible study.

Mr. Speaker, I send my very best wishes to MIKE and his wife, Suzanne, who has been kind enough to share him with us for over the last 16 years.

I thank MIKE for his friendship and guidance over the years. He will be sincerely missed.

COVID RELIEF FOR AMERICANS

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

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, it has been 257 days since the first major COVID relief package was signed into law—257 days. In that time period, COVID cases in the U.S. have skyrocketed, and we have lost almost 290,000 Americans.

The devastation this virus has wrought on our families, our communities, and our economy is enormous. But it would have been so much worse if we had not provided that early relief to our families, our small businesses, and workers impacted by the spring surge. And economists are clear that we need to provide more direct relief in order to buoy the economy, much less to keep people safe.

The relief that we are seeking, that the American people are seeking is not a handout. It is a lifeline. It is critical to get relief in the hands of families, small businesses, frontline workers, and local governments so we can get the virus under control. But, also, so we can get the country back to work once we do so.

Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence. Unemployment is running out, small businesses—and especially, restaurants—are closing. Families are facing eviction and foreclosure.

Mr. Speaker, fighting this pandemic has been hard enough on the American people. Getting them the relief they need to stay safe and healthy shouldn't be.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021, AND OTHER EXTENSIONS ACT

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8900) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2021, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8900

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 "Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021, and Other Extensions Act".

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

Sec. 3. References.

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021

DIVISION B—HEALTH EXTENDERS

Title I—Medicare and Medicaid Extenders

Title II—Public Health Extenders and Food and Drug Administration Provisions

Title III—Offsets

Title IV—Budgetary Effects

SEC. 3. REFERENCES.

Except as expressly provided otherwise, any reference to "this Act" contained in any division of this Act shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021

SEC. 101. The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 (division A of Public Law 116-159) is amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting "December 18, 2020".

This division may be cited as the "Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021".

DIVISION B—HEALTH EXTENDERS

TITLE I—MEDICARE AND MEDICAID EXTENDERS

SEC. 1101. EXTENSION OF THE WORK GEOGRAPHIC INDEX FLOOR UNDER THE MEDICARE PROGRAM.

Section 1848(e)(1)(E) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(e)(1)(E)), as amended by section 3801 of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136) and section 2201 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (Public Law 116-159), is amended by striking "December 12, 2020" and inserting "December 19, 2020".

SEC. 1102. EXTENSION OF FUNDING OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME PROGRAMS.

(a) STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS.—Subsection (a)(1)(B)(xi) of section 119 of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 1395b-3 note), as amended by section 3306 of the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148), section 610 of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-240), section 1110 of the Pathway for SGR Reform Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-67), section 110 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-93), section 208 of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-10), section 50207 of division E of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-123), section 1402 of division B of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-59), section 1402 of division B of the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-69), section 103 of division N of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94), section 3803 of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136), and section 2203 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (Public Law 116-159), is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

(b) AREA AGENCIES ON AGING.—Subsection (b)(1)(B)(xi) of such section 119, as so amended, is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

(c) AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS.—Subsection (c)(1)(B)(xi) of such section 119, as so amended, is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

(d) CONTRACT WITH THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR BENEFITS AND OUTREACH ENROLLMENT.—Subsection (d)(2)(xi) of such section 119, as so amended, is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

SEC. 1103. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR QUALITY MEASURE ENDORSEMENT, INPUT, AND SELECTION.

Section 1890(d)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395aaa(d)(2)) is amended by striking “December 11” each place such phrase appears and inserting “December 18” in each such place.

SEC. 1104. EXTENSION OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

Section 223(d)(3) of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (42 U.S.C. 1396a note), as amended by Public Law 116-159, is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

SEC. 1105. EXTENSION OF SPOUSAL IMPOVERISHMENT PROTECTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2404 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r-5 note), as amended by Public Law 116-159, is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in section 2404 of Public Law 111-148 (42 U.S.C. 1396r-5 note) or section 1902(a)(17) or 1924 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(17), 1396r-5) shall be construed as prohibiting a State from—

(1) applying an income or resource disregard under a methodology authorized under section 1902(r)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(r)(2))—

(A) to the income or resources of an individual described in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(VI) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(VI)) (including a disregard of the income or resources of such individual’s spouse); or

(B) on the basis of an individual’s need for home and community-based services authorized under subsection (c), (d), (i), or (k) of section 1915 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396n) or under section 1115 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1315); or

(2) disregarding an individual’s spousal income and assets under 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).

SEC. 1106. EXTENSION OF DELAY OF DSH REDUCTIONS.

Section 1923(f)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r-4(f)(7)(A)) is amended by striking “December 12” each place such phrase appears and inserting “December 19” in each such place.

SEC. 1107. EXTENSION OF MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON.

Section 6071(h)(1)(H) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 1396a note) is amended by striking “December 11” and inserting “December 18”.

TITLE II—PUBLIC HEALTH EXTENDERS AND FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Public Health Extenders

SEC. 1201. EXTENDING FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS, NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS, AND TEACHING HEALTH CENTER GME.

(a) COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.—Section 10503(b)(1)(F) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-2(b)(1)(F)) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$789,041,096” and inserting “\$865,753,425”; and

(2) by striking “December 11, 2020” and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

(b) NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS.—Section 10503(b)(2)(H) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-2(b)(2)(H)) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$61,150,685” and inserting “\$67,095,890”; and

(2) by striking “December 11, 2020” and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

(c) TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS THAT OPERATE GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.—Section 340H(g)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 256h(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$24,953,425” and inserting “\$27,379,452”; and

(2) by striking “December 11, 2020” and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

(d) APPLICATION OF PROVISIONS.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the amendments made by this section for the period beginning on December 11, 2020, and ending on December 18, 2020, shall be subject to the requirements contained in Public Law 116-94 for funds for programs authorized under sections 330 through 340 of the Public Health Service Act.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Paragraph (4) of section 3014(h) of title 18, United States Code, as amended by section 3831(e) of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136), is amended—

(1) by striking “Social Services Act,” and inserting “Social Services Act.”; and

(2) by striking “and section 2101 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act” and inserting “section 2101 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act, and section 1201(d) of the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021, and Other Extensions Act”.

SEC. 1202. DIABETES PROGRAMS.

(a) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR TYPE I DIABETES.—Section 330B(b)(2)(D) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c-2(b)(2)(D)) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$29,589,042” and inserting “\$32,465,753”; and

(2) by striking “December 11, 2020” and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

(b) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS.—Section 330C(c)(2)(D) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c-3(c)(2)(D)) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$29,589,042” and inserting “\$32,465,753”; and

(2) by striking “December 11, 2020” and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

SEC. 1203. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY EDUCATION; SEXUAL RISK AVOIDANCE EDUCATION.

(a) SEXUAL RISK AVOIDANCE EDUCATION.—Section 510 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 710) is amended by striking “December 11, 2020” each place it appears and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

(b) PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY EDUCATION.—Section 513 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 713) is amended by striking “December 11, 2020” each place it appears and inserting “December 18, 2020”.

Subtitle B—Food and Drug Administration Provisions

SEC. 1211. RARE PEDIATRIC DISEASE PRIORITY REVIEW VOUCHER EXTENSION.

Section 529(b)(5) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360ff(b)(5)) is amended—

(1) by striking “December 11, 2020” each place it appears and inserting “December 18, 2020”; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “December 11, 2022” and inserting “December 18, 2022”.

TITLE III—OFFSETS

SEC. 1301. TRANSPARENCY OF MEDICARE SECONDARY PAYER REPORTING INFORMATION.

Section 1862(b)(8)(G) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 395y(b)(8)(G)) is amended—

(1) by striking “INFORMATION.—The Secretary” and inserting “INFORMATION.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(ii) SPECIFIED INFORMATION.—In responding to any query made on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this clause from an applicable plan related to a determination described in subparagraph (A)(i), the Secretary, notwithstanding any other provision of law, shall provide to such applicable plan—

“(I) whether a claimant subject to the query is, or during the preceding 3-year period has been, entitled to benefits under the program under this title on any basis; and

“(II) to the extent applicable, the plan name and address of any Medicare Advantage plan under part C and any prescription drug plan under part D in which the claimant is enrolled or has been enrolled during such period.”.

SEC. 1302. DISPENSATION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RELIEVING ACUTE WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS FROM OPIOID USE DISORDER.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall revise section 1306.07(b) of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations, so that practitioners, in accordance with applicable State, Federal, or local laws relating to controlled substances, are allowed to dispense not more than a three-day supply of narcotic drugs to one person or for one person’s use at one time for the purpose of initiating maintenance treatment or detoxification treatment (or both).

SEC. 1303. MEDICAID IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Section 1941(b)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396w-1(b)(3)(A)) is amended by striking “\$3,446,000,000” and inserting “\$3,464,000,000”.

TITLE IV—BUDGETARY EFFECTS

SEC. 1401. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

(a) STATUTORY PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this division shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

(b) SENATE PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this division shall not be entered on any PAYGO scorecard maintained for purposes of section 4106 of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress).

(c) CLASSIFICATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—Notwithstanding Rule 3 of the Budget Scorekeeping Guidelines set forth in the joint explanatory statement of the committee of conference accompanying Conference Report 105-217 and section 250(c)(8) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, the budgetary effects of this division shall not be estimated—

(1) for purposes of section 251 of such Act; and

(2) for purposes of paragraph (4)(C) of section 3 of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 as being included in an appropriation Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 8900, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, the Appropriations Committees are hard at work negotiating fiscal year 2021 appropriations bills. There are many serious issues facing our Nation, and Federal funding plays a critical role in supporting families and communities as they go about their day-to-day lives as they try to survive during this health and economic crisis.

Mr. Speaker, Americans deserve the certainty of a full-year funding, and the Congress has a responsibility to the Nation to do its job and pass all 12 funding bills before we adjourn.

The continuing resolution we consider today will keep the government up and running to bring spending talks to a successful conclusion. These are serious issues that touch every aspect of people's lives, like their education, transportation systems, national security, public health infrastructure, and our environment.

□ 1230

In addition to an omnibus appropriations bill, it is my hope that this additional week will allow negotiators the time to assemble an emergency coronavirus relief package.

To take advantage of this window of opportunity, Leader MCCONNELL must

finally sit down with Democrats to find a bipartisan solution.

Coupled with a full year of government funding, an interim coronavirus relief package is critical. It is a lifeline for working families. If we do not act, 12 million Americans could lose unemployment aid just after Christmas, and millions could lose access to paid sick leave and protections against evictions. This will put working families over the edge and our economy closer to the financial cliff.

I urge my colleagues to join me in adopting this continuing resolution. Let us support the ongoing negotiations.

People are desperate. They are counting on us. We need to provide relief to working families, to our schools, to our children, to small businesses, and to communities across the Nation.

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

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8900, a continuing resolution that will fund the government through December 18.

Members of the Appropriations Committee have been negotiating night and day for weeks to reach agreement on a full-year appropriations bill. At the same time, House and Senate leaders continue to discuss a coronavirus relief package with the administration. It is my hope that we can complete both of these important pieces of legislation as soon as possible.

There is so much at stake: our national security, the health and welfare of millions of Americans, and our economic recovery. Passing this 1-week CR is simply a stopgap measure. I expect we will be back on the floor next week to complete the year's work.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this continuing resolution so that the Senate can pass it and send it to the President for signature. Then, we must immediately get back to the important work the American people expect us to finish.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Ms. DELAURO. She and I have served on the Appropriations Committee together and in the Congress for a very long time. She is one of our most able, energetic, and knowledgeable Members.

As someone who is very proud of my relationship to the Appropriations Committee, I know that she will do an excellent job working with the minority and the ranking member, with whom I also served, to make sure that the Appropriations Committee works in a way that benefits the American people and does so in a timely fashion.

Normally, I would not speak—well, though I do speak most of the time on the CR, because the CR is a recognition of failure. It is not any one individual's failure. It is not a bad thing. It is just

that we have had trouble getting together and coming to an agreement.

I want to observe, and maybe it has already been observed, we passed 10 of our 12 appropriations bills by July 26. That was 2 months before the end of the fiscal year. The Senate, unfortunately, didn't pass any of its appropriations bills. It still has not passed any of its appropriations bills. It has a document that they did not pass through committee and has not passed the Senate that is the basis for our negotiations.

That has delayed us substantially, not because the House didn't do its work on time, but, because for whatever reasons, the Senate did not address the appropriations process in a timely fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I have served on the Appropriations Committee for a long time. I went on in January 1983. I was on the subcommittee that Ms. DELAURO now chairs as well. When we would pass a bill, the Senate would pass a bill, and we would go to conferences. Some of our Members don't know what a conference is.

The Members of the House committee and the Members of the Senate committee came together in a room and talked about how we were going to resolve the differences between the two bills. That hardly ever happens now, and we are losing something of the legislative process because it doesn't happen.

With all due respect to the four people who now are called the four corners, whether it is the chairs of the committees, or the Speaker and the minority leader in the House, and the minority leader and the majority leader in the Senate, those four people have a lot of work to do.

I am the majority leader over here. I know I have a lot of things to watch out for, and I cannot focus the way the members of the subcommittees focus on the substance of the issues. Therefore, we lose something by not having all of the Members included.

Now, because that hasn't happened, and they haven't come up with a product, we are here with what we call a continuing resolution. But that really is an admission of failure.

We passed one before September 30 so the government didn't shut down. It was the right thing to do. We are going to pass one now. It is the right thing to do. This is something that we have to do to keep the government working.

But we ought not believe or pretend or represent this is the way we ought to do business. It is not. It is a function of procrastination, a function of failing to come together and making compromises.

That is what this body is about, all of these chairs here. We have to come to an agreement. The Constitution says if we don't come to an agreement and the Senate doesn't come to an agreement and the President doesn't come to an agreement with exactly the same thing, nothing happens.

I make this observation every time we do this. But I will tell you this, Mr. Speaker. I have talked to the new chair—and I know the ranking member, and I have worked with her and have great respect for her, as she knows. Why? Because she wants to get a job done.

She was a mayor. She was a mayor of a great city in the State of Texas. She knows that you have to get things done.

Ms. DELAURO is a person who gets things done.

I am going to work with both of them, Mr. Speaker, in this coming Congress. We are going to pass every one of the appropriations bills, every one.

We haven't dealt with homeland security because of the wall, not because of the other items, but the wall. We had a disagreement. We couldn't forge agreement on that and compromise on that.

I am going to work with both the chair and the ranking member, and, frankly, all the Members on both sides of the aisle to get our work done by June 30 of this coming year. That will give us 90 days to reach agreement with the Senate, pass the bills, and do it by September 30.

We have rarely done that. I think in my 40 years of service in this House, I think we have done it twice. I would have to check. Maybe it was only once. Maybe you could tell me that, and we could find out. But I am hopeful that we will do it.

There aren't many Members on this floor. This CR has to pass. All we did was change the date because of practically recognizing we have not gotten our work done on time.

And whoever is listening, whether the public or other Members are listening, Mr. Speaker, as I speak, I hope they will take to heart our responsibility to the American people, and to this institution, to make it work on time.

I told the majority leader of the United States Senate just about 2 days ago, 3 days ago, I said: MITCH, there is no agreement we can make on December 18 that we can't make on December 11. There is no magic in these next 7 days—now, I guess, 9 days. There is no magic in it. It is just, psychologically, we have until December 18, so we won't make the agreement today.

That is why I set December 11, because I was hopeful that we could do it by December 11. I urged the Members to do December 11, very frankly, for two reasons. Number one, it is the right thing to do. And number two, our Members are at risk when they travel. They are at risk here. They need to be in their homes quarantined with people who do not pose them any risk.

It is not that we want to shirk our duty. We can do our duty, but we don't need to be here for 2 more weeks or 1 more week to do it. We just have to have the thought in mind we are going to get it done today.

This will give us 8 more days, 9 more days to do it. I know the staff is going

to be working round the clock over the weekend to get us a bill done.

We need to pass three bills. We passed the NDAA last night. That bill should be passed in June as well, or late May. I told Mr. SMITH and the new ranking member that I am going to do everything I can to have that bill on the floor this coming May. We traditionally did that. I am not inventing something. Ms. DELAURO knows we did that; the ranking member knows we did that.

We all say it is a very important bill. Well, if it is a very important bill, let's deal with it in a timely fashion and not have this last-minute veto; we are going to do this.

We need to pass it, and 335 of us yesterday said we need to pass this bill.

So, I will end this tirade by simply saying congratulations to Ms. DELAURO and to the ranking member, who is a good friend and a very responsible Member of this House.

I will work closely with them and with all of our Members, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the American people can be proud of the fact that the House of Representatives knows its responsibilities, meets its responsibilities, and passes legislation in a timely fashion and does not say to the Federal employees and the people who are operating government: Maybe you will be funded tomorrow and maybe you won't.

We have wasted billions of dollars over the years I have been here with the government trying to figure out how they are going to prepare for a shutdown. Any business that operated that way in America would go bankrupt pretty soon. The CEO would be fired, and the board of directors, which we are, might be fired as well.

Let's learn the lesson that we learn too often, and let's do our work on time and do it well.

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

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I certainly associate with the concerns of the majority leader, Mr. HOYER. I associate myself with his concerns and my appreciation for the Appropriations Committee.

Let me thank Ms. DELAURO and my fellow Texan, Ms. GRANGER, and certainly make mention of her ascending to continue as ranking member in the next Congress.

I rise to support this underlying legislation for the extension of the CR to December 18. And I rise to, as well, re-emphasize the desperate conditions Americans are in. There are 14 million COVID-19 cases, almost 300,000 dead. It is predicted to have Americans, tragically, that will possibly lose their life in 2021, of upward of 500,000 Americans.

This is a funding bill. When we say keep the government open, what we really mean is to serve the American people, to make sure that they have healthcare, that they have education

dollars, that they are able to fund their local police and fire, that they have childcare dollars, that they have research dollars.

At the same time, if I went on any local street in America today, they would be asking me to give them a lifeline so their restaurants can stay open. The small businesses, they would be asking about their unemployment extension and the cash payments.

That is what we need to get into the negotiation, and we are hoping to do the funding bill and COVID-19 as well.

I want to rise on the floor today to make a number of points in particular: the necessity of the unemployment extension and increase—we had \$600 in the past—and the necessity of the cash payment as well.

But I also want to make mention of the fact that our local jurisdictions, our cities and counties and Tribal jurisdictions, they need the money for public funding to go directly to them, no strings attached by the State. They are losing out. Their firefighters are losing out; their health clinics are losing out; and their municipal workers are losing out because it is getting entangled with the State.

Finally, the Department of Transportation needs funding for its environmental assessment for projects like I-45.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

□ 1245

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, there are so many projects, like I-45 in Texas, that recklessly tears into minority neighborhoods without any response to those voters, those constituents, wiping out their houses and churches and schools. So the Department of Transportation funding will be in here that we will have the opportunity to assess environment impact statements.

Finally, let me offer my greatest appreciation for Chairwoman NITA LOWEY; yes, an angel on this floor for so many years, guiding us, leading us in a way that brought back the kind of success that America needs.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. DELAURO for her hard work and I wish her success as well.

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

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to take a minute to congratulate Congresswoman DELAURO for being named chairwoman of the full committee next Congress. I look forward to working with her in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the bill before us today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I know the majority leader has left the floor, but I thank

him for his congratulations and his warm words. I look forward to working in conjunction with him as we move to pass 12 bills by June.

I want to particularly say how pleased I am to be able to work with the ranking member, my colleague from Texas. We have worked on issues in the past, never at this level, but I am looking forward to a really close and wonderful relationship as we try to do the Nation's business. Thank you so very much.

Mr. Speaker, with an additional week to negotiate, I am optimistic that we can fund the government for this year and we can deliver coronavirus relief for the American people who are desperate and looking to us for hope.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this extension of funding so we can complete our work. It is not about us. We have the responsibility, but it is about the people outside of this Chamber who are relying on us.

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 Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8900.

The question was taken.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

REAFFIRMING COMMITMENT TO MEDIA DIVERSITY

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 549) reaffirming the commitment to media diversity and pledging to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to media diversity.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 549

Whereas the principle that an informed and engaged electorate is critical to a vibrant democracy is deeply rooted in our laws of free speech and underpins the virtues on which we established our Constitution, "in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity . . .";

Whereas having independent, diverse, and local media that provide exposure to a broad range of viewpoints and the ability to contribute to the political debate is central to sustaining that informed engagement;

Whereas it is in the public interest to encourage source, content, and audience diver-

sity on our Nation's shared telecommunications and media platforms;

Whereas the survival of small, independent, and diverse media outlets that serve diverse audiences and local media markets is essential to preserving local culture and building understanding on important community issues that impact the daily lives of residents;

Whereas research by the American Society of News Editors, the Radio Television Digital News Association, the Pew Research Center, and others has documented the continued challenges of increasing diversity among all types of media entities;

Whereas with increasing media experience and sophistication, it is even more important to have minority participation in local media to ensure a diverse range of information sources are available and different ideas and viewpoints are expressed to strengthen social cohesion among different communities; and

Whereas the constriction in small, independent, and diverse media outlets and limited participation of diverse populations in media ownership and decisionmaking are combining to negatively impact our goal of increasing local civic engagement and civic knowledge through increased voter participation, membership in civic groups, and knowledge of local political and civil information: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its commitment to diversity as a core tenet of the public interest standard in media policy; and

(2) pledges to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to media diversity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 549.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 549, reaffirming the commitment to media diversity and pledging to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to media diversity.

This resolution promotes much-needed diversity in the communications marketplace, and I commend Representative DEMINGS and her staff for all their efforts towards this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank Ranking Member WALDEN, Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman DOYLE, and Subcommittee Ranking Member LATTA for their work to bring this resolution to the floor.

This past year has highlighted racial inequities that have long existed in our

society, as we saw with the protests over the murder of George Floyd and the disparate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on communities of color.

These inequities also exist in our communications marketplace. For example, the owners of broadcast and media outlets do not reflect our diverse population. These media outlet owners make critical decisions about the educational, political, entertainment, and news programming Americans watch, and those decisions can influence people's opinions and perceptions.

Diversity in viewpoints and diverse ownership of media outlets promotes programming that offers different perspectives and enables viewers to access programming that is relevant to them.

A diverse media marketplace is also central to an informed and engaged electorate, which is critical to a vibrant democracy.

Committing to a diverse media marketplace, one that reflects our country, is a worthy goal, and this resolution reaffirms that goal.

Today's resolution is a good step forward, but there is much more that we need to do. The numbers and statistics are clear that our media marketplace does not resemble the people we serve.

I hope we can come together to do the additional work that is needed, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 549. This is a resolution introduced by my colleague, Mrs. DEMINGS, that reaffirms the commitment by Congress to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to find common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to diversity in our media.

As a former radio broadcaster myself, I understand the efforts that the broadcast industry, and the media industry as a whole, takes to ensure diversity of ownership, viewpoint, and employment. My wife and I had to make those hiring decisions for our five radio stations. I know firsthand the business imperative to serve your community with local news and local programming that reflects the makeup of your community.

While today's resolution focuses specifically on broadcast stations, this problem is not unique to one segment of the media industry; it is also an issue for their cable and digital streaming competitors in the marketplace.

I appreciate the many steps that the industry has taken, not only to recognize and take responsibility for this, but also to put in place the many programs and initiatives to promote opportunities for women, minorities, and veterans. But as the data show, we still have room for improvement.

While the House is considering this resolution today, it is my hope that we

can work together in a bipartisan manner to address the inequality identified in this resolution.

Republicans on the Energy and Commerce Committee have put forward solutions to help uplift minority voices and promote media diversity, solutions that can actually become law, unlike this resolution before us today.

Mr. Speaker, in September, the House passed H. Res. 5567, the MEDIA Diversity Act sponsored by Mr. LONG, which would help us better understand the market and regulatory barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals to enter and compete in the marketplace. This bill would help us make informed policy decisions.

I have also worked with advocates and industry alike to try to find consensus on legislation to establish the long-sought broadcaster incubator program. Now, this would help increase the number of minority-owned broadcast stations.

The Broadcast Diversity in Leadership Act, H.R. 8154, would encourage large, established broadcasters to work with aspiring broadcasters to break down barriers to capital and provide mentorship and experience to new, minority entrants. That is how we can ensure their long-term success in serving their local communities. We must better understand the problem before us and how best to incentivize all media entities to create opportunities for and lift the voices of underrepresented individuals.

Today, we can affirm our commitment to working toward common ground solutions, as this solution states; but Republicans stand ready to work across the aisle to turn these common ground solutions into law.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS), the sponsor of this resolution.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that media plays a critical role in how we see the world and how we see each other. When a child sees someone on the screen who looks like them, it can change their life.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we continue to struggle with ongoing disparities in housing, education, social justice, and even this ongoing pandemic. Whether in news, movies, TV, or music, who tells the story matters because diverse perspectives are critical to us understanding the entire story.

I am grateful for our cosponsors and for my colleagues who will vote for this resolution today, and for the media representatives who partnered with us to move this legislation forward. As we continue to work together to unite our country, break down barriers, and strengthen our future, let's continue to

utilize the powerful diverse voices who truly are our strength.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their support on this resolution.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA), the top Republican on the Communications and Technology Subcommittee.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 549. This resolution reaffirms the importance of having diverse representation across the media to better reflect their audience and serve the public interest. I urge my colleagues to support this pledge to eliminate barriers to media diversity and to reinforce our commitment to encourage diversity in media policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend the remainder of my time to commend the leadership of my good friend, the ranking member, Mr. WALDEN. Unfortunately, Leader Walden has decided to make this his last term in Congress, but his work at the Energy and Commerce Committee and his service to the people of Oregon will continue to positively impact our Nation for decades to come. It is going to be hard to imagine going to the committee without him at the helm on our side.

You have been a steady force, just as your family, who has been a steady force when they took those wagon trains to Oregon on that trail back in 1845. You have never forgotten your roots, and you show that every day. I appreciate it because I know, under your leadership, you have helped many of us in committee. And I know, as your vice chair, you had a lot of confidence in me when you let me take over the helm on many a day and run the committee.

□ 1300

But as one of your subcommittee chairs on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection and this Congress being the ranker on Communications and Technology, I appreciate that.

And I know that, again, when I think about all of the things that you have worked on, especially in the last Congress and with the opioid epidemic, which claimed over 73,000 lives in this country, and you were at the helm of H.R. 6 and brought together all those bills, over 60 pieces of legislation to help people in this country. And that is going to be a lasting legacy that we are going to have.

So, again, we are going to appreciate you, but we also hate to see you leave.

And also, with all your telecom work, to have someone with that experience, as you mentioned in your opening remarks about you and your bride of 38 years, Mylene, owning the radio stations and being able to get out there and get the work done.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) an additional 1 minute.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, again, it has been a tremendous run with all the work that you have done. You have been a gentleman and a good friend.

Something I learned from my dad from his 36 years in public service, and I will say it again on this floor. He said there is a difference between people who are politicians and public servants. He said a politician is a person who sees how much they can take from the people they represent for their own benefit, while a public servant sees how much they can give of themselves back to the people they represent.

For what you have done for not only your constituents of your great State but also here in this body, we are going to miss you.

So, GREG, and that is the first time I have ever used a first name on this floor, we are going to miss you. I am going to miss you, but we wish you all the best in the years to come.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I believe we had two other speakers planning to come down and speak, but it does not appear they have been able to free themselves from their other business.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage us all to support this very strong resolution that our colleague has offered up, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask for support on this 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 549.

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.

RELIABLE INVESTMENT IN VITAL ENERGY REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3361) to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize hydroelectric production incentives and hydroelectric efficiency improvement incentives, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3361

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 "Reliable Investment in Vital Energy Reauthorization Act" or the "RIVER Act".

SEC. 2. HYDROELECTRIC PRODUCTION INCENTIVES AND EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) HYDROELECTRIC PRODUCTION INCENTIVES.—Section 242 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15881) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking "10" and inserting "22";

(2) in subsection (e)(2), by striking “section 29(d)(2)(B)” and inserting “section 45K(d)(2)(B)”;

(3) in subsection (f), by striking “20” and inserting “32”; and

(4) in subsection (g), by striking “each of the fiscal years 2006 through 2015” and inserting “each of fiscal years 2019 through 2036”.

(b) **HYDROELECTRIC EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT.**—Section 243(c) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15882(c)) is amended by striking “each of the fiscal years 2006 through 2015” and inserting “each of fiscal years 2019 through 2036”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3361.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3361, the Reliable Investment in Vital Energy Reauthorization Act, or the RIVER Act. This bipartisan bill was introduced by Representatives MCKINLEY, TONKO, and LOEBSACK.

Hydropower is a vital part of our clean energy portfolio, and the RIVER Act reauthorizes important hydroelectric production incentives established in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The RIVER Act extends incentives that provide payments to owners or operators of hydroelectric facilities that are added to existing dams or conduits. Additionally, it reauthorizes efficiency improvement payments for improving facility efficiency.

I support this legislation, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues for their hard work on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3361. This is the Reliable Investment in Vital Energy Reauthorization Act.

This legislation was introduced by my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. MCKINLEY and Mr. TONKO, to reauthorize the Hydroelectric Production Incentive and hydropower efficiency improvement programs at the Department of Energy.

This legislation went through regular order, and it passed the full committee, Energy and Commerce, by a voice vote.

H.R. 3361 would authorize payments to support the development of hydropower production at existing dams and conduits. Literally, Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of existing dams in the United States that can support hydropower production while avoiding the costs and environmental effects associated with building new dams.

In addition to affordable and renewable energy, hydropower also provides ancillary services to stabilize the electric grid, to provide storage, to maintain emergency black-start capability.

I am proud to support H.R. 3361, which would reauthorize these really important Department of Energy programs and will ensure access to renewable, carbon-free, affordable hydropower for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting “yes” on H.R. 3361, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers on this side, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY), an engineer by trade, a terrific legislator, an important member of our committee, and the sponsor of this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3361, the RIVER Act, and thank Chairman TONKO and Congressman LOEBSACK for working with us in a bipartisan way on this important legislation.

This RIVER Act reauthorizes key hydropower production and efficiency incentives through 2036. Boosting hydropower production will ensure that Americans have access to affordable, clean energy.

As Congresswoman CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS has previously noted on numerous occasions, only 3 percent of America’s 91,000 dams generate electricity because in part it takes 10 years to get a permit to develop new hydropower projects.

This bill will help streamline and develop utilizing existing infrastructure and overcome barriers to future projects.

I urge my colleagues to support the RIVER Act.

Mr. Speaker, I ask a point of personal privilege to address my esteemed chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my ranking member and my former chairman, colleague, since I came here 10 years ago, coming from the business sector nearly 50 years in private practice in the business of engineering, I have been so impressed with the leadership we have had in Energy and Commerce. It wasn’t what I was expecting. You and FRED, and even to some extent my friend, FRANK, to some extent—FRANK, don’t get carried away here.

I have seen you taking on some difficult issues and using humor, your approach, you have been able to work through some difficult situations coming up with solutions. So you are going to be missed. You and Mylene have earned the break. But I think of all the legislation.

You have been in my house. You have come to West Virginia—“West by God Virginia”—and I do appreciate what you have done for us, what you have done on the opioid epidemic. It is still ravaging West Virginia and across this country.

People have to understand that in West Virginia more people are going to die from opioids than from COVID this year. This is still a problem, but thanks to you, we are moving in the right direction.

I can’t express enough how much you have meant to me in my career and my confidence. The people’s House has been in good hands under you, and I very much appreciate your service. God bless all of you as you continue in your retirement.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, to my friend from West Virginia, it has been a great honor. It has been an honor and great privilege to serve with you, and I have always appreciated your leadership, your great insights, your keen intellect as we have addressed these issues, especially on this issue of opioids. I don’t think there was a more passionate player on the committee, a more engaged and informed member of the committee on this matter than you.

And the citizens of West Virginia and, indeed, the citizens of all America, Mr. Speaker, have a lot to say thank you to Mr. MCKINLEY for and others in this body certainly, for the legislation we passed into law.

We know there is more work to do, and while I may be leaving, I know Mr. MCKINLEY is only going to double down on that effort going forward.

Mr. Speaker, this is good legislation that Mr. MCKINLEY and Mr. TONKO have brought before us. I urge passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would also urge support for this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3361.

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.

TRIBAL POWER ACT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5541) to amend the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to reauthorize programs to assist consenting Indian Tribes in meeting energy education, planning, and management needs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5541

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 “Tribal Power Act”.

SEC. 2. INDIAN ENERGY.

(a) **DEFINITION OF INDIAN LAND.**—Section 2601(2) of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (25 U.S.C. 3501(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)(iii), by striking “and”;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking “land.” and inserting “land.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following subparagraphs:

“(D) any land located in a census tract in which the majority of residents are Natives (as defined in section 3(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602(b))); and

“(E) any land located in a census tract in which the majority of residents are persons who are enrolled members of a federally recognized Tribe or village.”.

(b) **REDUCTION OF COST SHARE.**—Section 2602(b)(5) of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (25 U.S.C. 3502(b)(5)) is amended by adding at the end the following subparagraphs:

“(D) The Secretary of Energy may reduce any applicable cost share required of an Indian tribe, intertribal organization, or tribal energy development organization in order to receive a grant under this subsection to not less than 10 percent if the Indian tribe, intertribal organization, or tribal energy development organization meets criteria developed by the Secretary of Energy, including financial need.

“(E) Section 988 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16352) shall not apply to assistance provided under this subsection.”.

(c) **AUTHORIZATION.**—Section 2602(b)(7) of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (25 U.S.C. 3502(b)(7)) is amended by striking “\$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2016” and inserting “\$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025”.

SEC. 3. REPORT ON ELECTRICITY ACCESS AND RELIABILITY.

(a) **ASSESSMENT.**—The Secretary of Energy shall conduct an assessment of the status of access to electricity by households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land, and the reliability of electric service available to households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land, as compared to the status of access to and reliability of electricity within neighboring States or within the State in which Indian land is located.

(b) **CONSULTATION.**—The Secretary of Energy shall consult with Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, the North American Electricity Reliability Corporation, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in the development and conduct of the assessment under subsection (a). Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations shall have the opportunity to review and make recommendations regarding the development of the assessment and the findings of the assessment, prior to the submission of the report under subsection (c).

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report on the results of the assessment conducted under subsection (a), which shall include—

(1) a description of generation, transmission, and distribution assets available to provide electricity to households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land;

(2) a survey of the retail and wholesale prices of electricity available to households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land;

(3) a description of participation of Tribal members in the electric utility workforce, including the workforce for construction and maintenance of renewable energy resources and distributed energy resources;

(4) the percentage of households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land that do not have access to electricity;

(5) the potential of distributed energy resources to provide electricity to households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land;

(6) the potential for tribally-owned electric utilities or electric utility assets to participate in or benefit from regional electricity markets;

(7) a description of the barriers to providing access to electric service to households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land; and

(8) recommendations to improve access to and reliability of electric service for households residing in Tribal communities or on Indian land.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **TRIBAL MEMBER.**—The term “Tribal member” means a person who is an enrolled member of a federally recognized Tribe or village.

(2) **TRIBAL COMMUNITY.**—The term “Tribal community” means a community in a United States census tract in which the majority of residents are persons who are enrolled members of a federally recognized Tribe or village.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5541.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5541, the Tribal Power Act. This is a bipartisan bill that was introduced by Representative O'HALLERAN from Arizona and Representative MULLIN from Oklahoma, both members of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

This important legislation addresses some of the urgent energy needs of Tribal communities by improving access to energy sources that are affordable and reliable.

H.R. 5541 reauthorizes the Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy and reauthorizes programs to assist Indian Tribes in meeting energy education, planning, and management needs.

Mr. Speaker, we must work with Tribal Governments to ensure the members of Tribal Nations have access to affordable, reliable energy. We have made some strong bipartisan strides on these matters during this Congress, including this bill before us today.

As we prepare for the upcoming Congress, I am committed to working with the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee Chairman RUSH and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do even more to help Native American communities on these matters in the 117th Congress.

I thank the sponsors of this bill for their continued work and leadership on Tribal issues. I also thank House Natural Resources Committee Chairman GRIJALVA, a champion of Native American priorities, for his support which was crucial to bringing this bill to the floor today.

This is an important bipartisan bill that deserves to become law. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting passage, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,

Washington, DC, December 7, 2020.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE Jr.,

Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR PALLONE: In recognition of the goal of expediting consideration of H.R. 5541, the “Tribal Power Act,” the Committee on Natural Resources agrees to waive formal consideration of the bill as to provisions that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

The Committee on Natural Resources takes this action with the mutual understanding that, in doing so, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

Thank you for agreeing to include our exchange of letters in the Congressional Record. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
Chair,

House Natural Resources Committee.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2020.

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,

Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRIJALVA: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Energy and Commerce and agreeing to discharge H.R. 5541, the Tribal Power Act, from further consideration, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will ensure our letters on H.R. 5541 are entered into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, Jr.,
Chairman.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 5541, the Tribal Power Act.

This legislation was introduced by my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Representatives O'HALLERAN and MULLIN, and it does strengthen the Department of Energy's Tribal Energy Program, which is really important to do. This bill went through regular order in the committee and passed out of the full committee by a voice vote.

H.R. 5541 updates and reauthorizes programs at the Department of Energy to provide funding and technical assistance to Tribal Governments and organizations so that they can carry out projects that would expand access to energy and provide jobs and economic development on Indian lands.

□ 1315

American Indian and Alaska Native communities continue to struggle with energy affordability and access in many cases. Households on some Tribal lands also have higher rates of unemployment and lower incomes, meaning it may not be feasible to increase electricity rates to energize homes that are not currently connected to the electric grid. As a result, communities often rely on relatively expensive diesel microgrids and generators to power homes and businesses.

H.R. 5541 would help improve energy security and affordability on Indian lands by reauthorizing important government programs, and it would remove some barriers to providing access to electric service and recommends ways to improve energy education, planning, and management.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5541, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers on this side, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN). It is a great honor and privilege to recognize Mr. MULLIN, a Tribal member, an incredibly important member of our committee who has given great voice to people who need help, and a cosponsor of this legislation.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 5541, the Tribal Power Act.

As the only Native American that serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee and one who has lived in Indian Country my entire life, this bill is extremely important to Tribes. It can strategically help us receive capital that we need to become energy efficient and enhance our energy infrastructure.

I have long been a supporter of the economic benefits American energy brings to our communities. As sovereign nations, Tribes should have the ability to choose and deploy this kind of energy and the best kind of energy that works for them. I am proud to be a colead in this very important issue.

Now, with the remainder of my time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a second and recognize our good leader and a friend that we are going to lose here in Chairman WALDEN.

Our committee is better because of your leadership. Anybody who can put up with my attitude and my great personality and still stay calm and effectively lead our committee, I just want to tell you that shows a good leader. It shows somebody I would love to follow

and someone I have enjoyed being able to follow.

Since my time in Congress, you have been a friend and a mentor, one that I can always count on to give the right advice—not necessarily something I always wanted to hear, but the right advice. And, as I said before, that is the character of a good leader.

So, for your 22 years of service, and as someone who only got to serve with you for 8 of those years, it has been a great honor, and you will be missed.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, but I do want to say that I never thought that Mr. MULLIN had a bad attitude.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), my friend, for his very generous, over-the-top words. We have had a great working relationship. He is a fierce fighter for the causes he believes in and has been a terrific legislator and will continue to blossom and grow on the Energy and Commerce Committee, I have no doubt. The country will be better served. Indian Country has few stronger voices than his, and none stronger on the Energy and Commerce Committee, I would say.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), my good friend, the distinguished Republican whip of the House and an incredibly important member of the Energy and Commerce Committee who always came prepared, always did great work, and always presented us with his brick phone.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank my friend, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), for bringing this legislation, the Tribal Power Act. It is an important piece of legislation to help those Tribal communities. He does, as the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) said, provide great leadership for Tribal issues, and this is surely one I am sure we will work with.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. PALLONE, for bringing this as well.

Now, with my time, Mr. Speaker, and you may want to cut it short if this turns into a roast, my friend from Oregon is, as Mr. MULLIN said, departing at the end of this Congress.

I am not sure why you would want to leave after 22 years in Congress, but you have surely earned the right.

I got to know Mr. WALDEN when I was a freshman coming onto the Energy and Commerce Committee back in 2009 in my first year in Congress.

When you look at the dais now, it has surely changed a lot, but back in those days, I would offer, of my own good will, to make coffee for Mr. WALDEN. He was one of those senior members of the committee—probably more of a junior member, but I was the most junior member. But we actually developed a really good friendship.

As we do around here, we all battle it out on issues. We come up here to fight for the things that are important to our districts, important to the country from our perspective, and then you find people along the way you befriend who have that same perspective, and Mr. WALDEN has been one of those. I have learned a lot from him.

We have really, I think, achieved so many things on the Energy and Commerce Committee, and especially during his time as chairman.

I just want to mention a few of those areas where he has made this a better country, because we can all talk about the things that we want to do when we come up here and you would like to work with others, but then to be able to look back and see real, tangible achievements that make this a better country, it really does pay tribute that your time here was well spent. And for Mr. WALDEN, it surely was, and, you know, maybe none more obvious than what we just saw yesterday.

President Trump had a summit to talk about the rollout of a vaccine for COVID-19, a vaccine that came through work that we did in this Congress and the CARES Act to give money to the administration so that they could focus on finding a vaccine, but then it takes the ability, the tools.

The FDA is the gold standard in the world. The FDA has had problems over the years, and this committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, has had to come together to address some of those problems so that FDA can continue to be the gold standard that not only ensures that the trials go through the proper process, because you don't want a drug to come to market that has adverse consequences, but you also don't want government to get in the way and slow down the ability for a drug that will save lives to go through years and years of bureaucracy, and that had been going on.

When we were able to pass the bill to modernize FDA approval of drugs a few years ago when Mr. WALDEN was chairman, some of those reforms actually are what got us to the brink of an FDA-approved vaccine for COVID-19, and that will save millions of lives in America and around the world. You have seen people like the 90-year-old woman in Great Britain who is the first person to get the vaccine. That is from the work of what we did here at the FDA.

FDA is on the verge of approving that vaccine in America, and it will also, in addition to saving lives, allow us to reopen our economy fully, and I think that is another objective we all have.

That doesn't happen by accident. It happened because of leadership.

Again, without your leadership in reforming the FDA, we may be waiting years, not months, to get that vaccine to market.

We had the SUPPORT Act to address the opioid crisis in this country. Every community in America had been

touched by the opioid crisis, and Congress had to take action. Again, working, Republicans and Democrats together, under your leadership as chairman, we did just that, and there are millions of lives that are saved because of that work.

The FCC modernization and reauthorization, which typically happens, but when it was done in 2018, it was named after Ray Baum, who was the staffer who ran the Energy and Commerce Committee. I believe you all served together in the legislature. Unfortunately, we lost him, and to name that important piece of legislation after Ray Baum, I know, was not only important to keep the FCC going, but also to pay tribute to someone who came up here to do good public service for the country and did.

Finally, the reauthorization was to free up spectrum. This has been a challenge for years as we worked to get more spectrum, which has improved everybody's lives, to get to a 5G network.

That work was done, and the leadership of Chairman WALDEN to get that done when even the scorekeepers here said it wouldn't really produce anything for the country, well, billions and billions of dollars later that this country has to pay down our debt came out of that legislation, as well as spectrum to allow us to get to a 5G network, spectrum to allow us to build up more rural broadband.

All of the things that improve people's quality of life happened because of the leadership of Chairman WALDEN, during your time as chairman of the committee. You have earned the opportunity to go and enjoy the next phase of your life.

But while you will be missed here, you leave a great legacy where you can point to the things you have done that make America a greater country, and for that, I thank you. I know all of us join in in applauding your time here in this great institution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear friend and colleague from the Energy and Commerce Committee and the whip, the Republican whip of the House, for his overly generous comments, his fine leadership, and the fun we have had on the Energy and Commerce Committee. We do have a lot of fun there on both sides of the aisle, and then we do wrestle and tumble and we work things out, too.

But Mr. SCALISE has always been a real warrior on the committee, an incredible fighter for what he believes in, an effective legislator, a terrific spokesperson. He has fallen down a little bit, though, I must stipulate, in that he has failed to get me coffee in recent years. He has been otherwise consumed with other duties, and that will be noted in the historical record, I am sure.

Mr. Speaker, I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), whom we are glad to have back on the floor and looking well.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to call GREG WALDEN a colleague and friend. His time as chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee is another chapter of accomplishment and success in the committee's storied history.

As chairman, GREG approached every issue before the committee with his eye on achieving results for the American people. That is why we are here. He strove to reach across the political divide, because he understood, and still does, our work on behalf of the American people is far too important to always be derailed by needless partisanship. Of course, we will have our squabbles back and forth, but at the end of the day, it is about the American people, and GREG understands that.

From the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act to RAY BAUM'S Act, as well as too numerous bills signed into law to even list here, GREG's leadership of the Energy and Commerce Committee produced important legislation that is, today, making a difference in the lives of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to personally thank GREG for taking the time to bring me in and ask for my professional medical diagnosis of many major healthcare-related issues or other pieces of legislation before the committee.

I know at times we doctors can tell you things you don't want to hear—and quit laughing—but GREG always listened intently and worked with me to help find a cure, so to speak, or a remedy, and for that, I will always be appreciative.

GREG, your wisdom, charisma, and unflappable leadership will be greatly missed in the 117th Congress.

I wish you and Mylene the best as you both begin this new chapter of your lives, and I look forward to continuing to call you friend.

□ 1330

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, the good doctor from Indiana. We are so blessed in this institution to have people with such incredible backgrounds, intellect, capability, and just the overall human experience that they can bring to help us be better legislators and develop better policy.

I think when we listen to each other, when we are challenged in our views and our ideas by each other, we end up with a better product for the American people, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, Dr. BUCSHON has been a forceful figure in trying to get to better healthcare policy outcomes. I have greatly valued his counsel and his leadership, and I know incredible things await him in the next Congress and in the years thereafter, where I hope he will continue to serve with great distinction, honor, and ability.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I have anybody else on our side at this time, so I encourage passage of the legislation, the Tribal Power Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5541, 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.

TIMELY REVIEW OF INFRASTRUCTURE ACT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1426) to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act to address insufficient compensation of employees and other personnel of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1426

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 "Timely Review of Infrastructure Act".

SEC. 2. ADDRESSING INSUFFICIENT COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES AND OTHER PERSONNEL OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 401 of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7171) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k) ADDRESSING INSUFFICIENT COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES AND OTHER PERSONNEL OF THE COMMISSION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the Chairman publicly certifies that compensation for a category of employees or other personnel of the Commission is insufficient to retain or attract employees and other personnel to allow the Commission to carry out the functions of the Commission in a timely, efficient, and effective manner, the Chairman may fix the compensation for the category of employees or other personnel without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other civil service law.

“(2) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—A certification issued under paragraph (1) shall—

“(A) apply with respect to a category of employees or other personnel responsible for conducting work of a scientific, technological, engineering, or mathematical nature;

“(B) specify a maximum amount of reasonable compensation for the category of employees or other personnel;

“(C) be valid for a 5-year period beginning on the date on which the certification is issued;

“(D) be no broader than necessary to achieve the objective of retaining or attracting employees and other personnel to allow the Commission to carry out the functions of the Commission in a timely, efficient, and effective manner; and

“(E) include an explanation for why the other approaches available to the Chairman for retaining and attracting employees and other personnel are inadequate.

“(3) RENEWAL.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days before the date of expiration of a certification issued under paragraph (1), the Chairman shall determine whether the certification should be renewed for a subsequent 5-year period.

“(B) REQUIREMENT.—If the Chairman determines that a certification should be renewed under subparagraph (A), the Chairman may renew the certification, subject to the certification requirements under paragraph (2) that were applicable to the initial certification.

“(4) NEW HIRES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—An employee or other personnel that is a member of a category of employees or other personnel that would have been covered by a certification issued under paragraph (1), but was hired during a period in which the certification has expired and has not been renewed under paragraph (3) shall not be eligible for compensation at the level that would have applied to the employee or other personnel if the certification had been in effect on the date on which the employee or other personnel was hired.

“(B) COMPENSATION OF NEW HIRES ON RENEWAL.—On renewal of a certification under paragraph (3), the Chairman may fix the compensation of the employees or other personnel described in subparagraph (A) at the level established for the category of employees or other personnel in the certification.

“(5) RETENTION OF LEVEL OF FIXED COMPENSATION.—A category of employees or other personnel, the compensation of which was fixed by the Chairman in accordance with paragraph (1), may, at the discretion of the Chairman, have the level of fixed compensation for the category of employees or other personnel retained, regardless of whether a certification described under that paragraph is in effect with respect to the compensation of the category of employees or other personnel.

“(6) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—The Chairman shall consult with the Director of the Office of Personnel Management in implementing this subsection, including in the determination of the amount of compensation with respect to each category of employees or other personnel.

“(7) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Chairman may—

“(i) obtain the services of experts and consultants in accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United States Code;

“(ii) compensate those experts and consultants for each day (including travel time) at rates not in excess of the rate of pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of that title; and

“(iii) pay to the experts and consultants serving away from the homes or regular places of business of the experts and consult-

ants travel expenses and per diem in lieu of subsistence at rates authorized by sections 5702 and 5703 of that title for persons in Government service employed intermittently.

“(B) LIMITATIONS.—The Chairman shall—

“(i) to the maximum extent practicable, limit the use of experts and consultants pursuant to subparagraph (A); and

“(ii) ensure that the employment contract of each expert and consultant employed pursuant to subparagraph (A) is subject to renewal not less frequently than annually.”.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter for 10 years, the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report on information relating to hiring, vacancies, and compensation at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

(2) INCLUSIONS.—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) an analysis of any trends with respect to hiring, vacancies, and compensation at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and

(B) a description of the efforts to retain and attract employees or other personnel responsible for conducting work of a scientific, technological, engineering, or mathematical nature at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply beginning on the date that is 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1426.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1426, the Timely Review of Infrastructure Act. This bipartisan bill was introduced by Representatives OLSON and DOYLE. I would like to thank both of them for their hard work on this bill.

H.R. 1426 ensures that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC, has the resources and personnel it needs to review and analyze energy infrastructure projects.

H.R. 1426 addresses insufficient compensation of employees and other personnel by amending the Department of Energy Organization Act to grant the FERC Chairman additional authority to adjust compensation for a category of employees and other personnel without regard to certain civil service laws.

The Commission must be able to hire and retain sufficiently experienced employees so that complex and highly

technical environmental reviews are conducted in as rigorous a manner as possible. Better staffing by the best and brightest people means better environmental outcomes, better energy outcomes, and better outcomes for consumers.

I appreciate my colleagues' hard work on this legislation.

I particularly want to offer my best wishes to the sponsor of this bill, Representative OLSON, who is retiring at the end of this Congress. I have always worked with him on a bipartisan basis and enjoy spending time with him because he has a real sense of humor.

While we often disagree on policy, he has always been fair-minded and a man of his convictions. When he is with us, it is hard to imagine a better partner.

That is particularly true regarding the work we have been doing with Chairman TONKO and many others from both parties on legislation to phase out the use of hydrofluorocarbons. He and his staff have been true leaders in pushing forward that legislation, which, if we can get it done, will be a major win for our manufacturers, our economy, and our environment.

I thank the gentleman for his service to our committee and to our country. I wish you all the best in the next chapter of your life, PETE, absolutely.

I thank my colleagues for their efforts and urge passage of the bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1426, the Timely Review of Infrastructure Act. This legislation was introduced by my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Representative PETE OLSON and Representative MIKE DOYLE, to help the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission recruit and retain highly specialized personnel in the STEM fields.

This legislation went through regular order, and it passed by vote voice in the committee. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, otherwise known as FERC, is an independent agency. Mr. Speaker, it regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil.

FERC's responsibilities also include reviewing and approving the siting of large-scale infrastructure projects such as LNG export terminals, electric transmission lines, interstate pipelines, and all the associated environmental and safety requirements.

While FERC receives annual appropriations from Congress, FERC recovers 100 percent of its appropriations through the collection of annual charges and filing fees. This unique structure, where the industry essentially covers FERC's costs, has resulted in a lean and efficient agency, and it helps keep costs down for consumers.

In testimony before the Energy and Commerce Committee, FERC explained that it faces a growing challenge to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce to keep up with the demands of

our rapidly growing energy infrastructure.

FERC has especially had difficulty hiring engineers throughout the agency, with many candidates citing compensation rates as, frankly, the main issue.

H.R. 1426 would improve FERC's workforce by granting the Chairman authority to adjust compensation for a certain category of STEM workers. This fix would help FERC carry out its mission in a timely, efficient, and effective manner without any additional cost to our taxpayers.

I want to thank Mr. OLSON and Mr. DOYLE for working together in a bipartisan way, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the legislation. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers on this side, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to the author of the bill, the gentleman from Texas, I can tell you, Texas has few stronger advocates, if any, than Mr. OLSON. And Texas 22, his congressional district, has had an incredibly effective voice in the United States Congress.

He, like I, will be leaving at the end of this session, but he has left his mark on all kinds of positive policy improvements in the Federal Government.

Now, I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but there probably aren't many of us who could cite our friend's district by number, but somehow Mr. OLSON, when you look at him, you know it is Texas 22, and you know about the Houston Astros. Now why, I don't know. But that is a subject for another day.

What I do know is, he has been an able and effective legislator on the Energy and Commerce Committee in this House. He has served his country in many capacities, including in the military. He will be missed in this assembly, but his work will go on. His work today is noticed, once again, in a bipartisan way.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON), although I do have another speaker.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman—my ranking member, my inspiration, Chairman GREG WALDEN—for his kind words and the time to speak about H.R. 1426, the Timely Review of Infrastructure Act.

'Tis the season of giving. This bipartisan bill gives three gifts to America and to the world.

The first gift: We ensure that the American taxpayer gets the maximum value spent for the taxpayer dollars.

The second gift: This grows America's economy with high-paying, high-technology jobs.

And number three: This addresses climate change by encouraging energy transportation through the safest, cleanest medium possible, pipelines above ships, trains, and trucks.

H.R. 1426 is a commonsense bill. This is not new. It is modeled after Wall

Street. When the market was booming in the 2000s, the private sector poached staff employees from the SEC. They threw dollar after dollar after dollar at these experts and got them to leave the public sector for the private sector. That meant that oversight was not the highest quality it had been before, and those reviews were longer and longer and longer.

The same thing is happening right now in the current explosion of American energy. The agency is called FERC, as Mr. WALDEN mentioned, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The private-sector big guys, the Big Oil guys, have told me point-blank that they poach on FERC to get the best employees they possibly can get. They wave money at them that FERC does not have to compete.

When the SEC had their problems in the 2000s, we allowed them to temporarily raise the Federal employment cap to keep these SEC experts on the job in the SEC.

H.R. 1426 does that same thing, a proven remedy for FERC: 1 year, higher salaries, and then a review.

Every Member in this House, Democrat or Republican, should vote for this bill because it is not just bipartisan. It is bipartisan on steroids.

The lead Democrat, my good friend, MIKE DOYLE, is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the NFL, that is Steelers country. I am from the suburbs of Houston. That was Houston Oilers country. Oilers fans have had a clash, a strong clash, with Steelers fans for over 40 years. And Pittsburgh fans have never apologized for a horrific, blown call that may have cost my Oilers a chance to go to their first Super Bowl. That still hurts today.

My point is, if MIKE and I can put that difference aside and pass this bill, everyone in this entire body should come together and pass this bill. We all should vote for H.R. 1426.

I have to close by speaking about our leader, my idol, GREG WALDEN. Like me, GREG is retiring after this year. Like me, GREG is not dying. He is just retiring.

Let me give you a few examples of GREG's guidance of this committee when he was the chairman. He empowered every Member—Democrat, Republican, from any State—to have an amendment, to have their voices heard on the committee.

The best example is, I recall a bill that sunset, sunrise, sunset—our bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. That markup went on for 27 hours because GREG WALDEN made sure every Member could have their amendment with a vote in that committee before it came to the House floor.

Let me give you another great example of GREG WALDEN building a team that always wins, that is always united. I am from Texas, a Republican. When I first got here, we had 25 Members. At most times, we were together, but sometimes we split.

GREG WALDEN has led the entire Oregon delegation GOP the whole time I

have been here, and they have never, ever, ever had one defection with GREG WALDEN's leadership.

I will close with another Houston Oilers' quote from a great coach, Bum Phillips.

If Bum came down from Heaven right now and was talking about GREG WALDEN's record and career here in the House throughout our history, he would say: GREG WALDEN may not be in a class by himself, but whatever class you are in, my friend, it doesn't take long to call the roll.

□ 1345

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank my dear friend and colleague, Mr. OLSON, who we all know, it turns out, is from Texas 22; and his wife, Nancy. I wish them the very best in their lives ahead.

Mr. Speaker, since he is talking about a little history, I want to talk about a little history, too, before I turn to my friend from Georgia to speak on this bill, and that is that something really, really, really important happened not too far from my home State of Oregon.

In Fort Lewis, Washington, on this date 58 years ago, this gentleman from Texas 22 arrived on this planet. Today is his birthday, and I hope the House will join me in acknowledging Mr. OLSON's birthday. He was born in the great State of Washington, as it turns out, but he is Texas through and through. So happy birthday to Mr. OLSON.

Mr. Speaker, I would turn now to the only pharmacist in the United States Congress, which has really been important in our legislative efforts on the Energy and Commerce Committee. He knows so much about how to take care of people when they are at the counter, how to make sure they get what they need, and what they face when they come there in terms of costs of medicines and everything else.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), who is a terrific member of the committee.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1426, the Timely Review of Infrastructure Act. Simply put, this is a commonsense bill to address how employees are commended for their work at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC.

It is well known that there is a backlog of work at FERC due to a shortage of qualified personnel to handle the requirements. When energy developers need to submit applications for approval at FERC, they are often delayed due to a lack of available personnel to review the project.

The United States has finally reached a level of energy independence that we could never have dreamed of during the OPEC oil embargo. However, that development is often subject

to the timeliness and availability of approvals at FERC. This bill will ensure that the retention and recruiting of people at FERC will remain highly competitive, bringing in the people they need to do the job.

One area of serious concern was the number of pending LNG applications waiting at FERC. Thankfully, we have a bipartisan bill that can turn things around.

I thank my good friend from Texas 22, PETE OLSON, who is, unfortunately, leaving this body after years of distinguished service. But this is a good way to reflect on all of his great work. We will miss my friend from Texas, and I do wish him well.

Also, I thank my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee for their work on this important legislation.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I have any other speakers on my side of the aisle on this measure. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that today the House will consider the Timely Review of Infrastructure Act introduced by Representative PETE OLSON of Texas and myself. I would like to thank Mr. OLSON for his leadership and partnership on this bill and commend him and his staff on their tireless efforts to get it across the finish line.

The United States has always been a global leader when it comes to energy development and that is just a true today as it has ever been. However, in order to maintain and grow our energy sector, we need to ensure that we are building the necessary energy infrastructure to do so. Investing in our domestic infrastructure is more important than ever as we look to get through the current health crisis and rebuild our economy.

Indeed, just as we passed the Water Resources Development Act yesterday, today we have an opportunity to pass a bill that, while smaller in scale, will help hasten the buildout of critical energy infrastructure such as hydroelectric dams, pipelines, transmission equipment, and energy terminals. This will not only help the economy recover but will ensure that we have a secure and strong domestic energy system.

Unfortunately, too many energy infrastructure projects are delayed or do not have as vigorous a review as you would expect. And that is due to the fact that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which is responsible for reviewing proposed projects cannot hire or retain enough qualified engineers for the simple reason that salaries in the private sector are too high for FERC to compete with given its current pay scale limits. This lack of engineers not only doesn't allow FERC to fully and robustly do its work, but it is a barrier to communities benefiting from the good paying jobs the construction of these projects provides.

If we want FERC to ensure that the projects that come up for review, now and in the future, are stringently but quickly reviewed, then we must make the pay for the engineers who review the applications more competitive. That is exactly what the Timely Review of Infrastructure Act would do, by allowing FERC to offer higher salaries for these high demand engineering positions, ensuring that critical infrastructure projects can get the review and approval they need to move forward.

The bill has bipartisan and bicameral support and FERC Chairman Chatterjee has stated his support for this legislation saying that it would enhance the Commission's ability to recruit and compensate the skilled staff needed to lessen the backlog of projects awaiting review and to review future projects in a more timely manner.

Our bill would not only help get rid of the backlog of projects currently awaiting review, but would allow FERC to have the proper staff in place as we build out a sustainable energy system. I view it as an important piece of getting our economy back on track and ensuring that America remains the leader in energy production and innovation that it has been.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1426.

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.

CEILING FAN IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2020

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5758) to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to make technical corrections to the energy conservation standard for ceiling fans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5758

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 "Ceiling Fan Improvement Act of 2020".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATIONS TO THE CEILING FAN ENERGY CONSERVATION STANDARD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 325(ff)(6) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6295(ff)(6)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(C)(i) Large-diameter ceiling fans manufactured on or after January 21, 2020, shall—

“(I) not be required to meet minimum ceiling fan efficiency in terms of ratio of the total airflow to the total power consumption as described in the final rule titled ‘Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Ceiling Fans’ (82 Fed. Reg. 6826 (January 19, 2017)); and

“(II) have a CFEI greater than or equal to—

“(aa) 1.00 at high speed; and

“(bb) 1.31 at 40 percent speed or the nearest speed that is not less than 40 percent speed.

“(ii) For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘CFEI’ means the Fan Energy Index for

large-diameter ceiling fans, calculated in accordance with ANSI/AMCA Standard 208-18 titled ‘Calculation of the Fan Energy Index’, with the following modifications:

“(I) Using an Airflow Constant (Q_0) of 26,500 cubic feet per minute.

“(II) Using a Pressure Constant (P_0) of 0.0027 inches water gauge.

“(III) Using a Fan Efficiency Constant (η_0) of 42 percent.”.

(b) REVISION.—For purposes of section 325(m) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6295(m)), the standard established in section 325(ff)(6)(C) of such Act (as added by subsection (a) of this section) shall be treated as if such standard was issued on January 19, 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5758.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5758, the Ceiling Fan Improvement Act of 2020. This bipartisan bill was introduced by Representative GUTHRIE of Kentucky and Representative SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois, both senior members of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

H.R. 5758 amends the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to provide a technical fix for large-diameter ceiling fan efficiency standards. The legislation adjusts compliance requirements related to total airflow and power consumptions for these fans. This technical fix provides the highest-airflow fans a path to compliance, while still requiring improvements to products that underperform. This is a common-sense change that will improve efficiency of large-diameter ceiling fans and ensure that all products will become efficient over time.

Mr. Speaker, energy efficiency is a critical tool in our efforts to address climate change, while also saving consumers money on their electric bills. Residential and commercial buildings contribute nearly 40 percent to our Nation's carbon pollution, and energy efficiency measures can reduce U.S. energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2050.

It is crucial that we support energy efficiency efforts across different sectors. I commend my colleagues for their bipartisan work on this important bill. Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, in particular, who chairs our subcommittee that deals with consumer protection is always looking to not only improve efficiency, but also consumer protections.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5758, the Ceiling Fan Improvement Act. This legislation was introduced by my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Representatives GUTHRIE and SCHAKOWSKY, to make technical corrections to the Department of Energy's energy conservation standard for large-diameter ceiling fans. This legislation did go through regular order and it did pass the full committee on a voice vote.

H.R. 5758 would amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to adjust compliance requirements, and that will resolve a discrepancy in the regulations that may have the unintended consequence of allowing some large-diameter fans with low airflows to meet the minimum standards. The Department of Energy confirmed the need for a statutory revision and submitted technical assistance to aid in the drafting of this legislation, which we are appreciative of.

This is a good bipartisan bill, like the others before it today, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), who chairs our Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I also thank Representative GUTHRIE, who cosponsored this legislation with me, and also Chairman PALLONE and Chairman BOBBY RUSH for their help in moving this bill forward.

This is a bipartisan bill that provides an important fix to an energy conservation rule for ceiling fans that the Department of Energy finalized in January 2017.

However, minor technical changes to the rule were needed in order to prevent a major unintended consequence. Without this bill, some of the most energy-efficient, large-diameter ceiling fans would have to be taken off the market in the United States. So we fixed that.

The bill will also provide consistent labeling requirements for residential ceiling fans and simplify the ENERGY STAR program. Both of these changes will make it easier for Americans to choose the right products for their homes. Representative GUTHRIE and I worked together with ceiling fan manufacturers, the energy efficiency community, and other stakeholders to clarify the standard. The Department of Energy was consulted throughout the drafting process.

What pleases me really the most about this legislation is that it highlights how we need legislation, big and small, to tackle the climate crisis.

This bill also highlights how we can work together across the aisle to enact

commonsense policies that directly impact energy usage in homes and save American families money on their energy bill at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing to work together with my Republican colleagues in the next Congress.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege now to recognize the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE), who is the top Republican on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee and has really done incredible work as we put together our package on Operation Warp Speed and the second wave issues involving COVID, which I recommend to my colleagues to take a look at. He is also a great legislator in working out bipartisan issues like this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE).

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of my bill (H.R. 5758), the Ceiling Fan Improvement Act.

In January 2017, the Department of Energy finalized energy conservation standards for ceiling fans that, unfortunately, did not account for the different airflow dynamics of large ceiling fans.

Under the current regulations, some of the most efficient large-diameter fans would have to be taken off the market in the U.S.

The Ceiling Fan Improvement Act is a bipartisan, commonsense bill that will ensure large-diameter fans are properly regulated. Technical innovation and new products will be key to improving energy efficiency and protecting our environment for generations to come, and the Ceiling Fan Improvement Act seeks to ensure that high-performing, large-diameter ceiling fans can remain on the market and help achieve real energy savings.

I thank Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky for working with me on this bill. I appreciate all the efforts she made to work with me and work together. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, while on the floor, I want to make some comments about some of our colleagues who are leaving.

Mr. Speaker, first, we are hallway roommates in the Rayburn Office Building. I will miss seeing you. Congratulations on where you are going. You are retiring. It has been a pleasure. Your staff is fantastic. Every time I walk by and pop my head in and say hello to them, they are always very gracious. So we are going to miss you guys.

Elected with me in 2008—PETE OLSON was just recognized on the floor; farewell to him—when we first got elected to Congress, we were together in a new Member orientation. We were chatting with each other, and I think he said that he was born in Fort Lewis, Washington. We know he is Texas through and through, but he also had a sojourn in Alabama. We were talking, and I said: I was born in Alabama.

And he said: Well, I used to live in Alabama.

I said: I was born in Florence, Alabama.

Some of you may know Muscle Shoals is where some of the world's greatest music is from. That is where I was from.

He said: Well, I lived in Florence for a year.

I said: I lived in the Forest Hills neighborhood.

He said: I lived in the Forest Hills neighborhood. Did you ever know a Mr. McCugh?

I said: He was the kind of dad who was involved in everybody's lives. Yes, he was my Little League coach.

He said: He was my Little League coach.

I looked at him, and I said: You are little PETEY OLSON?

So PETE OLSON and I come together to Congress in 2008 and found out we knew each other when we were kids. His dad worked for Champion, a big paper mill that went on to Houston.

I would also like to say that the Houston Oilers now play 1 hour from my home in Nashville. So we are proud to have them. I hope he still cheers for them in Nashville.

But what was interesting is we just said he is a year older, and I have never said this on the floor, but I would like to say this now: He is a year older than I, as his birthday is today. We had the same second grade teacher.

He said: Did you have Mrs. LeCates?

I said: I had Mrs. LeCates.

The story about Mrs. LeCates is that from the time summer was out that PETE OLSON left and before school commenced that I went into second grade with Mrs. LeCates, something momentous that summer happened in her life. Her son, Second Lieutenant Robert LeCates, was killed in Vietnam. It is really the only name I personally know on the wall when I go. You have heard of people and you have different names you know and you hear stories about, but he is the only person I had a personal connection to. So every time I go to the wall, I have told him that. I said: Every time I go to the wall, I look at Robert LeCates, and I look at his name.

It reminds me to this day that there are people who sacrifice their lives for us to be here and for us to do what we are doing, and we need to conduct ourselves worthy of people who gave the ultimate sacrifice for that. So that was our story.

But I just want to close with talking about our former chairman and ranking member, GREG WALDEN, and wish him well in his retirement. He is outstanding to work with, just outstanding to work with. No matter what the subcommittee, he knew the policy, he knew what was going on, and he had his handle on it. But he also let us go out and do our work and then bring issues to him and move forward with him as well, particularly on the SUPPORT Act. That is the opioid epidemic

bill, trying to address that. It has been a plague on my State like it has been on so many others.

He really gave people freedom to bring the best ideas and put all the best ideas together with both sides. He could always compromise without compromising his values and his principles. He said: If there is a way for both sides to win, let's find a way for both sides to win.

Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman has yielded me as much time as I may consume. If I consumed everything to say what is good about you and the value you are to this institution, I would be here all afternoon because you have really made an impact on this institution. You have made an impact upon our conference.

I think people on both sides of the aisle have said your service here has made a difference, not for Congress, but through your service in Congress and for the country, and I thank you for that. We are going to miss you, and I wish you Godspeed as you move forward.

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Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers on this side, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself a minute or so here to thank my friend, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) who, as you all know, is a terrific legislator, a bright mind. And he, too, has served his country with distinction in uniform and here in the Congress, and he will have a great future going forward in this institution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume 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 H.R. 5758, the Ceiling Fan Improvement Act. This legislation will update the energy efficiency standards for ceiling fans manufactured after January 21 of this year.

We are here today because the existing energy and efficiency standards for ceiling fans was insufficient to meet the characteristics of ceiling fans being manufactured.

Specifically, the energy conservation standards finalized in January 2017 didn't properly account for the different types of air flow of large ceiling fans. Therefore, the result of not changing this law could be the removal of large ceiling fans from the market because they won't be in compliance.

This issue is a great example of how now nuanced and challenging some of these issues and topics can be here in Congress. Thanks to the leadership of my good friend, Congressman GUTHRIE, and that of Chairwoman SCHAKOWSKY, we are now one step closer to getting this fix across the finish line.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the Committee on Energy and Commerce for their work on this legislation

and for the bipartisan efforts to get it here, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers on my side of the aisle. It is good legislation, bipartisan. It should become law. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would urge support for this 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5758.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA RESEARCH ACT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3797) to amend the Controlled Substances Act to make marijuana accessible for use by qualified marijuana researchers for medical purposes, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3797

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 "Medical Marijuana Research Act".

SEC. 2. FACILITATING MARIJUANA RESEARCH.

(a) PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services—

(1) until the date on which the Secretary determines that manufacturers and distributors (other than the Federal Government) can ensure a sufficient supply of marijuana (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802), as amended by section 8) intended for research by qualified marijuana researchers registered pursuant to paragraph (3) of section 303(f) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(f)), as added by section 3, shall—

(A) continue, through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, to produce marijuana through the National Institute on Drug Abuse Drug Supply Program;

(B) not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, act jointly with the Attorney General of the United States to establish and implement a specialized process for manufacturers and distributors, notwithstanding the registration requirements of section 303 of such Act (21 U.S.C. 823), to supply qualified marijuana researchers with marijuana products—

(i) available through State-authorized marijuana programs; and

(ii) consistent with the guidance issued under subsection (c); and

(C) not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, jointly convene with the Attorney General a meeting to initiate the development of the specialized process described in subparagraph (B); and

(2) beyond the date specified in paragraph (1), may, at the Secretary's discretion, continue—

(A) through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, to so produce marijuana; and

(B) to implement such specialized process.

(b) REQUIREMENT TO VERIFY REGISTRATION.—Before supplying marijuana to any person through the National Institute on Drug Abuse Drug Supply Program or through implementation of the specialized process established under subsection (a)(1)(B), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall—

(1) require the person to submit documentation demonstrating that the person is a qualified marijuana researcher seeking to conduct research pursuant to section 303(f)(3) of the Controlled Substances Act, as added by subsection (d) of this section, or a manufacturer duly registered under section 303(l) of the Controlled Substances Act, as added by section 3 of this Act; and

(2) not later than 60 days after receipt of such documentation, review such documentation and verify that the marijuana will be used for such research (and for no other purpose authorized pursuant to this Act or the amendments made by this Act).

(c) GUIDANCE ON USE OF STATE-AUTHORIZED MARIJUANA PROGRAMS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue guidance related to marijuana from State-authorized marijuana programs for research.

(d) RESEARCH.—Section 303(f) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(f)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (5) as subparagraphs (A) through (E), respectively;

(2) by striking "(f) The Attorney General" and inserting "(f)(1) The Attorney General";

(3) by striking "Registration applications" and inserting the following:

"(2) Registration applications";

(4) in paragraph (2), as so designated, by striking "schedule I" each place that term appears and inserting "schedule I, except marijuana,";

(5) by striking "Article 7" and inserting the following:

"(4) Article 7"; and

(6) by inserting before paragraph (4), as so designated, the following:

"(3)(A) The Attorney General shall register the applicant to conduct research with marijuana if—

"(i) the applicant is authorized to dispense, or conduct research with respect to, controlled substances in schedule I, II, III, IV, or V;

"(ii) the applicant is compliant with, and authorized to conduct the activities described in clause (i) under, the laws of the State in which the applicant practices; and

"(iii) in the case of an applicant pursuing clinical research, the applicant's clinical research protocol has been reviewed and authorized to proceed by the Secretary under section 505(i) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

"(B) An applicant registered under subparagraph (A) shall be referred to in this section as a 'qualified marijuana researcher'.

"(C)(i) Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Attorney General receives a complete application for registration under this paragraph, the Attorney General shall approve or deny the application.

“(ii) For purposes of clause (i), an application shall be deemed complete when the applicant has submitted documentation showing that the requirements under subparagraph (A) are satisfied.

“(iii) In the case of a denial under clause (i), the Attorney General shall provide a written explanation of the basis for the denial.

“(D) The Attorney General shall grant an application for registration under this paragraph unless the Attorney General determines that the issuance of the registration would be inconsistent with the public interest. In determining the public interest, the following factors shall be considered:

“(i) The applicant’s experience in dispensing, or conducting research with respect to, controlled substances.

“(ii) The applicant’s conviction record under Federal or State laws relating to the manufacture, distribution, or dispensing of controlled substances.

“(iii) Compliance with applicable State or local laws relating to controlled substance misuse or diversion.

“(iv) Such other conduct which may threaten the public health and safety.

“(E)(i) A qualified marijuana researcher shall store marijuana to be used in research in a securely locked, substantially constructed cabinet.

“(ii) Except as provided in clause (i), any security measures required by the Attorney General for applicants conducting research with marijuana pursuant to a registration under this paragraph shall be consistent with the security measures for applicants conducting research on other controlled substances in schedule II that have a similar risk of diversion and abuse.

“(F)(i) If the Attorney General grants an application for registration under this paragraph, the applicant may amend or supplement the research protocol and proceed with the research under such amended or supplemented protocol, without additional review or approval by the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services if the applicant does not change the type of marijuana, the source of the marijuana, or the conditions under which the marijuana is stored, tracked, or administered.

“(ii) If an applicant amends or supplements the research protocol or initiates research on a new research protocol under clause (i), the applicant shall, in order to renew the registration under this paragraph, provide notice to the Attorney General of the amended or supplemented research protocol or any new research protocol in the applicant’s renewal materials.

“(iii)(I) If an applicant amends or supplements a research protocol and the amendment or supplement involves a change to the type of marijuana, the source of the marijuana, or conditions under which the marijuana is stored, tracked, or administered, the applicant shall provide notice to the Attorney General not later than 30 days before proceeding on such amended or supplemental research or new research protocol, as the case may be.

“(II) If the Attorney General does not object during the 30-day period following a notification under subclause (I), the applicant may proceed with the amended or supplemental research or new research protocol.

“(iv) The Attorney General may object to an amended or supplemental protocol or a new research protocol under clause (i) or (iii) only if additional security measures are needed to safeguard against diversion or abuse.

“(G) If marijuana is listed on a schedule other than schedule I, the provisions of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) that apply to research with a controlled substance in the applicable

schedule shall apply to research with marijuana or that compound, as applicable, in lieu of the provisions of subparagraphs (A) through (F) of this paragraph.

“(H) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as limiting the authority of the Secretary under section 505(i) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act or over requirements related to research protocols, including changes in—

“(i) the method of administration of marijuana;

“(ii) the dosing of marijuana; and

“(iii) the number of individuals or patients involved in research.”

SEC. 3. MANUFACTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MARIJUANA FOR USE IN LEGITIMATE RESEARCH.

Section 303 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823), as amended by section 2, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(1) REGISTRATION OF PERSONS TO MANUFACTURE AND DISTRIBUTE MARIJUANA FOR USE IN LEGITIMATE RESEARCH.—

“(1) REGISTRATION OF MANUFACTURERS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than the day that is 1 year after the date of enactment of the Medical Marijuana Research Act, the Attorney General, pursuant to subsection (f)(3) and subject to subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, shall register an applicant to manufacture marijuana (including any derivative, extract, preparation, and compound thereof) that is intended for—

“(i) the ultimate and exclusive use by qualified marijuana researchers for research pursuant to subsection (f)(3); or

“(ii) subsequent downstream manufacture by a duly registered manufacturer for the ultimate and exclusive use by qualified marijuana researchers for research pursuant to subsection (f)(3).

“(B) PUBLIC INTEREST.—The Attorney General shall register an applicant under subparagraph (A) unless the Attorney General determines that the issuance of such registration is inconsistent with the public interest. In determining the public interest, the Attorney General shall take into consideration—

“(i) maintenance of effective controls against diversion of marijuana and any controlled substance compounded therefrom into other than legitimate medical, scientific, or research channels;

“(ii) compliance with applicable State and local laws relating to controlled substance misuse and diversion;

“(iii) prior conviction record of the applicant under Federal or State laws relating to the manufacture, distribution, or dispensing of such substances; and

“(iv) such other conduct which may threaten the public health and safety.

“(2) REGISTRATION OF DISTRIBUTORS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than the day that is 1 year after the date of enactment of the Medical Marijuana Research Act, the Attorney General shall register an applicant to distribute marijuana (including any derivative, extract, preparation, and compound thereof) that is intended for the ultimate and exclusive use by qualified marijuana researchers for research pursuant to subsection (f)(3) or intended for subsequent downstream manufacture by a duly registered manufacturer for use by qualified marijuana researchers for research pursuant to such subsection, unless the Attorney General determines that the issuance of such registration is inconsistent with the public interest.

“(B) PUBLIC INTEREST.—In determining the public interest under subparagraph (A), the Attorney General shall take into consideration—

“(i) the factors specified in clauses (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) of paragraph (1)(B); and

“(ii) past experience in the distribution of controlled substances, and the existence of effective controls against diversion.

“(3) NO LIMIT ON NUMBER OF MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Attorney General shall not impose or implement any limit on the number of persons eligible to be registered to manufacture or distribute marijuana pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2).

“(4) REQUIREMENT TO VERIFY USE FOR LEGITIMATE RESEARCH.—As a condition of registration under this section to manufacture or distribute marijuana, the Attorney General shall require the registrant—

“(A) to require any person to whom the marijuana will be supplied to submit documentation demonstrating that the marijuana (including any derivative, extract, preparation, and compound thereof) will be ultimately used exclusively by qualified marijuana researchers for research pursuant to subsection (f)(3) or for subsequent downstream manufacture by a duly registered manufacturer for use by qualified marijuana researchers for research pursuant to such subsection;

“(B) in the case of distribution, to complete, with respect to that distribution, the appropriate order form in accordance with section 308 and to upload such forms to the system used by the Drug Enforcement Administration for such distribution;

“(C) to include in the labeling of any marijuana so manufactured or distributed—

“(i) the following statement: ‘This material is for biomedical and scientific research purposes only.’; and

“(ii) the name of the requestor of the marijuana;

“(D) to limit the transfer and sale of any marijuana under this subsection—

“(i) to researchers who are registered under this Act to conduct research with marijuana or to manufacturers duly registered under this subsection; and

“(ii) for purposes of use in preclinical research or in a clinical investigation pursuant to an investigational new drug exemption under 505(i) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act or for the purposes of further manufacturing of marijuana; and

“(E) to transfer or sell any marijuana manufactured under this subsection only with prior, written consent for the transfer or sale by the Attorney General.

“(5) TIMING.—Not later than 60 days after receipt of a request for registration under this subsection to manufacture or distribute marijuana, the Attorney General shall—

“(A) grant or deny the request; and

“(B) in the case of a denial, provide a written explanation of the basis for the denial.

“(6) DEEMED APPROVAL.—If the Attorney General fails to grant or deny a request for registration under this subsection to manufacture or distribute marijuana within the 60-day period referred to in paragraph (5), such request is deemed approved.”

SEC. 4. TERMINATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW PROCESS FOR NON-NIH-FUNDED QUALIFIED MARIJUANA RESEARCHERS.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services may not—

(1) reinstate the Public Health Service interdisciplinary review process described in the guidance entitled “Guidance on Procedures for the Provision of Marijuana for Medical Research” (issued on May 21, 1999); or

(2) create an additional review of scientific protocols that is only conducted for research on marijuana other than the review of research protocols performed at the request of a qualified marijuana researcher conducting

nonhuman research that is not federally funded, in accordance with section 303(f)(3)(A) of the Controlled Substances Act, as added by section 2 of this Act.

SEC. 5. CONSIDERATION OF RESULTS OF RESEARCH.

Immediately upon the approval by the Food and Drug Administration of an application for a drug that contains marijuana (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802), as amended by section 8 of this Act) under section 505 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355), and (irrespective of whether any such approval is granted) not later than the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall—

(1) conduct a review of existing medical and other research with respect to marijuana;

(2) submit a report to the Congress on the results of such review; and

(3) include in such report whether, taking into consideration the factors listed in section 201(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 811(c)), as well as any potential for medical benefits, any gaps in research, and any impacts of Federal restrictions and policy on research, marijuana should be transferred to a schedule other than schedule I (if marijuana has not been so transferred already).

SEC. 6. PRODUCTION QUOTAS FOR MARIJUANA GROWN FOR LEGITIMATE, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

Section 306 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 826) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(j) The Attorney General may only establish a quota for production of marijuana that is manufactured and distributed in accordance with the Medical Marijuana Research Act that meets the changing medical, scientific, and industrial needs for marijuana.”.

SEC. 7. ARTICLE 28 OF THE SINGLE CONVENTION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS.

Article 28 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs shall not be construed to prohibit, or impose additional restrictions upon, research involving marijuana, or the manufacture, distribution, or dispensing of marijuana, that is conducted in accordance with the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.), this Act, and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.

(a) **QUALIFIED MARIJUANA RESEARCHER.**—In this Act, the term “qualified marijuana researcher” has the meaning given the term in section 303(f)(3) of the Controlled Substances Act, as added by section 2(d) of this Act.

(b) **UPDATING TERM.**—Section 102(16) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802(16)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “the term ‘marihuana’ means” and inserting “the terms ‘marihuana’ and ‘marijuana’ mean”; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “The term ‘marihuana’ does not” and inserting “The terms ‘marihuana’ and ‘marijuana’ do not”.

SEC. 9. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3797.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3797, the Medical Marijuana Research Act. In recent years, including in this most recent election cycle, many States have taken action to allow cannabis use. While States are moving ahead with this action, there is a significant need for more research about the use of cannabis products in these States and the safety of products on the shelves.

According to the National Conference of State Legislators, 36 States, as well as Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia have approved medical cannabis programs, while 15 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands have approved adult-use cannabis. This is a major shift in cannabis policy, and the United States is not the only one making these changes.

Just last week, in a vote by the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the body acknowledged the medicinal and therapeutic potential of cannabis and removed it from the most restrictive classification category. While still voicing a need for control, the United States voted in favor of this move, stating that the legitimate medical use of cannabis has been established through scientific research.

Unfortunately, American researchers seeking to study the products widely available and used by consumers in these States and territories face restrictions and numerous hurdles created by U.S. Federal policy. It is time we break through this catch-22. This bipartisan bill begins to address this issue by reducing barriers to cannabis research.

In January, the Committee on Energy and Commerce heard from Federal officials about the difficulty researchers face when it comes to conducting research with cannabis. As an example, for years, there has been only one source of marijuana made available by the University of Mississippi that can be used in the U.S. for research purposes. Another difficulty is that the current Federal registration requirements can be time-consuming and add unique and additional responsibilities than what is required for other types of medical research.

The Council on Governmental Relations, an association of research uni-

versities and other entities, says that this more cumbersome process often requires 6 to 12 months to complete.

In testimony before our committee on this bill, Dr. Nora Volkow, who is the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, underscored this point. She testified that barriers in the current process “present challenges to advancing cannabis research.” As a result, she said, we have a gap in our understanding of cannabis products on health.

Mr. Speaker, now this bill, H.R. 3797, addresses some of these barriers by streamlining the registration process for those who want to advance cannabis research. The bill does this while still maintaining appropriate oversight from both the Department of Health and Human Services and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

This bill also requires HHS and DEA to act within specified time periods to ensure timely registration for researchers, and it encourages additional manufacturers and distributors to supply cannabis for purposes of research. This will diversify the range of products and make it easier for legitimate researchers to obtain products that better reflect the changing cannabis landscape.

Mr. Speaker, finally, the bill would also promote research on cannabis products available through State-authorized programs. This additional research is critical if we are to better understand the benefits and risks of cannabis products available in State markets today and most frequently used by consumers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the lead sponsors of this bipartisan legislation, Representatives BLUMENAUER, HARRIS, LOFGREN, GRIFFITH, BISHOP, and DINGELL, and their staffs, for their tireless work. I also thank the committee staff for their hard work, as well as the staff for both HHS and DEA for their technical assistance.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I hope the Senate will act on it swiftly, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2020.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PALLONE: This is to advise you that the Committee on the Judiciary has now had an opportunity to review the provisions in H.R. 3797, the “Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019,” that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. I appreciate your consulting with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee has no objection to your including them in the bill for consideration on the House floor, and to expedite that consideration is willing to forgo action on H.R. 3797, with the understanding that we do not thereby waive any future jurisdictional claim over those provisions or their subject matters.

In the event a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation is convened, the Judiciary Committee reserves the right to request an appropriate number of conferees to address any concerns with these or similar provisions that may arise in conference.

Please place this letter into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our committees.

Sincerely,

JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman.

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COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2020.

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JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support of H.R. 3797, the Medical Marijuana Research Act introduced by my colleague and friend from Oregon, Representative BLUMENAUER, my friend from Maryland, Representative ANDY HARRIS, among others.

I am sort of surprised we aren't taking this up at 4:20 in the afternoon rather than 2:10, but we will let history deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, Federally sanctioned research on marijuana is incredibly challenging. It is a schedule I controlled substance under the Controlled Substances Act, meaning that researchers seeking to investigate a drug have to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Drug Enforcement Administration to meet certain Federal requirements in order to conduct that research.

In addition, international obligations outlined in the United Nations drug control treaties impose requirements that impact the supply of research-grade cannabis. Currently, those conducting federally-sanctioned research can only study marijuana that is sourced through the National Institute on Drug Abuse's single DEA licensee: the University of Mississippi.

Unfortunately, that marijuana is chemically distinct from what is commercially available from State-legal

dispensaries, such as in my home State of Oregon.

What does that mean?

Well, it means that we have little to no data on the actual health impacts of products in States that have legalized cannabis for medical or recreational use.

States that have pursued marijuana legalization have largely done so in an information vacuum, with less understanding of what it does than virtually any nutritional supplement currently on the market, and with far less information than they have on legal substances that are easily abused, such as alcohol or tobacco. We don't even know at what point it is unsafe for marijuana users to drive. The THC levels that States have set for driving legal limits or for purposes of food consumption are simply arbitrary.

Mr. Speaker, in Oregon, for example, cookies infused with THC are limited to 5 milligrams of THC per serving, or 50 milligrams per package. Now, you go across the Columbia River to the great State of Washington, and their limit is 10 milligrams or 100 milligrams. So there is little to no scientific evidence to support either of these levels. We simply don't know.

Mr. Speaker, here is what we do know: There have been increases in cannabis-related poison control center calls, emergency room visits, and impaired driving incidents. Nationwide exposure in youth is increasing, with record numbers of 8th through 12th graders regularly vaping marijuana products.

So we need research that reflects the reality of what is on the market. Products containing CBD derived from the hemp plant have become commonplace across the country in pharmacies and health food stores, and even in fast food chains since hemp was removed from the CSA in the 2018 farm bill.

Now, these products often contain claims that they can effectively treat everything from depression and inflammation to cancer or Alzheimer's. However, none of these claims have been evaluated or approved by the FDA, meaning patients may be relying on the unsubstantiated claims of CBD products and foregoing other proven medical treatments.

Mr. Speaker, like cannabis, while there is potential for CBD to provide patient benefits, the research and science lag far behind the market and the agencies are simply struggling to catch up. Last week, the majority forced this Chamber to vote on the MORE Act, which completely removed marijuana from the list of scheduled substances under the Controlled Substances Act—among many other things in that bill—and they didn't have the data to justify this policy decision.

Not only was this legislation incredibly premature, it could also potentially put the U.S. in violation of international treaty obligations. Any discussion of de-scheduling must be preceded by a fuller understanding of the

potential risks associated with cannabis use, which we currently do not have. And the current research restrictions on fully studying cannabis have effectively created a catch-22 in the re-scheduling debate.

So evaluations by the FDA and the National Academies have both concluded that the lack of research is a significant factor in denying previous administrative rescheduling petitions. More research, better data, remain the critical first steps to any future policy discussions. Making it easier to research cannabis is common ground that I think we can all agree upon and pursue together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, and especially Representatives HARRIS and BLUMENAUER, for working tirelessly to bring us this bipartisan, commonsense legislation. This bill will help improve the marijuana research landscape and give consumers the information they need.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Oregon. He has really been out front in educating me, in particular, and so many of us, on the cannabis issue. I think without him, we would not see many States like my own leaning towards legalization.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), the prime sponsor of the bill.

□ 1415

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's kind comments and cooperation. Working with the ranking member, working with Dr. HARRIS, we made real progress here.

Mr. Speaker, the cannabis laws in this country are broken, especially those that deal with research. It is illegal everywhere in America to drive under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or any other substance. But we do not have a good test for impairment because we can't study it. Now, Dr. HARRIS and I don't necessarily agree on the efficacy of cannabis, but we agree that this is insane and that we need to change it.

At a time when there are 4 million registered medical cannabis patients, and many more who self-medicate, when there are 91 percent of Americans supporting medical cannabis, it is time to change the system. Our bill will do precisely that. We have a broad coalition of Members and organizations who support the bill, including those who do have concerns about cannabis.

Specifically, the bill will tackle two main issues: research licensing and manufacturing. For manufacturers, it requires the DEA to license outside of the NIDA monopoly so we can study the products Americans are using. For researchers, it shortens the timelines, reduces unnecessary security measures, and streamlines approval.

This bill will not only reduce barriers to medical research but all cannabis research. It is a narrow bill that fixes one of many broken cannabis laws.

I want to hasten to add that this in no way negates the need to move forward with other areas of legislation, like we did with the MORE Act. But this is sort of a foundational question. No matter where you are, there is no reason the Federal Government should impede this critical research.

One of the most moving moments I have had in the last 2 years working on this issue was in the backyard of a constituent in southeast Portland who brought together a half dozen families with children with extreme seizure disorder. The only thing that stopped those babies from being tortured was medical cannabis. They had to research it themselves. They had to formulate it themselves.

At Oregon Health and Science University, they told me: This works. We know it works. We could go to the street corner and buy something, but we legally can't do it.

Listening to those heartbreaking stories of the families, of what they had to do—they crossed their fingers. It sort of worked for them. But no family should have to do that.

We ought to get the Federal obstacles out of the way of simple, common-sense research. It will make a difference for families across the country. We need to move forward, so there is no unnecessary dispute about cannabis, and get the job done.

SUPPORT THE MEDICAL MARIJUANA RESEARCH ACT

DEAR COLLEAGUE: We write to encourage you to cosponsor our bill, the Medical Marijuana Research Act (H.R. 3797). Regardless of your stance on marijuana, we can all agree that there should not be onerous federal barriers to conduct research and access objective evidence as to the medicinal properties of marijuana.

Although more than two-thirds of Americans are living in states with legal marijuana programs, current federal law greatly limits researchers' ability to research this drug. This includes the overly burdensome registration process, redundant protocol reviews, lack of adequate research material and unnecessarily onerous security requirements. In fact, a 2017 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report found that "research on the health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids has been limited in the United States, leaving patients, health care professionals, and policy makers without the evidence they need to make sound decisions regarding the use of cannabis and cannabinoids. This lack of evidence-based information on the health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids poses a public health risk." We could not agree more.

The Medical Marijuana Research Act will reduce many of the barriers to conducting legitimate medical marijuana research. First, the bill streamlines the burdensome and often duplicative licensure process for researchers seeking to conduct marijuana research, while still maintaining all necessary safeguards against misuse and abuse. Second, it addresses the woefully inadequate, both in quantity and quality, supply of medical-grade marijuana available for use in

such research. Finally, it requires, within five years of enactment, a report by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on the status and results of the then-available body of research on marijuana.

Irrespective of where one falls on the ideological spectrum with respect to further legalization, we can all agree that the American people deserve to know what's going on with marijuana. The United States leads the world in biomedical research. It is therefore unconscionable that the federal government stands as the chief impediment to legitimate medical research that will ensure American physicians, patients, purchasers, and constituents have access to the information they need to make an informed decision about marijuana.

Sincerely,

EARL BLUMENAUER,
Member of Congress.

ANDY HARRIS, M.D.,
Member of Congress.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS), who has been a real leader on this and so many other healthcare-related issues.

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your concern about addiction and all the problems. This is an ancillary problem that deals with that. I thank you for your concern about that.

I thank the chairman of the committee and the ranking member. This has been years in the making. I thank them for bringing this across the finish line.

I thank my cosponsor from across the aisle. The gentleman from Oregon is absolutely right. He and I will disagree, probably the most two people can disagree, about recreational marijuana. We agree 100 percent that we need to do this research and that we need this bill.

Now, because of the discussion about COVID and the vaccines and therapeutics for that, Americans realize how medical research has to be done and how important it is to be done. They expect purity, safety, and efficacy for anything that has a claim of a medical product.

Now, unfortunately, because of the public policy we have had in place with marijuana and its scheduling, this simply couldn't be done. The unfortunate consequence is that legislatures in general across the States, and, unfortunately, this legislature last week, took a ready-fire-aim approach: Let's go ahead and legalize it, even for recreational use, without a medical basis.

But I am only going to talk about medical marijuana. We need good studies. Understandably, because of current scheduling, we can't do it. I get it. I did research, as a physician, on drugs. You can't do it under the current scheduling, but we need to do the research.

As the chairman pointed out, Dr. Volkow, who has appeared before our committee many times, has said that the claims of medical usefulness are simply greatly exaggerated because we don't have the science. Many claims are made; very few are proven.

We don't tolerate that for other medications. We certainly don't tol-

erate it for COVID vaccines and therapeutics. We shouldn't tolerate it for medical marijuana. This research just simply hasn't been done, for a variety of reasons, most of which get cured by this bill.

Now, could medical marijuana be useful for PTSD for my fellow veterans? Absolutely. It might be useful. We have no idea.

What we have done is, instead, the public press has said it is useful for PTSD. That is not the way we treat medicine in this country. We actually do the research. Our veterans deserve for us to do this research.

It couldn't be done, because of the scheduling, because of the rules—the rules, by the way, that Congress made. This is on us. We shouldn't have taken so long to get to this point.

Could it be useful for non-neurogenic chronic pain? Yes, it might be, but I don't know. The last thing we should do to our chronic pain patients, as you know, Mr. Speaker, because of the problems with treating chronic pain, is make false promises to them about something.

If this works for it, oh, my gosh, that is great. We have a potential solution for part of our addiction problem. If it doesn't work, those people deserve to know.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TRONE). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS).

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, is it useful for that group? Is CBD useful for that group of pediatric patients with seizures? Yes, it sure is. Is it useful for people with glaucoma? Yes, it sure is. Is it useful for spasticity with multiple sclerosis? Yes, it sure is.

But there are 40 or 50 other claims that we don't know about. We deserve to know about it. Those claims are simply not founded on science.

Look, let's do the science. Let's see what medical marijuana is useful for. As a physician, anything it is useful for, I want to provide for patients. Let's do the science. Let's pass H.R. 3797.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL), one of our colleagues on the committee.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Medical Marijuana Research Act, which would streamline outdated bureaucratic barriers and Federal roadblocks preventing legitimate medical research into the impacts of medical marijuana.

I, too, like my colleague, thank you for your leadership. I have a healthy fear of drugs, having lost a sister to a drug overdose, but there is just too much information we do not have.

We have seen dramatic changes in the legal status of marijuana at the State level. Almost 1 year ago to the day, sales of recreational marijuana began in my home State of Michigan.

Following multiple successful State ballot initiatives last month, medical marijuana is now legal in 36 States. However, the Federal framework for conducting marijuana research is decades old and has not kept pace with these changes.

Currently, as has been said by my other colleagues, scientists in the United States looking to conduct research on marijuana must contend with a heavy-handed, duplicative registration and licensure process that doesn't work. They are limited to using marijuana grown at a single location overseen by the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the University of Mississippi.

Collectively, this regulatory red tape greatly limits our understanding of the health impacts of marijuana and prevents qualified researchers from engaging in further study.

We are driving cars that NHTSA can't do the research they need to do about people driving while smoking. We should know that.

The Medical Marijuana Research Act will streamline this cumbersome process by preventing bureaucratic roadblocks on marijuana research registration applications. It will also direct the FDA to issue guidelines on the production of marijuana and ensure that adequate amounts are available for research.

The legislation also mandates a comprehensive review of the available body of research on marijuana by the Secretary of Health and Human Services 5 years after enactment.

I thank my colleagues—Congresspersons BLUMENAUER, GRIFFITH, LOFGREN, HARRIS, and ROB BISHOP—for all of their work on this. This does matter. We need answers. And I thank my chairman, who has been great about this.

I refuse to accept the fact that our Ranking Member WALDEN is leaving. He is a dear friend, and he has made so much of a difference. He has had very thoughtful input on this, as he does on everything.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time we modernize our Nation's Federal regulations to facilitate legitimate medical research into the impacts of marijuana, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her kind comments and her leadership on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, can I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GRIFFITH), an extraordinary leader on the Energy and Commerce Committee, a gentleman I refer to as our counsel on the committee. He is an extraordinary lawyer and incredible public policy initiator.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that this bill has made it to this level.

You know, Congress doesn't always work well, but sometimes it does. ANDY HARRIS and I were back here, about where he is sitting right now, having a discussion one day, because a lot of times, things get solved or issues come to a head because we are trying to solve problems for the American people.

I believe that there are many uses for medicinal marijuana. I don't support recreational use, but I support medicinal use. ANDY thinks that it goes way too far, as you heard him just say.

But the bottom line is, as we were discussing it, neither one of us could cite scientific research to support our positions. So, we agreed at that point that we would work together on our side of the aisle. And obviously, the gentleman from Oregon has been leading on this for many, many years, and he was going to lead on the other side. We agreed we would try to find language that worked.

We have tried some backdoor routes to get it through some Energy and Commerce bills before, schedule 1R to do research. But this is extremely important. And you are either for medicinal marijuana or against medicinal marijuana, but you can't make an argument either way without the proper research.

This fine piece of legislation that was hammered out over a couple of years, maybe as many as 5 years, is a good piece of legislation, and it deserves the unanimous support of this United States House. I recommend it to each and every one of you.

That being said, I would like to take another minute to speak about my relationship with my Ranking Member WALDEN, who is leaving us. It is with regret on my part that he is leaving. He has a life to lead, and that is what people sometimes forget about Members of Congress.

There is life after Congress, and he is going to do some interesting things. I am anxious to learn what they are. He says he is anxious to learn what they are, too.

But he has so much talent. He has led our committee and then our side of the aisle on the committee so well, and has allowed those of us who are a little different sometimes to have some interesting ideas, to have those ideas bubble up, to take some interesting votes sometimes in committee, to allow Members down dais to have significant input. I am greatly appreciative of that.

I am also appreciative of his friendship and loyalty. I remember when we discovered that his longtime friend Ray Baum had a fatal disease, how he stuck with him, how Ray kept coming to work and was doing things all the way through, and then how he passed an important piece of legislation which commemorated all of Ray Baum's work.

The bill has Ray Baum's name on it, as it should, but it was a tribute from his friend, and I respect that type of friendship. I appreciate it very much.

I will always hold you in high regard. If I can do anything to be of assistance in the future, I will gladly do so.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Virginia for not only his very kind comments but also his incredible work ethic.

I will tell one quick story about MORGAN GRIFFITH. I had a little bill, a suspension bill, that Mr. BLUMENAUER and I had to do a land exchange up on Mount Hood. It flew through here one night, first night of votes, and got two dissenting votes. One of them I understood, but his dissenting vote I didn't understand.

I went up to him, and I said: I am going to win this. There are only two noes. But why did you vote no?

He said: Well, I read the bill, and it referenced this memorandum of understanding between the Forest Service and Mount Hood Meadows about this land exchange. I tried to get a copy of that MOU, and I couldn't get it before I voted on the bill, so I voted no.

□ 1430

Well, the bill didn't get through that Congress. It got through the House, but not, of course, the other body.

So the next Congress, we did it again, and I made sure that Mr. GRIFFITH had that memorandum of understanding related to this little land transfer bill in an area that Mr. BLUMENAUER and I share, and he voted with us on that measure.

I thought: He is a pretty darn good, thorough legislator if he is reading every suspension bill and every land transfer bill and diving into the weeds. Americans need to know what a great man he is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Medical Marijuana Research Act.

Cannabis has been known by humans for thousands of years, yet we still don't truly know if the plant is medically beneficial. Some preliminary findings have given cause to believe that there may be some medicinal benefits. In fact, the FDA has authorized use of medical-grade CBD products for rare forms of epilepsy, but large-scale research has not occurred.

Despite this, more than half of the States have legalized cannabis for medical purposes. Even Georgia, my home State, has acted to expand cannabis laws.

As the legal status of cannabis evolves, we must prioritize making the plant available for medicinal research.

In 2017, the National Academy of Medicine found that there are several challenges and barriers in conducting cannabis and cannabinoid research, including the classification of cannabis

as a schedule I substance and the difficulty for researchers to gain access to the quality and quantity of product necessary for research.

I do not believe that the Federal Government should be standing in the way of medical research for cannabis products. Cannabis could be a lifesaving product. It may also not be, but we owe it to the patients to do the due diligence, research, and testing so that they may make the best medical decisions for themselves.

While we may all have differing opinions on the decriminalization of recreational marijuana—and my stance on that is well-known and well-documented that I am adamantly opposed to the recreational use of marijuana—I think we can all agree that we should facilitate better research on the plant's medicinal benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see this legislation come to the floor for a vote. I thank my colleague, Mr. BLUMENAUER, for working on this legislation with me. I urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, before I leave, I want to pay homage, if you will, to Mr. WALDEN, who will be leaving us, you have heard other speakers indicate before.

I came on this committee 4 years ago. Being the only pharmacist in Congress, I wanted to be on the Health Subcommittee, and I wanted to work in that arena. That is where Energy and Commerce was.

I will have to be quite honest with you. I really didn't understand just what a great committee—the best committee in Congress—Energy and Commerce is, and I truly believe that. I understand that now.

But I want to thank GREG WALDEN, because when I came in 4 years ago, he was the chairman of this committee, and he was very encouraging to me. In fact, he was my mentor on this committee. He led me and gave me opportunities, and I appreciate that very, very much.

His diversity, his intelligence, his fairness has been outstanding. His leadership has been outstanding, and it is only surpassed by his impeccable character.

Mr. Speaker, as he leaves, I want him to know how much I personally am appreciative of all of his help and all of his leadership.

Our committee, our Congress, our country is better off because of your work. Thank you and Godspeed.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my dear friend and colleague from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for his leadership on so many issues before the committee and for his very kind and generous words. I will miss serving with Mr. CARTER. He has been a terrific member of the committee, and he, too, will have a great future ahead.

Mr. Speaker, our next Member, I should call him the deputy mayor of Washington, D.C., because that is kind of what you are when you are the ranking member of the House Administra-

tion Committee. He has been a passionate advocate on the next bill, but because of a meeting he has coming up, I am going to yield to him now, so he can make that scheduled appointment, to talk about this bill and the next bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I do support the bill that we are talking about. I have been a longtime supporter of medical marijuana use, and I certainly believe that the bipartisan legislation that is being put forward today is a great idea.

But it is also great to follow my favorite legalized drug dealer here at the dais, BUDDY CARTER, the only pharmacist in Congress. This is a guy who says a lot of things about GREG WALDEN. All of them are true, but I am going to get to that in a bit.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to thank my good friend, DONALD PAYNE, Jr., for allowing me to cosponsor a bill that is very personal to me, and that is the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2020.

As some of you may know, my wife was diagnosed with early-onset colorectal cancer in 1999. She was 26 years old, and she is a 21-year cancer survivor today. It is a genetic form of cancer, Lynch syndrome, that I hope and pray that families like mine and many others don't have to continue to fight.

But it is imperative that we catch cancer in its early stages, and I can speak from experience, with my wife constantly being misdiagnosed just a few short years ago, and that is exactly what this legislation does for our Medicare population.

Put simply, this legislation ensures that, if a Medicare beneficiary receives a colonoscopy, which is covered by Medicare, he or she won't be billed for any subsequent tests on polyps that may be discovered during the screening.

The current policy of providing colonoscopies at no cost to beneficiaries but then billing them for potential findings, that greatly disincentivizes vulnerable individuals from actually seeking the screening process, which could lead to worse cancer and possibly death.

This is a commonsense fix that will save lives. I am proud to colead it, again, with my good friend, Mr. PAYNE. This is bipartisan.

But before I close, I want to take a moment to thank the countless advocates who have visited my office to fight for increased screening, including those with Fight Colorectal Cancer and the American Cancer Society. Today's vote stands as a testament to their advocacy and hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, again, Chairman PALLONE and Ranking Member WALDEN and everyone on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Ways and Means Committee for working with us to move this legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. Speaker, now I do want to take some time—it is actually ironic to watch all of the well wishes to GREG WALDEN.

After first meeting him on an airplane that happened to land at the wrong airport, I didn't have a lot of high hopes for you, Mr. Ranking Member. I mean, who lands at the wrong airport, except an airplane that GREG WALDEN is on?

Unlike a lot of folks that are here touting what you have done, I say: Good riddance. It is about time.

In all seriousness, my friend, this place is going to miss you. This place is going to miss your humor. This place is going to miss your leadership and your tenacity. I can't tell you how proud I am to not just call you my colleague, but my friend.

Thank you for everything you have done for me and what you have done for this great institution. It is a better place because you served here, and it will not be as good a place without you here.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Illinois for his generous comments and his great leadership, and I wish him well in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the underlying bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask for support to pass this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3797, the Medical Marijuana Research Act. I advanced this bipartisan bill through my Health Subcommittee and I'm proud to support it on the Floor today.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services National Survey on Drug Use, 44 million Americans reported using cannabis in the past year. Thirty-three states now allow the medicinal use of cannabis and 11 states and the District of Columbia have legalized cannabis for adult use.

But state laws and federal policy are a thousand miles apart. As more states allow cannabis, the federal government still strictly controls and prohibits it, even restricting legitimate medical research.

The Medical Marijuana Research Act addresses these restrictions on research and alleviates a burdensome, out-of-date process for scientific researchers. First, it creates a new, less cumbersome registration process specifically for marijuana, reducing approval wait times and costly security measures. Second, this bill makes it easier for researchers to obtain the cannabis they need for their studies through reforms in production and distribution regulations.

Under this bill, scientists will no longer be forced to wait more than a year to become federally-approved to conduct cannabis research. They will also not be forced to use the cannabis grown by a government-authorized farm at the University of Mississippi. This cannabis lacks the properties and potency of commercially-available cannabis and leads to inadequate research.

This is a commonsense bill that will update federal policy to advance research on cannabis and its compounds. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3797, 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.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING ACT OF 2020

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1570) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1570

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 “Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. WAIVING MEDICARE COINSURANCE FOR CERTAIN COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING TESTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1833(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(a)) is amended—

(1) in the second sentence, by striking “section 1834(0)” and inserting “section 1834(o)”;

(2) by moving such second sentence 2 ems to the left; and

(3) by inserting the following third sentence following such second sentence: “For services furnished on or after January 1, 2022, paragraph (1)(Y) shall apply with respect to a colorectal cancer screening test regardless of the code that is billed for the establishment of a diagnosis as a result of the test, or for the removal of tissue or other matter or other procedure that is furnished in connection with, as a result of, and in the same clinical encounter as the screening test.”.

(b) SPECIAL COINSURANCE RULE FOR CERTAIN TESTS.—Section 1833 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)(Y), by inserting “subject to subsection (dd),” before “with respect to”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(dd) SPECIAL COINSURANCE RULE FOR CERTAIN COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING TESTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a colorectal cancer screening test to which paragraph (1)(Y) of subsection (a) would not apply but for the third sentence of such subsection that is furnished during a year beginning on or after January 1, 2022, and before January 1, 2030, the amount paid shall be equal to the specified percent (as defined in paragraph (2)) for such year of the lesser of the actual charge for the service or the

amount determined under the fee schedule that applies to such test under this part (or, in the case such test is a covered OPD service (as defined in subsection (t)(1)(B)), the amount determined under subsection (t)).

“(2) SPECIFIED PERCENT DEFINED.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the term ‘specified percent’ means—

“(A) for 2022 and 2023, 80 percent;

“(B) for 2024 and 2025, 85 percent;

“(C) for 2026 and 2027, 90 percent; and

“(D) for 2028 and 2029, 95 percent.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 1834(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(d)) are each amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C)(ii), in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking “Notwithstanding” and inserting “Subject to section 1833(a)(1)(Y), but notwithstanding”; and

(2) in subparagraph (D), by striking “If during” and inserting “Subject to section 1833(a)(1)(Y), if during”.

SEC. 3. REQUIRING CERTAIN MANUFACTURERS TO REPORT DRUG PRICING INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO DRUGS UNDER THE MEDICARE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1847A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-3a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting “or subsection (f)(2), as applicable” before the period at the end;

(B) in paragraph (3), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “or subsection (f)(2), as applicable,” before “determined by”; and

(C) in paragraph (6)(A), in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “or subsection (f)(2), as applicable,” before “determined by”; and

(2) in subsection (f)—

(A) by striking “For requirements” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For requirements”; and

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

“(2) MANUFACTURERS WITHOUT A REBATE AGREEMENT UNDER TITLE XIX.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—If the manufacturer of a drug or biological described in subparagraph (C), (E), or (G) of section 1842(o)(1) or in section 1881(b)(14)(B) that is payable under this part has not entered into and does not have in effect a rebate agreement described in subsection (b) of section 1927, for calendar quarters beginning with the second calendar quarter beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, such manufacturer shall report to the Secretary the information described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(iii) of such section 1927 with respect to such drug or biological in a time and manner specified by the Secretary. For purposes of applying this paragraph, a drug or biological described in the previous sentence includes items, services, supplies, and products that are payable under this part as a drug or biological.

“(B) AUDIT.—Information reported under subparagraph (A) is subject to audit by the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services.

“(C) VERIFICATION.—The Secretary may survey wholesalers and manufacturers that directly distribute drugs described in subparagraph (A), when necessary, to verify manufacturer prices and manufacturer’s average sales prices (including wholesale acquisition cost) if required to make payment reported under subparagraph (A). The Secretary may impose a civil monetary penalty in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 on a wholesaler, manufacturer, or direct seller, if the wholesaler, manufacturer, or direct seller of such a drug refuses a request for information about charges or prices by the Secretary in connection with a survey under

this subparagraph or knowingly provides false information. The provisions of section 1128A (other than subsections (a) (with respect to amounts of penalties or additional assessments) and (b)) shall apply to a civil money penalty under this subparagraph in the same manner as such provisions apply to a penalty or proceeding under section 1128A(a).

“(D) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, information disclosed by manufacturers or wholesalers under this paragraph (other than the wholesale acquisition cost for purposes of carrying out this section) is confidential and shall not be disclosed by the Secretary in a form which discloses the identity of a specific manufacturer or wholesaler or prices charged for drugs by such manufacturer or wholesaler, except—

“(i) as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this section (including the determination and implementation of the payment amount), or to carry out section 1847B;

“(ii) to permit the Comptroller General of the United States to review the information provided; and

“(iii) to permit the Director of the Congressional Budget Office to review the information provided.”.

(b) ENFORCEMENT.—Section 1847A of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-3a) is further amended—

(1) in subsection (d)(4)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “IN GENERAL” and inserting “MISREPRESENTATION”;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking “subparagraph (B)” and inserting “subparagraph (A), (B), or (C)”;

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (D); and

(D) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraphs:

“(B) FAILURE TO PROVIDE TIMELY INFORMATION.—If the Secretary determines that a manufacturer described in subsection (f)(2) has failed to report on information described in section 1927(b)(3)(A)(iii) with respect to a drug or biological in accordance with such subsection, the Secretary shall apply a civil money penalty in an amount of \$10,000 for each day the manufacturer has failed to report such information and such amount shall be paid to the Treasury.

“(C) FALSE INFORMATION.—Any manufacturer required to submit information under subsection (f)(2) that knowingly provides false information is subject to a civil money penalty in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for each item of false information. Such civil money penalties are in addition to other penalties as may be prescribed by law.”; and

(2) in subsection (c)(6)(A), by striking the period at the end and inserting “, except that, for purposes of subsection (f)(2), the Secretary may, if the Secretary determines appropriate, exclude repackagers of a drug or biological from such term.”.

(c) MANUFACTURERS WITH A REBATE AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1927(b)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r-8(b)(3)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “For purposes of applying clause (iii), a drug or biological described in the flush matter following such clause includes items, services, supplies, and products that are payable under this part as a drug or biological.”.

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 1927(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r-8(b)(3)(A)(iii)) is amended by striking “section 1881(b)(13)(A)(ii)” and inserting “section 1881(b)(14)(B)”.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than January 1, 2023, the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services shall assess and submit to Congress a report on the accuracy of average sales price information submitted by manufacturers under section 1847A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-3a). Such report shall include any recommendations on how to improve the accuracy of such information.

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1570.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1570, the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2020. This bill eliminates out-of-pocket costs for colorectal cancer screening tests under Medicare, even in situations when a polyp is detected and removed.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among men and women, combined, in the United States. The American Cancer Society predicts that more than 53,000 Americans will die from the disease this year. This is clearly a tragedy, especially because these deaths are so preventable.

Approximately 90 percent of all individuals diagnosed with colorectal cancer at an early stage are still alive 5 years later. But research shows that out-of-pocket costs discourage individuals from seeking out preventative screenings that could save their lives.

Under current law, Medicare waives coinsurance and deductibles for colonoscopies. However, when a polyp is discovered and removed during the procedure, it is then reclassified as therapeutic for Medicare billing purposes, and patients are required to pay the coinsurance.

This simply is not right. Patients should not be saddled with hundreds of dollars in medical bills that they justifiably thought would be covered by Medicare as part of a preventative service.

H.R. 1570 provides a commonsense fix to this oversight. The bill would ensure

that colonoscopies, whether they are diagnostic or therapeutic, are treated equally at the billing stage so all cost-sharing is waived under Medicare. By removing the financial burden associated with this procedure, Medicare beneficiaries may seek preventative care for colorectal cancer without the added deterrence of surprise bills.

In addition, H.R. 1570 incorporates a policy that requires all part B drug manufacturers to report average sales price data to the Medicare program and provides the Secretary with new authority to verify this data.

Under current law, only manufacturers with Medicare drug rebate agreements are required to report average sales price data, and in the absence of such data, the Medicare program ends up paying more. This legislation ensures that the government is paying the right price for part B drugs, saving taxpayers billions and allowing greater transparency around drug pricing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the bill's sponsors.

First of all, I want to thank Representative DONALD PAYNE from my State. He has been working on this bill for so many years, and, of course, it came out of the passing of his dad from colorectal cancer. I remember his dad so fondly.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank Representatives DAVIS, MCEACHIN, and MCKINLEY for their hard work on this important piece of legislation.

I want to thank Representative DOGETT for his work on the important drug pricing policy that is included today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1570, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2020.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PALLONE: In recognition of the desire to expedite consideration of H.R. 1570, Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2019, the Committee on Ways and Means agrees to waive formal consideration of the bill as to provisions that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the resolution or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letter on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 1570.

Sincerely,

RICHARD E. NEAL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2020.

Hon. RICHARD NEAL,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NEAL: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Energy and Commerce and agreeing to discharge H.R. 1570, the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2020, from further consideration, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will ensure our letters on H.R. 1570 are entered into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, Jr.
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1570, the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2020.

This is really important legislation, as you have heard, and it has received strong bipartisan support from literally hundreds of our colleagues, including myself. It was a key provision of a bill I actually introduced last year, H.R. 19, the Lower Costs, More Cures Act of 2019, which had a lot of bipartisan solutions to lower drug prices without hindering the development of new therapeutics or cures.

So I am happy to see the House take this action on this critical component of that other legislation.

This bill would address an oversight in Medicare that requires beneficiaries to cover the cost of an unexpected polyp removal when provided a free screening colonoscopy.

These surprise medical bills, as I would call them, create financial barriers for patient access to these life-saving screenings, which can save thousands of lives a year.

In the United States, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths, Mr. Speaker. Screenings are the most effective way to detect and treat this devastating disease early on, and efforts must be made to ensure individuals have access to these important services.

By removing these financial barriers for patients, this bill would enhance screening efforts and ultimately save lives. The bill is offset with another policy from H.R. 19 that would require pharmaceutical companies to report their average sales price, ASP.

Right now, certain companies are exploiting a little loophole in the current law where they are not reporting their

ASP and drawing down higher reimbursement rates from Medicare as a result. This creates an unfair advantage with competitors who are doing the right thing, as the statute intended, and reporting their data.

I am glad this package includes these two provisions of H.R. 19, further adding to the number of provisions from this bill that I hope are enacted into law during the remainder of this Congress.

While I urge support of this bill that would end surprise billing for this select group of Americans, I am disappointed Congress has yet to pass a bill that would end surprise billing for all Americans. Mr. PALLONE and I have worked closely on this legislation. We have a bipartisan bill. It is ready to go, and we could pass it into law before the end of the year and put an end to surprise billing for all Americans, not just those with an unexpected polyp removal.

I urge Congress to take further swift action to do what the American people want us to do. Let's end surprise billing once and for all for everyone.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the sponsor of this bill, who has worked so hard on it.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss my bill, the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act. It has been a long time coming.

I thank my friend and New Jersey colleague, Congressman FRANK PALLONE, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. As chairman of the House committee, his leadership was critical to getting my bill to the floor today.

I have been working on this bill since my arrival to the United States House of Representatives. Unfortunately, colorectal cancer is the reason that I am a member of this body.

In addition, I thank my coleads on the bill, as you heard earlier, Congressman RODNEY DAVIS and my colleague from Virginia, DONALD MCEACHIN, who has been instrumental in moving this bill forward. Congressman MCEACHIN has done an incredible amount of work to promote the bill and increase awareness of colorectal cancer. I also thank my other colead, Congressman DAVID MCKINLEY from West Virginia, for his efforts, as well.

These great representatives understand the importance of this bill to the health and security of millions of Americans and know that colorectal cancer is bipartisan in nature of its negative impact on people in this country.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in America. It only trails lung cancer, and it affects both men and women. It is the second leading cause of death in the United States in cancers.

Like many cancers, it is treatable and patients can recover if it is caught early enough. But that depends on whether Americans get screened. And one of the reasons that we are here today, my bill would seek to remove one of the barriers to screenings. It would allow Medicare to cover screenings and surgical procedures to remove cancerous polyps during the screenings.

Today, Medicare covers only screenings for eligible patients. If doctors find and remove a cancerous polyp during the screening, patients could wake up to a surprise bill that could cost thousands of dollars.

After my father succumbed to this dreadful disease, I had my first colonoscopy, and at that time they found 13 polyps. So can you imagine the bill that I could have potentially awoken to, tens of thousands of dollars in bills that I did not even know that I had?

Too many men refuse to get screened because of the fear of this surprise bill and a lot of the reason why men don't find this procedure very palatable. Then they wait to get screened until there is a problem, and potentially that is a decision that could be fatal.

I encourage my House colleagues to vote for this bill so we can save thousands of American lives annually.

It has been almost 9 years since I lost my father, Congressman Donald Payne, Sr., to colorectal cancer, and I do not want to see other families go through the same horror and pain.

I ask that we pass this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" and save the lives of the American people.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I served with the gentleman's father for 9 years, and I certainly understand the pain that was reflected in his voice in those remarks.

This is a commonsense bill. When a practitioner encounters a correctable lesion at the time of a screening colonoscopy, the curative procedure should be able to be undertaken without the worry of a patient waking up to an unintended charge.

The other thing that crosses my mind as we sit here now, hopefully, on the downside of the pandemic is how many people have not proceeded with the screening procedure because of concern about going to a facility during the time of the coronavirus. And it is incumbent upon us as policymakers to ensure that people do understand the importance of undertaking these screenings and removing any obstacles that would prevent someone from having a potentially lifesaving screening procedure done.

Further, Mr. Speaker, if I could, many people today have reflected on the time of service of Mr. WALDEN, who is retiring at the end of this Congress, and we will all miss him a great deal. As I have listened to several of the speakers give testimony to Mr. WALDEN's leadership on the committee, I am just reminded of so many times, both good times and rough times. We served together on the majority and the minority for a number of years on the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The country can look to things like the last 10-year reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program and thank Mr. WALDEN for the vision of getting that enacted. Certainly, the SUPPORT Act in the last Congress, starting with Member Day in the committee and culminating with the signing ceremony in the White House literally 12 months later.

These were some of the significant accomplishments of then-Chairman WALDEN, now Ranking Member WALDEN. He has left a rich legacy in this Congress, and we are all very much in his debt, and we will miss him terribly in the Congresses to come. I thank the gentleman for his indulgence.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask that we support this legislation and pass it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1570, the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act. I advanced this bipartisan bill through my Health Subcommittee and I'm proud to support it on the Floor today.

This legislation was introduced by Representatives PAYNE, DAVIS, MCEACHIN, and MCKINLEY to remove financial barriers to lifesaving colorectal cancer screenings and treatment for Medicare beneficiaries.

Currently, Medicare covers a colonoscopy without out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries, but if the colonoscopy results in a polyp removal, patients are stuck with an unexpected copayment. This small distinction could mean hundreds of dollars of out-of-pocket expenses for seniors on Medicare who are often living on a fixed income.

This bill would waive that cost-sharing and give millions of Medicare beneficiaries the peace of mind that they can receive the preventive care they need without being stuck with unexpected costs.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1570, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive co-insurance under Medicare for

colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening, and for other purposes.”.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HENRIETTA LACKS ENHANCING CANCER RESEARCH ACT OF 2019

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1966) to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to complete a study on barriers to participation in federally funded cancer clinical trials by populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in such trials, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1966

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 “Henrietta Lacks Enhancing Cancer Research Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Only a small percent of patients participate in cancer clinical trials, even though most express an interest in clinical research. There are several obstacles that restrict individuals from participating including lack of available local trials, restrictive eligibility criteria, transportation to trial sites, taking time off from work, and potentially increased medical and nonmedical costs. Ultimately, about 1 in 5 cancer clinical trials fail because of lack of patient enrollment.

(2) Groups that are generally underrepresented in clinical trials include racial and ethnic minorities and older, rural, and lower-income individuals.

(3) Henrietta Lacks, an African-American woman, was diagnosed with cervical cancer at the age of 31, and despite receiving painful radium treatments, passed away on October 4, 1951.

(4) Medical researchers took samples of Henrietta Lacks’ tumor during her treatment and the HeLa cell line from her tumor proved remarkably resilient.

(5) HeLa cells were the first immortal line of human cells. Henrietta Lacks’ cells were unique, growing by the millions, commercialized and distributed worldwide to researchers, resulting in advances in medicine.

(6) Henrietta Lacks’ prolific cells continue to grow and contribute to remarkable advances in medicine, including the development of the polio vaccine, as well as drugs for treating the effects of cancer, HIV/AIDS, hemophilia, leukemia, and Parkinson’s disease. These cells have been used in research that has contributed to our understanding of the effects of radiation and zero gravity on human cells. These immortal cells have informed research on chromosomal conditions, cancer, gene mapping, and precision medicine.

(7) Henrietta Lacks and her immortal cells have made a significant contribution to global health, scientific research, quality of life, and patient rights.

(8) For more than 20 years, the advances made possible by Henrietta Lacks’ cells were without her or her family’s consent, and the revenues they generated were not known to or shared with her family.

(9) Henrietta Lacks and her family’s experience is fundamental to modern and future

bioethics policies and informed consent laws that benefit patients nationwide by building patient trust; promoting ethical research that benefits all individuals, including traditionally underrepresented populations; and protecting research participants.

SEC. 3. GAO STUDY ON BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN FEDERALLY FUNDED CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS BY POPULATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN TRADITIONALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN SUCH TRIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) complete a study that—

(A) reviews what actions Federal agencies have taken to help to address barriers to participation in federally funded cancer clinical trials by populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in such trials, and identifies challenges, if any, in implementing such actions; and

(B) identifies additional actions that can be taken by Federal agencies to address barriers to participation in federally funded cancer clinical trials by populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in such trials; and

(2) submit a report to the Congress on the results of such study, including recommendations on potential changes in practices and policies to improve participation in such trials by such populations.

(b) INCLUSION OF CLINICAL TRIALS.—The study under subsection (a)(1) shall include review of cancer clinical trials that are largely funded by Federal agencies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1966.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. MFUME).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Maryland will control the balance of the time of the majority.

There was no objection.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. PALLONE of New Jersey. I appreciate his oversight of this bill and the way his committee has moved us to where we are today.

Mr. PALLONE and I go way back. When I left this body some time ago, I didn’t know I would come back and he would be chair of the committee, but I couldn’t think of a better person.

I also say to Mr. WALDEN, the ranking member from Oregon, that the body obviously will miss you. And as you heard on both sides of the aisle with the comments that have been made, people have respected your leadership and the leadership that you have

brought to that committee both as ranking member and as chair. By the way, let me tell you, there is life after Congress. I went out and found 24 years of it before coming back. So best of everything to you, sir.

Members of the body, if I might, let me just talk a bit about a distinguished, in my opinion, woman whose picture is here beside me. Her name was Henrietta Lacks. She was born 100 years ago in Roanoke, Virginia.

Mrs. Lacks and her husband and her family later moved to Baltimore County in 1941, seeking, as a lot of people did, what they thought were jobs that were available the further north you moved. They moved to an area near what was known as the old Bethlehem Steel Plant. Henrietta and her family lived not far from me and my family in a segregated Black enclave known as Turner Station.

Ironically, Mrs. Lacks got ill. In 1951, as a young mother, she went to the hospital complaining of vaginal bleeding. She went to Johns Hopkins at the time, which was one of the few hospitals that African Americans could go to and be treated.

Upon examination, gynecologists discovered a large, malignant tumor in her cervix. During her treatment there, two cell samples were taken from Mrs. Lacks and from her cervix without her permission and without her knowledge. One sample was healthy tissue, the other sample was cancerous tissue. And these samples were given to a physician and a cancer researcher at Hopkins to study.

What this researcher would soon discover was that Mrs. Lacks’ cells were unlike any others he had ever seen. Where other cells would die, Mrs. Lacks’ cells doubled every 20 to 24 hours.

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This continued after her death.

The cells from the cancerous sample became known eventually as the HeLa immortal cell line.

The HeLa immortal cell line is the oldest and the most commonly used human cell line in scientific research anywhere in the world. The cell line was found to be remarkably durable and prolific, which allows its use extensively in scientific study. This was the first human cell line to prove to be successful in in vitro studies, which was a scientific achievement with profound implications on the future and profound benefits to medical research.

HeLa cells can divide an unlimited number of times in a laboratory cell culture plate as long as fundamental cell survival conditions are met and sustained. There are, as we have come to know over time, many strains of HeLa cells as they continue to mutate in other cell cultures, but all HeLa cells are descended from the same tumor cells once removed from Mrs. Lacks. The total number of HeLa cells that have been propagated in cell culture far exceeds the number of cells that were in her body.

Today, these incredible cells are used to study the effects of toxins, drugs, hormones, and viruses on the growth of cancer cells without having to experiment on humans while that is being done. They have been used to test the effects of a number of different things: radiations, poisons, to study the human genome, and to learn more about how all viruses ultimately work, and they have played a crucial role in the development of the polio vaccine.

When Jonas Salk was so close to getting to what he thought was an effective vaccine, Dr. Salk tested the vaccine against the cells, and the cells directed him to make the vaccine even more potent.

The NIH analyzed and evaluated scientific literature over the course of time involving HeLa cells and found that over 110,000 publications cited the use of those cells from 1953 to 2018. So this analysis, I think, further highlights the persistent impact of HeLa cells in science and in medicine, proving that they have been a consistent and essential tool that has allowed researchers to expand their knowledge base in fields such as cancer biology, infectious disease, and many, many other areas.

There is so much to be said about Ms. Lacks, who died in that same Black, poor enclave many, many years ago, but to her credit and to the credit of all science, her living clearly was not in vain, and her death has proven something that nobody ever anticipated at the time: that there could even be such a cell that would continue to develop and mutate long beyond the donor's ability to live.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. MFUME) for bringing us this legislation and for his very kind comments about my service and the future that lies ahead of me, perhaps. I appreciate his leadership and his kind words.

I, too, rise today to speak on H.R. 1966, the Henrietta Lacks Enhancing Cancer Research Act of 2019, which was sponsored by the late, great Representative Elijah Cummings originally.

This bill is named after Henrietta Lacks, a woman of color who donated her cells, without her knowledge and consent, to Johns Hopkins in 1951, beginning what was the first human cell line able to reproduce indefinitely.

Her cells have been used in biomedical research around the world.

H.R. 1966 requires the Government Accountability Office, or the GAO, to study how Federal agencies have addressed barriers to participation in cancer clinical trials by individuals from underrepresented populations and to provide recommendations for addressing such barriers.

The intent of the bill is laudable, as racial and ethnic minorities are currently underrepresented in clinical trials.

I know that has been an issue even in the COVID trials. I have talked to the people who have developed these vaccines, and this is a real issue they face, trying to get the right mix to reflect the community and make sure that everyone who takes the various drugs and vaccines are represented in these trials.

It is a concern, because people of different ages, different races, different ethnicities, they simply may react differently to medical treatments. So we have to get this right.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friends from Maryland for bringing this legislation to the floor, and I, of course, pay homage to Representative Cummings for his initial leadership on this as well.

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

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RUPPERSBERGER) of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1966, and I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I proudly co-led this bill when it was first introduced by our late friend, Elijah Cummings, in honor of the extraordinary life and legacy of a Baltimore native, Henrietta Lacks.

Although Congressman Cummings has passed on and remains deeply missed, I am proud and grateful that Congressman MFUME has picked up the mantle on this important legislation.

Without her knowledge or permission, doctors used Henrietta Lacks' cells for medical research that eventually led to some of medicine's most critical breakthroughs, including development of the polio vaccine, along with treatments for cancer, HIV/AIDS, leukemia, and Parkinson's.

I can think of only a handful of Marylanders or even Americans who have contributed more to modern medicine than Henrietta Lacks. Her life-saving contributions will continue to advance cures for debilitating diseases for generations to come.

Yet more than 70 years after Henrietta Lacks' death, many communities still face glaring health disparities. For example, while cancer incidence rates are highest among non-Hispanic White females, non-Hispanic Black females have the highest rate of death.

Clinical trials are a key component to advancing cancer research and treatment, but 20 percent of cancer clinical trials fail because of a lack of patient enrollment, with racial and ethnic minorities and older, rural, and lower-income Americans generally underrepresented in such trials.

This bill examines access to government-funded cancer clinical trials for traditionally underrepresented groups, but it is also about much more.

It is about giving credit where credit has been long overdue, it is about ensuring all Americans get the medical treatments they deserve, and it is

about ensuring clinical trials succeed because they are inclusive.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. KEVIN HERN).

Mr. KEVIN HERN of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) for yielding.

I rise in support of H.R. 1966.

This legislation was first brought to my attention by my constituent, Carla Prothro, who is fighting cancer. We talked about the way clinical trials impact the treatments available for cancer patients. The trials very rarely reflect the population of cancer patients.

When women and minorities are underrepresented in clinical trials, it negatively impacts the results. About one in five cancer trials fail because of a lack of participation.

This bill addresses that by studying the barriers to participation for underrepresented groups. We need to find ways to reduce those barriers and enroll more patients from diverse backgrounds.

My niece, Juniper, is 3 years old and fighting stage 4 neuroblastoma. She is just a little kid, but her short life has already had so much pain. She has spent a third of her life in the hospital.

Juniper is a fighter, though, and she has so many people who love her and are praying for her.

Bills like this help Juniper and Carla and millions of cancer patients around the world. Every step forward in cancer research is important. Every bit of progress gets us closer to a better world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 1966 today.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any other speakers on my side. I encourage Members to support this really important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire how much time remains on my side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. MFUME) has 10½ minutes.

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

My thanks, again, to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the others who have spoken on behalf of this, including Congressman RUPPERSBERGER, who has been, as he indicated, a part of this effort for a while.

And that while goes all the way back to the other reason that I am here today, and that is my friend of 42 years and a Member of this body for 23 years, the late Elijah Cummings, who originally introduced this bill before his death, and a commitment that I made to he and to others long ago that, working outside of the Congress, I would be supportive of him.

But now that I am inside, I wanted to make sure that I got unanimous consent from this body, as I did a month

or so back, to be able to assume the leadership of this bill, its sponsorship, and to move it forward, and we have been doing all that we could to get to this point.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not thank Mr. PALLONE and Mr. WALDEN for their efforts.

Let me, if I might, just say a couple of things, Mr. Speaker. It has been long recognized that the burden of cancer is not equal and not equivalent among different racial and ethnic groups in our society. In fact, there is a fourfold increase, or disparity, in the number of Black people diagnosed with cancer in this country as compared with the proportion of Black people participating in clinical trials.

The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) mentioned how sensitive this is right now as we are trying to work with drug companies to come up with a number of vaccines. And whether it was the Pfizer trial or the Moderna trial, one thing is clear: there has never seemed to be enough persons of ethnic backgrounds, particularly African Americans and Latinos, who are participating in these trials.

To underscore this more, let me remind you that 20 percent of Alzheimer's patients in this country are African American, but only 3 to 10 percent are the trial participants in clinical trials.

As I said, COVID is a disease with a roughly twofold higher rate of diagnosis and mortality between African Americans and other populations.

So all of that, in the aggregate, really stresses the need for a more diverse research participatory effort in order to fully understand, comprehensively deal with, and cure these diseases.

Clinical trials are an essential step in advancing potential new cancer treatments. We know that. Patient participation in those trials is absolutely crucial to their success.

Now, many patients will express a willingness to participate in clinical research, yet only a small fraction of those persons do actually do that.

In terms of the larger African-American community, some of the barriers that have existed continue to exist. People can't take time off from their job to participate and be studied in a clinical trial, or, more importantly, there is this level of distrust.

The distrust, particularly among African Americans, goes back to 1932, when our government, through the United States Public Health Service, oversaw and gave authorization for what was to become known as the infamous Tuskegee Study, where 600 Black men, without their knowledge, without their approval or consent, were injected with syphilis and told that they were being treated for something altogether different.

Those 600 men lived and watched their bodies change. Many of them may have had reinfectious others. They suffered a great deal of pain. And nowhere during that time did the government step in and say, "Stop it."

□ 1515

That Tuskegee study, which many of us grew up hearing about, is something that lurks in the minds of a lot of African Americans about why you can't trust the government on research when it comes to your body. The shame that went with that ought to be a collective shame that all of us in this country feel.

We are beyond 1932. People are still getting ill. There are all sorts of infectious diseases. We need vaccines, and we have to find a way now to participate in that process and to find a way to get beyond the things that hold us back.

But in this instance, I just thought it was important to mention why that reluctance tends to exist.

Racial and ethnic groups, and older Americans, rural Americans, and poor Americans, are all the groups that still remain underrepresented in cancer clinical trials. Without action, these groups will continue to face barriers in terms of enrollment in cancer and other clinical trials, which then deprive many Americans from access to effective treatments and effective interventions.

Mr. Speaker, I close by reminding us how we began, and that is with the story, the life, and the lesson of Henrietta Lacks, who died at an early age, a mother of five who came north seeking employment, who developed an illness, who got treated, and who, without her knowledge or consent, had cells taken out of her body that were not cancerous—in addition to the cancerous cells—only to miraculously find that there was something very, very special about Ms. Lacks and her biological makeup: a cell that continued to mutate and to mutate and to double long after it was taken from her body, long after her death, and even now has created 110,000 studies about this miraculous cell, which we call HeLa, that has been the basis of research, Nobel award-winning research, in the years that followed.

My thanks to all of you for participating and for understanding the passion that drove Elijah on this, that drives me on this.

I want to thank the Lacks family, the Henrietta Lacks Foundation.

I want to thank the American Cancer Society, the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, Research America, and all the other organizations that continue to fight to bring about some sort of balance and equity in the whole issue of research and clinical trials.

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

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1966, the Henrietta Lacks Enhancing Cancer Research Act. I urge my colleagues to support this bill in honor of two Baltimoreans who changed the world—Henrietta Lacks and Representative Elijah Cummings.

Representative Cummings introduced this legislation to help address the barriers facing minority, low-income, and underrepresented

groups when it comes to enrolling in federally-funded clinical cancer trials. He named it after Henrietta Lacks to honor the role she and her tumor samples played in breakthroughs for cancer, HIV/AIDS, leukemia, polio, and Parkinson's disease. Henrietta Lacks' tumor samples were used without her or her family's knowledge or consent and her contribution has been overlooked for decades. This legislation will begin to correct that wrong, while also improving access to medical research for African Americans and other underrepresented groups.

Representative Cummings dedicated his Congressional career to ensuring underrepresented groups had access to health care. He championed policies to improve health equity by lowering drug prices and improving maternal care for African American women. I'm pleased that this bill will be added to his legacy and I thank Representative MFUME for ensuring the advancement of this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1966, 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.

REQUIRING SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO CONSIDER CERTAIN RECOGNIZED SECURITY PRACTICES

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7898) to amend title XXX of the Public Health Services Act to provide for a technical correction to provide the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Service certain authorities with respect to investigations of information blocking, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7898

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

SECTION 1. RECOGNITION OF SECURITY PRACTICES.

Part 1 of subtitle D of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (42 U.S.C. 17931 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 13412. RECOGNITION OF SECURITY PRACTICES.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with the authority of the Secretary under sections 1176 and 1177 of the Social Security Act, when making determinations relating to fines under such section 1176 (as amended by section 13410) or such section 1177, decreasing the length and extent of an audit under section 13411, or remedies otherwise agreed to by the Secretary, the Secretary shall consider whether the covered entity or business associate has adequately demonstrated that it had, for not less than the previous 12 months, recognized security practices in place that may—

“(1) mitigate fines under section 1176 of the Social Security Act (as amended by section 13410);

“(2) result in the early, favorable termination of an audit under section 13411; and

“(3) mitigate the remedies that would otherwise be agreed to in any agreement with respect to resolving potential violations of the HIPAA Security rule (part 160 of title 45 Code of Federal Regulations and subparts A and C of part 164 of such title) between the covered entity or business associate and the Department of Health and Human Services.

“(b) DEFINITION AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.—

“(1) RECOGNIZED SECURITY PRACTICES.—The term ‘recognized security practices’ means the standards, guidelines, best practices, methodologies, procedures, and processes developed under section 2(c)(15) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act, the approaches promulgated under section 405(d) of the Cybersecurity Act of 2015, and other programs and processes that address cybersecurity and that are developed, recognized, or promulgated through regulations under other statutory authorities. Such practices shall be determined by the covered entity or business associate, consistent with the HIPAA Security rule (part 160 of title 45 Code of Federal Regulations and subparts A and C of part 164 of such title).

“(2) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as providing the Secretary authority to increase fines under section 1176 of the Social Security Act (as amended by section 13410), or the length, extent or quantity of audits under section 13411, due to a lack of compliance with the recognized security practices.

“(3) NO LIABILITY FOR NONPARTICIPATION.—Subject to paragraph (4), nothing in this section shall be construed to subject a covered entity or business associate to liability for electing not to engage in the recognized security practices defined by this section.

“(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Secretary’s authority to enforce the HIPAA Security rule (part 160 of title 45 Code of Federal Regulations and subparts A and C of part 164 of such title), or to supersede or conflict with an entity or business associate’s obligations under the HIPAA Security rule.”.

SEC. 2. TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3022(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300jj-52(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) APPLICATION OF AUTHORITIES UNDER INSPECTOR GENERAL ACT OF 1978.—In carrying out this subsection, the Inspector General shall have the same authorities as provided under section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.)”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-255).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 7898.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Energy and Commerce Committee led the charge in passing the 21st Century Cures Act.

In addition to investing billions in cutting-edge research and opioid abuse prevention and treatment, the Cures Act also included several provisions related to improving the interoperability of health information technology. Specifically, the act defined the practice of information blocking. It also provided the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General, or OIG, with the authority to investigate and levy penalties on entities found to be engaging in information blocking.

Examples of information blocking could include a developer placing unnecessary restrictions on authorized exchanges of information. Another example would be when a developer implements their electronic health record, EHR, technology in such a non-standard way that it becomes incredibly difficult to exchange a patient’s health information with a system not owned by that developer.

Practices like these simply stand in the way of patients accessing their own data and carrying their data with them as they move between plans and providers.

I am pleased that the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, ONC, and the OIG have worked since the passage of the Cures Act to implement these important policies.

The bill before us today, H.R. 7898, provides for a technical correction to the Cures Act to ensure that the OIG has the authority they fully need to enforce the information blocking prohibitions.

H.R. 7898 also includes another health IT-related policy that was part of a bipartisan, bicameral health agreement released by the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions last December.

This policy incentivizes healthcare entities to adopt strong cybersecurity practices by encouraging the Secretary of HHS to consider entities’ adoption of recognized cybersecurity practices when conducting audits or administering HIPAA fines.

Cyberattacks are increasingly a major concern for healthcare providers. It is important that we acknowledge those providers that are acting in good faith and doing everything in their power to safeguard patient data.

This provision encourages providers to follow widely recognized best practices in the field with the goal of helping all providers be better prepared for potential cybersecurity attacks.

These both are commonsense policies, and I urge my colleagues to join

me in supporting them. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7898, a technical corrections bill introduced by Dr. BURGESS.

The 21st Century Cures Act had a major provision, led by Dr. BURGESS, regarding information blocking. This is a process where a healthcare provider or an electronic healthcare record vendor will not move a patient’s data between care settings or erects significant technological or financial barriers to do so.

The 21st Century Cures Act was significant in that it banned the practice of information blocking, which is a key patient protection and an effort to transform our healthcare delivery system. Patient access and control over personal health information should be at the center of our efforts in securing high-quality and patient-driven care.

The Energy and Commerce Committee delivered this win for patients, and today, we need to make a minor but very important technical correction to ensure our policy is enforced.

H.R. 7898 would clarify the authority of the Department of Health and Human Services inspector general regarding information blocking, to make crystal clear that the IG has the authority to enforce this ban, to go after bad actors, and to protect patient access to personal health data.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), the author of this provision and our ranking member, the top member on the Republican side, on the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7898, once again, to clarify the enforcement and investigative authorities of the inspector general at the Department of Health and Human Services with respect to health record information blocking.

In 2016, as has been stated, Congress passed the bipartisan 21st Century Cures Act with the goal of closing the gap between innovation and our Nation’s regulatory process. Throughout the drafting of Cures, I made it a priority to address important health information technology issues, including interoperability and the prevention of information blocking.

I am a physician, but I am also a patient, and I am acutely aware of the frustrations surrounding the difficulty of a patient accessing their medical records. Patients should control their own medical data. Yet, if a patient and their doctor have difficulty in accessing electronic health records, the patient’s care may suffer.

In the Cures bill, Congress provided the tools necessary for doctors and patients to better coordinate their care through the sharing of patient data.

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology promulgated a rule that outlines what is permissible. This rule,

which was finalized this past May, aims to allow patients to seamlessly access their electronic health information.

This bill, H.R. 7898, is needed in order to ensure that there is a smooth and effective implementation and to allow for the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services to enforce this rule.

In the context of this coronavirus pandemic, I think we have all seen the importance of allowing the efficient flow of a patient's medical records so that patients and their doctors can have informed conversations about their care plans.

Also of importance is ensuring patient privacy and ensuring that it is protected and that information is secure. H.R. 7898 builds on the sections of the 21st Century Cures Act and encourages healthcare entities to adopt strong cybersecurity practices, which are essential in protecting patient data from bad actors.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 1 minute.

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

Finally, I would like to point to the bipartisan, bicameral support of H.R. 7898, which was included in title V of the Lower Health Care Costs package in the Senate. We have both Chambers and both parties coming to an agreement, and that is a positive sign. It certainly indicates the importance of this legislation.

It is for these reasons that I encourage Members to vote in favor of H.R. 7898. Again, I thank the ranking member for his years of friendship and service to the committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was hoping I wasn't going to have to make this statement about GREG WALDEN retiring because I really didn't want him to retire. I guess I kept hoping that he wouldn't or that he would still be here in some fashion—and he will be in some fashion.

But I wanted to thank him for 20 years of extraordinary service on the Energy and Commerce Committee, in particular. And I want to particularly thank him for his leadership and friendship over the last 4 years as he served as the top Republican on the committee.

During those first 2 years, he chaired the committee, and then over the last 2 years, he served as the ranking member. Our committee, as he knows and I think a lot of people know, has a long and proud tradition of bipartisanship, and GREG has really been a great partner, particularly over the last year as we faced the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19.

We have worked very closely over the last 11 months on all the legislation that was signed into law to respond to

the pandemic. Among those laws was the CARES Act, which provided essential assistance to the American people, healthcare workers, hospitals, small businesses, and State and local government. We have taken some significant steps, but the work continues as we hope to complete another COVID-19 relief package in the coming days before we adjourn.

Prior to the pandemic this year, we were able to come together over the last 4 years, thanks to GREG's leadership, to pass a lot of other substantial bills that actually became law.

We passed comprehensive legislation to address the opioid epidemic by expanding treatment to people fighting opioid use disorder and supporting those affected by the opioid crisis.

We reauthorized the Safe Drinking Water Act for the first time in 20 years.

We eliminated annoying robocalls—I don't know, "eliminating" may not be accurate, but we eliminated a lot of them.

We passed the RAY BAUM'S Act, named after the late Republican staff director of the committee and GREG's longtime friend, which reauthorized the Federal Communications Commission for the first time in 28 years.

I know the law is very important to GREG, not only because it was named after Ray but also because of GREG's longtime love for broadcasting.

Of course, not everything is bipartisan. He will probably never forget his initiation as chairman. His first full committee markup—as was already mentioned by other colleagues—was the longest markup in the Energy and Commerce Committee's history, 27 hours as we debated the Republican Affordable Care Act repeal bill. That was really baptism by fire.

At the end of the day, I am going to remember GREG most for the commitment he made day in and day out to help everyday Americans. It is really special.

A lot of people have a bad opinion of Congress. They think that we come here for self-aggrandizement because somehow we want to get a better job after we leave—not that there is one—or that we are trying to help our families or trying to help special interests. The one thing I will say about GREG is that none of that is true.

□ 1530

One thing I will say about GREG is that none of that is true. He has a strong dose of humility, and humility is something that I would say oftentimes is lacking, not just in Congress, but in general. Sometimes I wonder if people even value it as something that they cherish. But certainly GREG does. He is not only humble, he really cares about everyone, and he is not just out for himself.

I also want to thank his wife, Mylene, for sharing him with us for all these years. We are going to miss GREG, and we will miss Mylene also.

GREG, I wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavors. I have

been hearing different rumors from other Members. EARL actually told me about some trip you took in the mountains in Oregon.

Everybody is sort of secret about these different things that he is doing, but I suspect that they are going to be endeavors that he loves and that, when I hear about them, will be fantastic.

I just feel bad about even making this speech about his leaving, but that is the way it is, and I am going to miss him.

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

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

To my friends in this assembly, thank you for your friendship.

To the chairman of the committee, we have developed a wonderful relationship. Sometimes your staff and our staff spar, but we are a family, and families do disagree from time to time. But generally speaking, we are headed in the same direction, and that direction is making America a better place for everyone and solving problems. So I am very thankful for your very generous and kind comments, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I will say it has been a real delight and joy to work with the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. I would have to admit it was a more delight and joy to work with the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee when I was chairman, but that is the way of the world, and that is democracy. We switched roles and handed off the gavel in peace, and we began to approach issues from a different angle but with the same mission.

Mr. Speaker, as 2020 comes to a thankful close—I think we are all ready to get it behind us—so does my 22 years of public service in this incredible crucible of democracy, the United States House of Representatives.

I want to start by thanking my wife of 38 years, and our son, who is 30, Mylene and Anthony. They have always supported me during my three decades of State and Federal service, all the campaigns, all the meetings, and all the times away. I know my colleagues will understand this when I say I will never fully understand all that they sacrificed so that I could fulfill my duty in office, but I do know it was a lot.

I also want to thank my terrific staff over the years, and especially those who helped me build and lead such successful organizations, including my two personal office chiefs of staff of over 22 years, Brian MacDonald and Lorissa Bounds, terrific leaders both; my executive directors at the NRCC when I ran the Republican campaign organization, Liesl Hickey and Rob Simms; and my staff directors at the Energy and Commerce Committee.

You have heard of the late great Ray Baum, my colleague dating clear back to the late eighties in the Oregon Legislature and then all the way through

just a couple years ago when he passed away of cancer. Mike Bloomquist and Ryan Long also did such terrific work heading up the best committee in Congress.

I want to thank the professional staff, many of whom have been on the floor today, my personal staff in Oregon and Washington, D.C. We rely so much on these very smart and talented people, and the country is well-served by their work.

I want to thank the thousands of volunteers and supporters of my campaigns over the years. We did it together, and I would like to believe we did it for the right reasons: to leave our State and to leave our country better places than we found them.

I also want to thank some important mentors in my life.

Of course, I would have to start with my parents, who grew up with nothing during the Great Depression. They taught me the importance of giving back to the community, of working hard, and of always being honest and seldom being judgmental.

I want to thank those along the way who gave me some interesting career opportunities.

My freshman year in college was spent at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I want to thank the folks at KTVF and the old KFRB Mighty Ninety in Fairbanks who put a 17-year-old kid in charge of producing and directing the 11 o'clock TV news. I had never been in a TV studio before, and suddenly, as a freshman in college, I was working every night doing that.

To Roger Martin, Vic Atiyeh, Gary Wilhelms, and Denny Smith, I learned so much from working for each of you.

To former Oregon Speaker Larry Campbell, time and again you showed Oregon how principled leadership produces good results. So it was great sport serving alongside you in the Oregon House.

Of course, I want to thank the church, school, and scout leaders who influenced my life in such a positive way. I would give a shout-out to the late Earl Fowler. He was my high school vice principal and student body officer adviser whose counsel, when I was student body president at Hood River Valley High School, was as valuable then as it is now.

I remember one of the things he told us as student leaders was: "When there is a leadership vacuum, fill it." He expected us to step up, to lead, and to take on challenges.

I am indeed thankful for the opportunity the people of Oregon have given me to represent them in the United States House of Representatives. It is a responsibility I have always taken seriously as I faithfully tried to do my best to represent them. After all, this is their office, not mine. I was simply entrusted to use the powers bestowed upon it for their benefit, something I never forgot. It is part of why I have returned home nearly every weekend and will soon—whenever we wrap up business here—complete my 644th round trip back home.

My team and I put special emphasis on taking care of the men and women who wear or have worn our Nation's uniform and defended America's freedom:

We helped thousands of Oregon veterans and families receive the benefits they earned and deserved.

We worked to strengthen the mission at Kingsley Air Field and open veterans clinics throughout the community and the district.

We helped save the veterans facility in White City.

America is blessed to have those brave men and women who risk their lives so that we can enjoy ours in peace. America owes them a debt we can never fully repay.

Having grown up on a cherry orchard outside of The Dalles, Oregon, I always had great admiration for those who farm and ranch and feed us. I worked hard to protect their way of life, defending farmers and ranchers from bad policy proposals. I stood up for their water rights. I protected their land and ranching way of life.

I am especially proud of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act and the collaborative approach that it envisioned.

Moreover, I supported ag research and water conservation efforts throughout the district. And while we made much progress on both fronts, my one regret is that we could never find the key to unlocking a durable and fair solution to the water crisis in the Klamath Basin that could also pass in the Congress.

We did make progress to improve forest management, even though I am disappointed Congress has dragged its feet in enacting much-needed reforms to make our Federal forests healthier and more resilient to climate change.

It was 17 years ago last week that President Bush signed the Healthy Forest Restoration Act into law. Hopefully, in the next Congress, you all will heed the guidance of our Yale forestry graduate and colleague, BRUCE WESTERMAN, to modernize how we manage this great American resource before the rest of it goes up in smoke.

Having spent 6 years as chair of the Telecommunications Subcommittee, I am really proud of the bipartisan work we did together to open up spectrum for advanced communications; enact FirstNet, our first responders' new interoperable broadband network; and to expand access to high-speed internet, although much work still remains to fully connect all Americans to high-speed broadband.

With the RAY BAUM'S Act, we even reauthorized and modernized the FCC, and, as you heard, that hadn't been done in a couple of decades.

When I had the great privilege and honor to chair the Energy and Commerce Committee, we took on the deadly epidemic of drug overdose and combined more than 60 bipartisan pieces of legislation into the SUPPORT Act, which, while focused on the opioid

crisis, actually was much bigger than that and provided support for our communities to help all with addiction.

We modernized our mental health laws, stepped up medical research, and fully funded the Children's Health Insurance Program for a decade—something that had never been done before.

We modernized the FDA and its approval processes for medicines and medical devices, and thank goodness we did. Some of these changes have already proven their value during this pandemic.

I am proud to have done my part to help enact Medicare part D, which finally brought more affordable medicines to America's seniors. While we need to update this law, it is a fact that Medicare part D has been a godsend to seniors who no longer have to board buses to foreign countries to get lifesaving medicines.

We also unleashed a cleaner energy revolution in America that created thousands of new jobs and reduces America's carbon emissions, too. Energy innovation holds the opportunity for a strong economy and a healthier environment.

Mr. Speaker, as you can tell, I am pretty passionate about good public policy, and I have really enjoyed this opportunity in serving with all of you. I think we can use our resources we have among ourselves in Congress to get good things done for the American people.

It wasn't easy to decide to voluntarily leave this wonderful institution, but I had long ago decided I didn't want to get voted out—and I don't think that was going to happen—or carried out. I was confident I would win reelection, and my health is good, so I leave on my own terms, feeling good about that which I have helped improve in the lives of those who entrusted me election after election.

I leave feeling positive about the ability to get good policy done right here in the U.S. House of Representatives. In fact, we just worked through a slate of bipartisan bills again today.

I will miss this process, and I will miss you, my colleagues. Always remember how important the work you do here is and how much the fate of the American way of life rests in your hands every time you put that voting card in one of these machines.

I am a big fan of Theodore Roosevelt. His writings have also had an impact on my life. Just as my high school adviser encouraged us to fill leadership vacuums, so did Roosevelt laud those who climbed into the arena. So I close with President Roosevelt's words:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to

do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

God bless you, my colleagues, family, and friends, and may God bless the United States of America.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for passage of the bill, and I also yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7898, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to amend the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to consider certain recognized security practices of covered entities and business associates when making certain determinations, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 9, 2020.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 9, 2020, at 11:54 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to Relative to the death of the Honorable Paul Spyros Sarbanes, former United States Senator for the State of Maryland S. Res. 797.

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 51.

That the Senate agrees to House amendment to the bill S. 1869.

That the Senate passed S. 3325.

That the Senate passed S. 3729.

That the Senate passed S. 4138.

That the Senate passed S. 4460.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 5663.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON,
Clerk.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPRO- PRIATIONS ACT, 2021, AND OTHER EXTENSIONS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8900) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2021, 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 gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DeLAURO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 343, nays 67, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 240]

YEAS—343

Adams	Davis (CA)	Horsford
Aguilar	Davis, Danny K.	Houlahan
Allred	Davis, Rodney	Hoyer
Amodei	Dean	Hudson
Armstrong	DeFazio	Huffman
Axne	DeGette	Huizenga
Bacon	DeLauro	Hurd (TX)
Baird	DelBene	Jackson Lee
Balderson	Delgado	Jacobs
Barr	Demings	Jayapal
Barragán	DeSaulnier	Jeffries
Bass	Deutch	Johnson (GA)
Beatty	Diaz-Balart	Johnson (LA)
Bera	Dingell	Johnson (SD)
Bergman	Doggett	Johnson (TX)
Beyer	Doyle, Michael	Joyce (OH)
Bilirakis	F.	Joyce (PA)
Bishop (GA)	Emmer	Kaptur
Blumenauer	Engel	Katko
Blunt Rochester	Escobar	Keating
Bonamici	Eshoo	Kelly (IL)
Bost	Españillat	Kelly (PA)
Boyle, Brendan	Estes	Kennedy
F.	Evans	Khanna
Brady	Ferguson	Kildee
Brindisi	Finkenauer	Kilmer
Brooks (IN)	Fitzpatrick	Kim
Brown (MD)	Fleischmann	Kind
Brownley (CA)	Fletcher	King (NY)
Buchanan	Flores	Kinzing
Bucshon	Fortenberry	Kirkpatrick
Burgess	Foster	Krishnamoorthi
Bustos	Fox (NC)	Kuster (NH)
Butterfield	Frankel	Kustoff (TN)
Carbajal	Fudge	LaHood
Cárdenas	Gabbard	LaMalfa
Carson (IN)	Gallego	Lamb
Carter (GA)	Garamendi	Langevin
Cartwright	García (CA)	Larsen (WA)
Case	García (IL)	Larson (CT)
Casten (IL)	García (TX)	Latta
Castor (FL)	Golden	Lawrence
Castro (TX)	Gomez	Lawson (FL)
Chabot	Gonzalez (OH)	Lee (CA)
Chu, Judy	Gonzalez (TX)	Lee (NV)
Ciulline	Gottheimer	Lesko
Cisneros	Granger	Levin (CA)
Clark (MA)	Graves (MO)	Levin (MI)
Clarke (NY)	Green, Al (TX)	Lieu, Ted
Clay	Griffith	Lipinski
Cleaver	Grijalva	Loeb
Clyburn	Grothman	Lofgren
Cohen	Guest	Lowenthal
Cole	Guthrie	Lowey
Comer	Haaland	Luetkemeyer
Connolly	Hagedorn	Luján
Cooper	Hall	Luria
Correa	Harder (CA)	Lynch
Costa	Harris	Malinowski
Courtney	Hartzler	Maloney.
Cox (CA)	Hastings	Carolyn B.
Craig	Hayes	Maloney, Sean
Crawford	Heck	Matsui
Crenshaw	Herrera Beutler	McAdams
Crist	Higgins (NY)	McBath
Crow	Hill (AR)	McCarthy
Cuellar	Himes	McCaul
Cunningham	Holding	McCollum
Curtis	Horn, Kendra S.	McEachin
Davids (KS)		McGovern

McHenry	Riggleman	Stewart
McKinley	Roby	Stivers
McNerney	Rodgers (WA)	Suozi
Meeks	Roe, David P.	Swalwell (CA)
Meng	Rogers (AL)	Takano
Meuser	Rogers (KY)	Thompson (CA)
Mfume	Rose (NY)	Thompson (MS)
Miller	Rouda	Thompson (PA)
Moolenaar	Rouzer	Thornberry
Moore	Roybal-Allard	Tiffany
Morelle	Ruiz	Tipton
Moulton	Ruppersberger	Titus
Mucarsel-Powell	Rush	Tlaib
Murphy (FL)	Rutherford	Tonko
Nadler	Ryan	Torres (CA)
Napolitano	Sánchez	Torres Small
Neal	Sarbanes	(NM)
Neguse	Scalise	Trahan
Newhouse	Scanlon	Trone
Norcross	Schakowsky	Turner
Nunes	Schiff	Underwood
O'Halleran	Schneider	Upton
Ocasio-Cortez	Schrader	Van Drew
Olson	Schrier	Vargas
Omar	Scott (VA)	Veasey
Palazzo	Scott, David	Vela
Pallone	Serrano	Velázquez
Panetta	Sewell (AL)	Visclosky
Pappas	Shalala	Wagner
Pascarella	Sherman	Walberg
Payne	Sherrill	Walden
Pence	Shimkus	Walorski
Perlmutter	Simpson	Wasserman
Peters	Sires	Schultz
Peterson	Slotkin	Waters
Phillips	Smith (NE)	Watkins
Pingree	Smith (NJ)	Watson Coleman
Pocan	Smith (WA)	Welch
Porter	Smucker	Wexton
Pressley	Soto	Wild
Price (NC)	Spanberger	Wilson (FL)
Quigley	Speier	Womack
Raskin	Stanton	Woodall
Reed	Stefanik	Yarmuth
Rice (NY)	Stell	Young
Richmond	Stevens	Zeldin

NAYS—67

Allen	Gooden	Posey
Amash	Gosar	Rice (SC)
Arrington	Green (TN)	Rooney (FL)
Babin	Hern, Kevin	Rose, John W.
Banks	Hice (GA)	Roy
Biggs	Higgins (LA)	Schweikert
Brooks (AL)	Hollingsworth	Smith (MO)
Buck	Jordan	Spano
Budd	Keller	Staub
Burchett	Kelly (MS)	Taylor
Byrne	King (IA)	Timmons
Cheney	Lamborn	Walker
Cline	Long	Waltz
Cloud	Marshall	Weber (TX)
Conaway	Massie	Webster (FL)
Davidson (OH)	Mast	Wenstrup
DesJarlais	McClintock	Westerman
Duncan	Mooney (WV)	Williams
Fulcher	Mullin	Wilson (SC)
Gaetz	Murphy (NC)	Wittman
Gallagher	Norman	Yoho
Gibbs	Palmer	
Gohmert	Perry	

NOT VOTING—19

Abraham	Dunn	Reschenthaler
Aderholt	Graves (LA)	Scott, Austin
Bishop (NC)	Johnson (OH)	Sensenbrenner
Bishop (UT)	Loudermilk	Steube
Calvert	Lucas	Wright
Carter (TX)	Marchant	
Collins (GA)	Mitchell	

□ 1641

Messrs. MARSHALL, WALZ, CLINE of Virginia, and SMITH of Missouri changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

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.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE
RESOLUTION 965, 116TH CONGRESS

Barragán (Beyer)	Kind (Beyer)	Porter (Wexton)
Bera (Aguilar)	Kirkpatrick	Price (NC)
Bonomici (Clark)	(Stanton)	(Butterfield)
(MA))	Kuster (NH)	Richmond
Boyle, Brendan	(Clark (MA))	(Butterfield)
F. (Jeffries)	Lamb (Crow)	Rooney (FL)
Brownley (CA)	Lawson (FL)	(Beyer)
(Clark (MA))	(Demings)	Rouda (Aguilar)
Cárdenas	Lieu, Ted (Beyer)	Roybal-Allard
(Cisneros)	Lofgren (Jeffries)	(Garcia (TX))
Cohen (Beyer)	Lowenthal	Ruiz (Dingell)
Costa (Cooper)	(Beyer)	Rush
Cunningham	Lowe (Tonko)	(Underwood)
(Murphy (FL))	McEachin	Schneider
Dean (Scanlon)	(Wexton)	(Casten (IL))
DeSaulnier	Meng (Clark	Schrier
(Matsui)	(MA))	(DelBene)
Deutch (Rice	Moore (Beyer)	Serrano
(NY))	Mucarsel-Powell	(Jeffries)
Doggett (Raskin)	(Wasserman	Titus (Connolly)
Frankel (Clark	Schultz)	Tlaib (Dingell)
(MA))	Nadler (Jeffries)	Trahan
Garamendi	Napolitano	(McGovern)
(Sherman)	(Correa)	Vargas (Correa)
Grijalva (Garcia	Pascrell	Velázquez
(IL))	(Pallone)	(Clarke (NY))
Hastings	Payne	Watson Coleman
(Wasserman	(Wasserman	(Pallone)
Schultz)	Schultz)	Welch
Jayapal (Raskin)	Peters (Kildee)	(McGovern)
Johnson (TX)	Peterson (Craig)	Pingree
(Jeffries)	Pingree	(Cicilline)
Kim (Davids	(Cicilline)	Wilson (FL)
(KS))	Pocan (Raskin)	(Hayes)

Dean	Kelly (PA)	Porter	Watson Coleman	Wild	Woodall
DeFazio	Kennedy	Posey	Weber (TX)	Williams	Yarmuth
DeGette	Khanna	Pressley	Welch	Wilson (FL)	Yoho
DeLauro	Kildee	Price (NC)	Wenstrup	Wilson (SC)	Young
DeBene	Kilmer	Quigley	Westerman	Wittman	Zeldin
Delgado	Kim	Raskin	Wexton	Womack	
Demings	Kind	Reed			
DeSaulnier	King (IA)	Rice (NY)			
DesJarlais	King (NY)	Rice (SC)	Marshall		
Deutch	Kinzing	Richmond	Webster (FL)		
Diaz-Balart	Kirkpatrick	Riggleman			
Dingell	Krishnamoorthi	Roby			
Doggett	Kuster (NH)	Rodgers (WA)			
Doyle, Michael	Kustoff (TN)	Roe, David P.			
F.	LaHood	Rogers (AL)			
Duncan	LaMalfa	Rogers (KY)			
Emmer	Lamb	Rose (NY)			
Engel	Lamborn	Rose, John W.			
Escobar	Langevin	Rouda			
Eshoo	Langevin	Rouzer			
Español	Larson (CT)	Roy			
Estes	Latta	Roybal-Allard			
Evans	Lawrence	Ruiz			
Ferguson	Lawson (FL)	Ruppersberger			
Finkenauer	Lee (CA)	Rush			
Fitzpatrick	Lee (NV)	Rutherford			
Fleischmann	Lesko	Ryan			
Fletcher	Levin (CA)	Sánchez			
Flores	Levin (MI)	Sarbanes			
Fortenberry	Lieu, Ted	Scalise			
Foster	Lipinski	Scanlon			
Fox (NC)	Loebach	Schakowsky			
Frankel	Lofgren	Schiff			
Fulcher	Long	Schneider			
Gabbard	Lowenthal	Schrader			
Gaetz	Lowe	Schrier			
Gallagher	Luetkemeyer	Schweikert			
Gallego	Luján	Scott (VA)			
Garamendi	Luria	Scott, David			
Garcia (CA)	Lynch	Serrano			
Garcia (IL)	Malinowski	Sewell (AL)			
Garcia (TX)	Maloney,	Shalala			
Gianforte	Carolyn B.	Sherman			
Gibbs	Maloney, Sean	Sherrill			
Gohmert	Massie	Sires			
Golden	Mast	Slotkin			
Gomez	Matsui	Smith (MO)			
Gonzalez (OH)	McAdams	Smith (NE)			
Gonzalez (TX)	McBath	Smith (NJ)			
Gooden	McCarthy	Smith (WA)			
Gottheimer	McCauley	Smucker			
Granger	McClintock	Soto			
Graves (MO)	McCollum	Spanberger			
Green, Al (TX)	McEachin	Speier			
Griffith	McGovern	Stanton			
Grijalva	McHenry	Staub			
Grothman	McKinley	Stefanik			
Guest	McNerney	Steil			
Guthrie	Meeks	Stevens			
Haaland	Meng	Stewart			
Hagedorn	Meuser	Stivers			
Hall	Mfume	Suozzi			
Harder (CA)	Miller	Swalwell (CA)			
Harris	Moolenaar	Takano			
Hartzler	Mooney (WV)	Taylor			
Hastings	Moore	Thompson (CA)			
Hayes	Morelle	Thompson (MS)			
Heck	Moulton	Thompson (PA)			
Hern, Kevin	Mucarsel-Powell	Thornberry			
Herrera Beutler	Mullin	Tiffany			
Hice (GA)	Murphy (FL)	Timmons			
Higgins (LA)	Murphy (NC)	Tipton			
Higgins (NY)	Nadler	Titus			
Hill (AR)	Napolitano	Tlaib			
Himes	Neal	Tonko			
Hollingsworth	Neguse	Torres (CA)			
Horn, Kendra S.	Newhouse	Torres Small			
Horsford	Norcross	(NM)			
Houlihan	Norman	Trahan			
Hoyer	Nunes	Trone			
Hudson	O'Halleran	Turner			
Huffman	Ocasio-Cortez	Underwood			
Huizenga	Olson	Upton			
Hurd (TX)	Omar	Van Drew			
Jackson Lee	Palazzo	Vargas			
Jacobs	Pallone	Veasey			
Jayapal	Palmer	Vela			
Jeffries	Panetta	Velázquez			
Johnson (GA)	Pappas	Visclosky			
Johnson (LA)	Pascarell	Wagner			
Johnson (SD)	Payne	Walberg			
Johnson (TX)	Pence	Walden			
Jordan	Perlmutter	Walker			
Joyce (OH)	Perry	Walorski			
Joyce (PA)	Peters	Waltz			
Kaptur	Peterson	Wasserman			
Katko	Phillips	Schultz			
Keller	Pingree	Waters			
Kelly (MS)	Pocan	Watkins			

Watson Coleman	Wild	Woodall
Weber (TX)	Williams	Yarmuth
Welch	Wilson (FL)	Yoho
Wenstrup	Wilson (SC)	Young
Westerman	Wittman	Zeldin
Wexton	Womack	

NAYS—2

Marshall
Webster (FL)

NOT VOTING—31

Abraham	Gosar	Reschenthaler
Aderholt	Graves (LA)	Rooney (FL)
Allen	Green (TN)	Scott, Austin
Biggs	Holding	Sensenbrenner
Bishop (NC)	Johnson (OH)	Shimkus
Bishop (UT)	Keating	Simpson
Calvert	Kelly (IL)	Spano
Carter (TX)	Loudermilk	Steube
Collins (GA)	Lucas	Wright
Dunn	Marchant	
Fudge	Mitchell	

□ 1716

Mr. PERRY 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:

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 241.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on H.R. 5758. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 241.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE
RESOLUTION 965, 116TH CONGRESS

Barragán (Beyer)	Kim (Davids	Pingree
Bera (Aguilar)	(KS))	(Cicilline)
Bonomici (Clark	Kind (Beyer)	Pocan (Raskin)
(MA))	Kirkpatrick	Porter (Wexton)
Boyle, Brendan	(Stanton)	Price (NC)
F. (Jeffries)	Kuster (NH)	(Butterfield)
Brownley (CA)	(Clark (MA))	Richmond
(Clark (MA))	Lamb (Crow)	(Butterfield)
Cárdenas	Lawson (FL)	Rouda (Aguilar)
(Cisneros)	(Demings)	Roybal-Allard
Cohen (Beyer)	Lieu, Ted (Beyer)	(Garcia (TX))
Costa (Cooper)	Lofgren (Jeffries)	Ruiz (Dingell)
Cunningham	Lowenthal	Rush
(Murphy (FL))	(Beyer)	(Underwood)
Dean (Scanlon)	Lowe (Tonko)	Schneider
DeSaulnier	McEachin	(Casten (IL))
(Matsui)	(Wexton)	Schrier
Deutch (Rice	Meng (Clark	(DelBene)
(NY))	(MA))	Serrano
Doggett (Raskin)	Moore (Beyer)	(Jeffries)
Frankel (Clark	Mucarsel-Powell	Titus (Connolly)
(MA))	(Wasserman	Tlaib (Dingell)
Garamendi	Schultz)	Trahan
(Sherman)	Nadler (Jeffries)	(McGovern)
Grijalva (Garcia	Napolitano	Vargas (Correa)
(IL))	(Correa)	Velázquez
Hastings	Pascarell	(Clarke (NY))
(Wasserman	(Pallone)	Watson Coleman
Schultz)	Payne	(Pallone)
Jayapal (Raskin)	(Wasserman	Welch
Johnson (TX)	Schultz)	(McGovern)
(Jeffries)	Peters (Kildee)	Wilson (FL)
	Peterson (Craig)	(Hayes)

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1434

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1434.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALLRED). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

CEILING FAN IMPROVEMENT ACT
OF 2020

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5758) to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to make technical corrections to the energy conservation standard for ceiling fans, 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 396, nays 2, not voting 31, as follows:

[Roll No. 241]

YEAS—396

Adams	Brindisi	Clarke (NY)
Aguilar	Brooks (AL)	Clay
Allred	Brooks (IN)	Cleaver
Amash	Brown (MD)	Cline
Amodei	Brownley (CA)	Cloud
Armstrong	Buchanan	Clyburn
Arrington	Buck	Cohen
Axne	Bucshon	Cole
Babin	Budd	Comer
Bacon	Burchett	Conaway
Baird	Burgess	Connolly
Balderson	Bustos	Cooper
Banks	Butterfield	Correa
Barr	Byrne	Costa
Barragán	Carbajal	Courtney
Bass	Cárdenas	Cox (CA)
Beatty	Carson (IN)	Craig
Bera	Carter (GA)	Crawford
Bergman	Cartwright	Crenshaw
Beyer	Case	Crist
Bilirakis	Casten (IL)	Crow
Bishop (GA)	Castor (FL)	Cuellar
Blumenauer	Castro (TX)	Cunningham
Blunt Rochester	Chabot	Curtis
Bonomici	Cheney	Davids (KS)
Bost	Chu, Judy	Davidson (OH)
Boyle, Brendan	Cicilline	Davis (CA)
F.	Cisneros	Davis, Danny K.
Brady	Clark (MA)	Davis, Rodney

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RONALD ROGERS

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

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and legacy of Mr. Ronald Rogers. Ron dedicated his life to public service and to creating opportunities for young people.

Ron was a proud member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a graduate of Florida A&M University. But above all, he was a proud graduate of Jones High School, and he loved the students with all of his heart and soul.

As founder and president of the Orlando chapter of 100 Black Men of America, he worked hard to mentor students and provide scholarships and other resources to help them during their college years.

Ron also served in numerous leadership roles, including as city administrator for the historic town of Eatonville, where his vision for Eatonville helped pave the way for the town's success today.

Ron never stopped, paused, or exhaled. He had an unwavering sense of urgency about serving his community, about making his community better.

Ron Rogers truly made a difference in the lives of others, and we are so grateful for a life well-lived.

SUPPORTING OUR CORRECTIONS OFFICERS

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, early Monday morning, two corrections officers at Allenwood Federal penitentiary in Union County, Pennsylvania, were viciously assaulted in the line of duty by an inmate.

While both Officer Sara Harvey and Officer Dale Franquet were injured, their heroic actions resulted in subduing an armed and violent inmate and preventing the inmate from harming others.

Officer Harvey has since returned to work, while Officer Franquet remains in the hospital undergoing treatment.

Both of these individuals exemplify sacrifice and service. They are true heroes.

This tragic incident is a stark reminder of the challenges our corrections officers face on a daily basis. Despite great personal risk to themselves and their families, corrections officers go to work every day out of a deeply rooted sense of service.

Our entire community is grateful for these two corrections officers and every person employed in the prison who continue to stand guard.

As chairman of the BOP Reform Caucus, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Congress to ensure that our corrections officers have the resources and support they

need to do their jobs effectively and, most importantly, safely.

SALUTING KIMBERLY A. ROSS

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute and salute a person who has dedicated 20 years of her life to this institution, coming here in 2000 as a young, brilliant regulatory attorney to work in the Senate as a senior LA, then to the House as a legislative director, then to be the staff attorney for the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and, finally, to my office as chief of staff and counsel, the only chief of staff I have had since 2013.

She is one of the most loyal, hardest working, dedicated, and intelligent individuals I have worked with. I consider it an honor to have worked with her.

Her footprints are deep. They leave an impression to guide others. Her words of wisdom, generosity, historical knowledge, quickness to speak, analytical thoughts, late night conversations, and early morning pickups to work make her my national treasure.

This woman is Kimberly Ross, Esquire, Chief of Staff, who serves faithfully to this institution and to me.

Kimberly, you have climbed every mountain, now enjoy the view. Happy retirement. And to you and your wonderful husband, Bernard, good luck and congratulations on your next venture.

BUCKET BRIGADE BREWING

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

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Bucket Brigade Brewing in Cape May Courthouse in south Jersey.

They actually were founded by two identical twin brothers, Kurt and Karl Hughes. The brothers are also firefighters from Cape May County.

The Hughes family has a long, storied history in this great Nation, even having a relative who signed the Declaration of Independence. His name was Thomas McKean.

The Bucket Brigade taproom was inspired by the rich history of Cape May County's small businesses. I was lucky enough to swing by and visit with them recently.

I want to thank them for their commitment to south Jersey and to first responders and partnering with the National Fallen Firefighters Association to assist those who are in real need.

Mr. Speaker, if you happen to be in the area, make sure to grab a nice cold beer.

I thank Kurt and Karl for all they do for their community.

God bless you, and God bless America.

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the importance of historically Black colleges and universities.

For over 150 years, HBCUs have played an important role in the education, cultivation, and upward mobility of African Americans. But as the Nation's economy changes and shifts firmly towards the information age, our Nation's HBCUs must be steadfast in following this trend.

Software and technology startups are the largest creators of new jobs and wealth creation in this country in decades; however, there is an imbalance for minorities to have access to this opportunity. For example, less than 1 percent of all venture capital dollars go to Black founders.

Software and technology startups are the chance to build something from nothing. Indeed, to do so is the American Dream.

We need to make that dream, the tech startup dream, available to all minorities and overlooked communities. This program, Startup the HBCUs, can significantly increase the number of minorities that work in the high-tech field and increase the number of minorities that are founders of tech companies.

If we follow these steps, we will be able to ensure that the American Dream in the information age is available to all, including our students at our Nation's historically Black colleges and universities.

THE FIRST MILITIA

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, in December 1636, the first militia regiments in North America were organized in Massachusetts and recognized by Massachusetts Bay Colony's General Court. This date marks the founding of State militias that collectively make up the National Guard.

The men and women of the National Guard make great sacrifices to protect our homeland and citizens from harm. Their duties encompass more than just mitigating violence and civil unrest or being mobilized overseas.

For example, just this year, in my home State of California, two National Guard aircrews flew repeatedly into the raging Creek fire in southern California to rescue nearly trapped campers, hikers, and residents. Their heroic efforts saved nearly 400 lives.

This bravery is not uncommon to National Guardsmen, and for 384 years they have always been, and always will be, there for us.

COVID-19 RELIEF

(Mrs. LEE of Nevada asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Nevada's Third Congressional District with a plea to all of my colleagues:

We are now entering the darkest period of this pandemic. Americans are scared, and I don't blame them. Americans are also angry, and they should be. They are angry at Congress and this administration for failing to pass more relief for struggling families, frontline workers, and small businesses.

Thousands more Nevadans filed for unemployment during the last few weeks. Over 400,000 Nevadans remain at risk of eviction as housing assistance expires.

As this virus uncontrollably spreads in every corner of this country, our frontline workers and hospitals are overwhelmed with a tidal wave of new COVID-positive patients.

There is no more time for political games that have consumed Congress for months. There never was. I am pleading to my Republican and Democratic colleagues, to our leadership, and to this administration: It is time to do our jobs and pass more COVID-19 relief now.

□ 1730

THE FOUR CHURCHWOMEN

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise this December in reflective remembrance and commemoration of the valiant lives of the famed four American churchwomen, who were brutally raped and murdered by the El Salvadoran military 40 years ago on December 2, 1980.

Their names were Sisters Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, and Jean Donovan. Their mission, and ultimately their lives, were sacrificed to the service of the forgotten and the impoverished in El Salvador. These courageous women of faith were hallmarks of their community and their mission of accompaniment in the nation amidst turmoil.

Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago, in the midst of a civil war, the U.S. Government funded and supported the El Salvadoran military that on December 2, 1980, murdered these evangelical saints. In their protection and companionship of refugee families, they were targeted as enemies of national interest in the country. These four women were nothing less than lionhearts of political and social righteousness that respected all people.

Mr. Speaker, in recognizing their legacy, I ask for a moment of silence as we recall, each time we mourn their names, the loss of these four saints.

HONORING SCOTT HORSFALL

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the decades of service of my good friend, Scott Horsfall.

Scott is retiring this month after decades of serving our agricultural community on the central coast of California. Scott's career has been spent serving farmers and farmworkers through his work at California Grown, at the California Kiwifruit Commission, at the California Table Grape Commission, and where I got to know him, at the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement, where he was the first CEO.

With Scott at the helm for over the past 13 years, leafy green producers in California have operated under one set of science-based food safety standards. Over 6,200 government audits have been conducted, and more than 7 billion servings of lettuce and leafy greens have been grown and enjoyed by American consumers.

But it is not just about his accolades and accomplishments. It is about the relationships he has fostered and the work he has done to build strong relationships on the central coast and throughout our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Scott for his work, his commitment, his dedication for our food safety, for our agriculture, and for our Nation's food security.

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to come to the House floor tonight to commemorate National Bible Week. This year's Special Order marks the 79th annual celebration of a week in which we celebrate the tremendous influence of the Bible on the freedoms we enjoy today in America.

I am so thankful and blessed to live in a country where we have the freedom to worship and read the Holy Scriptures without fear. Many people across the globe live in countries where such freedoms do not exist.

Mr. Speaker, under our wonderful system of government, people are free

to respect and study the Bible, or any other system of belief, if they so choose—or even none at all. That is the beauty of the American way, and it is rooted in the deep truths contained in the Word of God.

In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared the week of Thanksgiving to be National Bible Week. This is the time we set aside to recognize the Bible as a foundational building block of Western civilization, the Judeo-Christian heritage, and the ideas and principles that shape the thinking of our America's Founding Fathers.

The Word of God has had a profound impact on my life as well. I agree with the Psalmist when he says:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

This has been true in my own life as well. God's Word has shaped my thinking and deeply influenced my relationship with God. The Bible has indeed been a guiding light in every area of my life and a source of comfort and strength in a time of need.

In this hour, we will hear from Members of Congress from various faiths, traditions, and denominations to speak about what the Bible means to them. We are here, in keeping with tradition, to recognize National Bible Week.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER).

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have taken the Bible and God out of school. We are so smart. We have replaced Him with armed police officers, drug-sniffing dogs, and metal detectors.

We have kicked Biblical training and principles out of schools. And now, we have broken families, absentee fathers, single moms struggling, and disrespect like we have never seen before.

So much for what Jesus teaches us in the Bible: Love others as you love yourself. Or do unto others as you would have them do unto you, a/k/a, the Golden Rule.

Today's moral-less culture's motto seems to be, do unto others and then split, but not before you get a selfie and put it on Facebook.

Disrespect is rampant—witnessing the rioting in the cities recently, the burning of the American flag. The courts decided in their infinite wisdom that flag burning is a protected form of speech. All I ask of those who are going to burn the flag, wrap themselves in it first.

Mr. Speaker, courts have decided that you can't pray in schools, you can't pray at football games. We wouldn't want to invoke God's blessings on our gatherings. So much for the commandments in the Bible: Love, respect, duty, commitment, et cetera.

Our country has gotten away from Biblical principles. Marriages have been destroyed, drugs are rampant, killing of unborn children. So much the order of the day, that now the abortion crowd wants to kill people after they have botched an abortion.

Mr. Speaker, think of it. America's great fighting men and women can be fighting a vile enemy; we can wing one of their soldiers and we will do everything we can to nurse that soldier back to health, that enemy. But we won't try to save a baby we just tried to abort.

God, help us. Lord, help us if we don't get back to Biblical principles. It is God's guidebook, his plan that this country was founded on. America, you had better get back to the Bible.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas, and I yield to another gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN).

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Mr. LAMBORN from Colorado, for having this Special Order Hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 79th annual National Bible Week. Since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941, every President has set aside a time of reflection and a time of gratitude for the Good Book in acknowledgment of its profound influence on humankind.

The Bible was perhaps the most accessible book to our Founding Fathers, and its principles gave them valuable insights about human nature, civic virtue, political authority, and the rights of our citizens. Many of our founding documents contained references to the great truths found in Scripture.

As stated in the Declaration of Independence, "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."

Mr. Speaker, much like the early days of this great country, we are at a critical time in our history in America. The decisions we make now will set our course for years to come. It is my fervent prayer that we, as Americans, turn to the Scriptures for healing and for direction. Its principles are timeless, and its wisdom is trustworthy.

The Bible has been my comfort in sorrow, my counsel in decisionmaking, my companion in day-to-day life. Whether conducting my business as a dentist in Woodville, Texas, raising my family, or serving the good people of the 36th District of Texas here in Congress, the Good Book continually shapes the way that I try to live my life.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Bible is more than a book of inspiration and comfort or simply a compilation of moral teachings. I believe it is the Holy Word of God that contains the truth of his love for us and his plan of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

One of the most well-known verses in the Bible, John 3:16, tells us that:

God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

There, in the pages of Scripture, God describes His great love for us, a love

that was exhibited through the gift of His only Son sent to redeem us. And we are about to celebrate His birth.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave you with a passage of Scripture from the Book of Job in the Old Testament that has been an encouragement for me with its promise of eternal life. I hope that it will be for you as well:

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the Earth; and after my skin is decayed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), who is the current chairman of the Republican Study Committee.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my colleague, Congressman DOUG LAMBORN. He is so faithful every year to organize this Special Order series. And this year, we recognize, as has been mentioned, the 79th anniversary of National Bible Week.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand with all my Members and friends today to share our perspectives on why the Bible is so important to us and to our country. I am often reminded, I think about and reflect upon, and we quote all the time, the Founders. George Washington, who was the father of our country, and he famously said, "Of all the disposition and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." They were the foundation of the very Republic.

And John Adams is our second President. He comes next. He says, "Our Constitution is made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

What he meant was that this is essential to who we are as Americans. Even more fundamental than that, who we are as human beings.

And it was one of my favorite Presidents, Ronald Reagan, who said that, "If we ever forget that we are one Nation under God, we will be a Nation gone under."

Mr. Speaker, in the very short time I have, I would share one brief paragraph, a preface to a historic text that I have in my collection. Some of the guys have this as well. But this is a copy of a New Testament Bible study that was approved by and published for the public schools of Dallas, Texas, by its Board of Education in September of 1946.

The preface was written by a gentleman by the name of Henry van Dyke. And it is a wonderful summary of what the Bible means to us and to the world. I will read that into the RECORD.

"Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible

walks the ways of the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere.

"It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the hearts of men. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God.

"Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the time of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely.

"The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and the penitent, it has a mother's voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn page.

"It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that love, friendship, sympathy and devotion, memory and hope, put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh. No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own.

"When the landscape darkens and the trembling pilgrim comes to the Valley named of the shadow, he is not afraid to enter; he takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand; he says to friend and comrade; 'Goodbye, we shall meet again.' And comforted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who walks through darkness and into light."

Mr. Speaker, that is a pretty good summary about what the Bible means to us. I am delighted to honor National Bible Week and to stand with my friends here.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, that reminds me of a story here from the Halls of Congress in the beginning of our country's history.

Many of the early American settlers who came to the New World with the express purpose of living out their faith to God and his Word, according to the convictions of their own consciences, founded our country. And one of the very first Congress' first acts was the authorization of an American-published Bible.

The Revolutionary War with the British in the late 1700s had cut off all remaining shipments of Bibles from England.

□ 1745

Our Founding Fathers understood how important it was for the American people to have access to Bibles.

Robert Aitken, a private citizen, brought this need to the attention of Congress, and he wrote a letter saying: "This work is an object worthy of the attention of the Congress of the United

States of America, who will not neglect spiritual security, while they are virtuously contending for temporal blessings.”

In 1782, Congress reviewed, approved, and authorized the first known English language Bible to be printed in America. They passed a resolution, here in the halls of Congress—or the Continental Congress—saying: “Resolved, that the United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion, as well as an instance of the progress of arts in this country, and being satisfied from the above report of his care and accuracy in the execution of the work, they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize him to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper.”

Can you imagine doing that today? The House of Representatives approving the printing of a Bible?

Our country has changed over the years, and I am not sure it has always changed for the better.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HICE).

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado, my good friend, for leading this Special Order. I am indeed honored to rise and celebrate and honor the book that, without question, has transformed my life, brought light into my life and to the entire world, and to join my colleagues in recognizing the most significant book in the history of our Nation, its founding, and its history throughout. Of course, we are talking about the Bible.

As a pastor of 25-plus years, prior to coming to Congress, this opportunity to speak the Word of God on this floor is an extremely important thing to me personally and to our Nation.

There is no question that Benjamin Franklin—and we have many, many, many, many examples—and I have a lot of them in my office. But Benjamin Franklin spoke very clear truth when he said that famous statement that: “The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men.”

Without a doubt, it is in the Bible that we learn about the greatness of God. We learn that He is the object of true worship, that He is the fount of all blessings, that He is the light of the world. It is in the Bible that we learn about the holiness of God. And, yes, it is in the Bible that we learn about the sinfulness of every one of us as human beings, that we have broken God’s moral standard in one of a thousand different ways.

But it is in the Bible also that we learn how much God loves us, and in His great love, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins on that cross. It is in the Bible we learn that all of us who trust in Him can receive the greatest gift that anyone could ever receive, and that is the gift of forgiveness, which all of us need.

I cherish this moment to speak about the truths of God’s Word. Our country, as we all know, has been referred to over and over and over throughout history as a shining city on a hill. But we also know today that we are a Nation that stands at a critical crossroad. I believe it is times like this, more than other times, perhaps, that the verse that was quoted earlier, Psalm 119, verse 105, means so much to us. We need to heed that God’s Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. More than ever, we need to heed, as a nation, as a body, as leaders in this great Chamber, the Word of God and let it become our light and our pathway.

It is, I believe, our responsibility, as leaders in this country, to point our constituents, at least to the point of reminding them that the Bible is extremely significant, not only to us as individuals, but to us as a Nation, and that we need to encourage people to go back to the teachings, the principles, the truths, the eternal truths of God’s Word. How different our Nation would be with that.

Again, I want to thank my friend for leading this Special Order and all of my colleagues for taking time to come to speak to the truths of God’s Word.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and appreciate his remarks.

Next, it is with great pleasure that I would like to recognize a personal friend as well as a colleague from Michigan. He and his wife, Sue, have been an example to my wife and me in the sincerity of their beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for taking advantage of National Bible Week to give us a chance to talk about foundational principles.

It was back in 1973—and this is a great book, the Bible. In 1973, a beloved mentor of mine brought me into his office, and he said: Tim, I think there is a verse in Scripture that would be good for your life verse of challenge.

He read to me from Acts 20:24 where it says:

But I do not consider my life of any account as dear unto myself, that I might finish the course and the ministry set before me to testify solemnly of the Gospel of the grace of God.

I took that as a life challenge verse, and it has directed my entire life since 1973. It has been an impactful verse from Scripture, God’s Word, to direct my steps, imperfect as they may be, to be about something more than just myself and declare a message that talks of eternal things and not just for the here and now.

It all began, though, back in my home with my twin brother. My mom and dad, I thank God they were believers in this book and believers in God and taught their two young sons to memorize Scripture to impart in their lives.

It was a verse that was referred to earlier that was the first verse that my twin brother and I were asked to memorize. It didn’t mean anything really to me until it became personal by putting my own name in the words of that verse of John 3:16. For God so loved TIM that He gave His only begotten Son, that if TIM believed in Him, TIM would not perish, but he would have eternal life.

That made all the difference in the world. It changed my life. It changed my perspective. It didn’t make me perfect.

Mom also asked me to memorize Second Timothy 3:16, where it says:

All Scripture is inspired by God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

I think mom wanted those words to be not so important for doctrine, but to correct me, to train me, and to reprove me as I moved forward in my life.

Even as King David said in Psalm 119: “Your Word,” the Bible, “Your Word have I treasured in my heart that I might not sin against You.” And if I do, First John 1:9 says:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

How our country needs that today. As has been pointed out, we were founded on Biblical things, principles of Scripture that were seen to be important for a new nation.

First Peter 1:21 says this—and I end with this Scripture:

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation.

We hear that in our world today. We hear that in our country: Oh, whatever. To thy own self be true. You decide. You choose. You make Scripture important for you in whatever way.

But it goes on to say:

For no prophecy of Scripture was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

My colleague, the gentleman from Colorado, thank you for giving us an opportunity to remind ourselves that this book is from God. It is for our benefit. It will impact this Nation for good, not evil. It will give us the way to move forward, to bind up the division that has taken place, to bind up the uncertainty that is there and put us back on a path that God can bless.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who believe in the Bible are sometimes accused of having blind faith. But nothing could be further from the truth. There are many proofs on why we know that the Bible is actually true. One of those is the fulfillment of prophecies.

The accuracy of the Bible is proven by so many prophecies, foretelling future events, that have come true exactly as foretold, especially in the Old Testament. There have been many predictions that were given to prove, when they were first spoken, that the speaker was divinely inspired. If and when

those predictions came true, it validated the words of that person, of that prophet.

For instance, the Book of Daniel has some very detailed prophecies, scores of these, that were literally fulfilled, that could not have ever been done by chance. Skeptics responded and said, well, Daniel must have been written after those events. They, otherwise, could not have been so detailed on what happened later and that the writer of Daniel was not being honest.

But, in fact, it was discovered afterward that the Book of Daniel was found in its entirety in the Greeks' Septuagint and partially in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and both of those were proven to predate the events that were prophesied. That argument that it was written later fell through. This means that the critics of the Book of Daniel and its dating are the ones who are not being honest.

The rise and fall of empires, the capture and destruction of cities, the destiny of kings, all were prophesied about in minute detail. Fulfillment of prophecy is just one of the reasons we know that the Bible is true.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES).

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend, Mr. LAMBORN, for holding this special hour.

For our Nation's Founding Fathers, the Bible was a guiding light and provided them the wisdom to build a strong foundation for the United States, a nation that recognizes and protects our God-given rights.

The teachings in the Bible are intertwined with American beliefs and values, showing us truth, sacrifice, and compassion for others.

In Isaiah 45:13, God called on Cyrus to bring freedom to His people. He says:

I have raised them up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall rebuild My city and let My exiles go free, not for price nor reward.

Just as God called upon Cyrus centuries ago, He calls each of us to serve Him and our fellow man. Not only that, but God equips us with His Word and His Holy Spirit.

We serve Him by advocating for the weakest among us and giving a voice to the voiceless. We do this in His name, not for reward, but out of love for our fellow man. That servant attitude should be followed, whether you are a Member of Congress, a farmer, or a machinist on a manufacturing line.

I am so grateful for His calling in my life and for His Word that is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his great remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Colorado for giving me the opportunity to share my faith tonight. It is the most important aspect of my life.

I became a believer at the age of 13. I thank my dad for taking me to

church every week and for leading Bible studies with our family. I learned at a young age that our God is the mighty creator of the universe, a just God who is holy and perfect, a loving God that cares for each of us, and He made salvation possible through having faith and believing in His Son, Jesus.

The Bible is the most important book ever written, and in the end, it is the most valuable possession I own. A Bible may cost only \$20, but the values of lives changed for eternity cannot be measured.

I am grateful the Bible teaches us who God is, about His character. I am also grateful the Bible tells us about the hope we can have in our eternal future. Without that hope, I know I would feel lost.

I love the verses where Jesus says:

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you may also be where I am.

There is eternal life. There is hope.

I am thankful the Bible gives us directions on how to live and provides a roadmap for life. Without that guidance, again, I would feel lost.

Also, I am thankful that the Bible gave me confidence in frightening moments. In one of my four deployments to the Middle East, I was deployed to Baghdad, where we were attacked every single day with mortars and rockets, sometimes 30 rockets or mortars a day. People were being killed around me.

God said in Matthew: Do not fear man who can take your life but not your soul.

I meditated on that verse every day. My soul was secure, and God told me not to fear. In times of life, when things seem unfair, I am reminded of the words God gave the Apostle Paul when He said: "My grace is sufficient for you." I have often had to be reminded that God's grace has been sufficient for me.

□ 1800

Mr. Speaker, I will close with an anecdote from Abraham Lincoln, in my mind, our greatest President.

In 1864, some former slaves from Maryland presented Lincoln with the gift of a Bible, and Lincoln replied: "In regards to this great Book, I have but to say it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book."

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I also thank him for his service to our country. We have many veterans who are serving in Congress, and Representative BACON is one of the finest.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before you today to celebrate National Bible Week. What bet-

ter time to celebrate Bible Week in what is called the people's House, but what is ultimately God's house.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a national proclamation to celebrate the impact of the Bible on our Nation, a light for so many and a source of hope in the darkest of times.

The boundless influence of the Holy Bible on this Nation is unmistakable.

In this Chamber, Moses, the messenger of the Ten Commandments, a witness of God in all of his glory upon the mountaintop, watches over this body from above the gallery doors each time we gather to conduct business.

However, it is not merely the multitudes of honorary monuments and portraits of Biblical figures and passages that exemplify the importance of the Scriptures to all Americans, but it is the impression on our social fabric that is so evident in our actions, which speaks volumes.

This Nation was founded upon Judeo-Christian principles. A stroll past any of the extraordinary monuments here in the Capitol makes that abundantly evident. Our commitment to the fundamentals of the Word of the Lord Jesus has sustained us throughout our rich history, during the highest of times and during the lowest of times.

The profound impact of the Bible, and particularly the Gospels, led me to serve in this great body. It is the words of the Son of God, to "love each other as I have loved you," which guides me. And I believe that if we continue to turn to the Lord in all that we do, our best is yet to come.

Despite our fierce philosophical differences and the imperfect nature of legislation, God never fails us. An annual celebration of His infallible Word and never-ending love, though not near enough, is the perfect reminder for us to unite as a body with the shared goal of humbly serving our creator faithfully and encouraging this Nation to do the same.

God bless each and every one of you.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman; he made some reference to here in the Capitol, some of the insignia that shows the recognition of God.

Above the Speaker, it says, "In God We Trust." That is chiseled in the stone there.

Behind me, among all these lawgivers down through the centuries, Moses is there in the center looking straight on, over our deliberations. He gave us the Ten Commandments.

So I appreciate, also, those historical references.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. PALMER), who is the policy chairman of the Republican Conference.

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) for hosting this special hour to talk about the Bible.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 419th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible.

In 1604, King James I commissioned 54 scholars from Oxford and Cambridge Universities to produce one uniform translation of the Bible that all denominations could accept. It is unlikely that there has ever been another group of translators whose collective expertise in Biblical languages was equal to this group.

Benson Bobrick, who wrote a book called "Wide as the Waters," said, because of the people's desire to read the Bible, the English translation, known as the Authorized Version in Great Britain, helped Great Britain become the most literate nation in the world. In terms of the language of the King James Version, about 90 percent are Anglo-Saxon words with a vocabulary of only about 8,000 words for the entire translation. It was the first major work of English prose based primarily on Anglo-Saxon words instead of Latin.

The King James translation established the prose style for English and American literature and became the foundation of modern English language giving us words and phrases that are common parts of our language today.

In his "History of England," Thomas Macaulay said that "... if everything else in our language should perish, it would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

Bobrick wrote: "Its subsequent impact on English, and American, literature might be traced in a thousand ways—in the work of religious writers like Milton and Bunyan, or their more secular brethren like D.H. Lawrence, Walt Whitman, and Defoe. Without the King James Version, it has been said, 'there would be no 'Paradise Lost,' no 'Pilgrim's Progress' ... no Gettysburg Address.'"

As Britain's literacy rate increased, it fostered a spirit of inquiry which led to people reading books and tracts that transformed the laws and government of Great Britain and ultimately laid the foundation for American political thought, and our Founders' ideas about individual liberty and constitutional government.

Including the 1611 edition, there were four other editions of the King James Bible, which were published in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769; the last is the version that is most commonly cited today.

"Next to the Bible itself," Bobrick wrote, "the English Bible was, and is, the most influential book ever published."

According to Vanderbilt University Press, the King James Version is the best-selling book of all time, with more than 5 billion copies sold, and it is the most frequently quoted book ever written.

Russell Kirk concluded that it was the book that was to exert a stronger influence than any other in America. He wrote: "Read from American pulpits and in the great majority of American households during colonial times, the Authorized Version shaped the style, informed the intellect, affected

the laws, and decreed the morals of the North American colonies."

P. Marion Simms wrote: "No nation in all history was ever founded by people so dominated by the Bible as America." In fact, every American President except Franklin Pierce has been sworn in with their hands placed on the English Bible.

Even though it was published after the Jamestown Colony was established, the King James Bible was the book that had the greatest impact on the American culture.

"The English did not really drive away the American colonists, nor were they driven," said G.K. Chesterton. "The Americans were led on by a light that went before."

The light was the Biblical light that the English Bible had given them: the idea of the equality of man. It was the idea of the sacred and equal importance of every man, as made in the image and likeness of God.

One of the earliest copies of the King James Version Bible can be seen at the Museum of the Bible. I encourage everyone to visit this great American museum.

Mr. Speaker, I thank, again, Mr. LAMBORN, for this great opportunity.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I would like to recall an incident from my own background.

When I was a freshman in college years ago, some people talked to me, and they said: Do you know what the Bible is about?

I said: Yeah, I know all about it.

Although, I realized after a minute went by, that that was really a pretty presumptuous answer because I had never actually read anything in the Bible.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if this might be true for others who are listening in today.

The only honest thing I could do at that point when I realized I hadn't read any of it was to say: I am going to read the Bible for myself.

So I started by reading the Gospel of John in the New Testament. And when I read it, I discovered that I hadn't known at all what the Bible was about. I learned that Jesus said things like:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

I ended up discovering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who became my Lord and Savior.

Mr. Speaker, I speak from personal experience when I say that it is better to read the Bible for one's self and not just take someone else's word for it for what it says. My life has been transformed by the truths that it holds.

The message of the good news of Jesus is still transforming lives today. John 3:16:

For God so loved to world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

So as we celebrate National Bible Week, we celebrate the place that faith holds in both our private and public

lives. The Bible's message of hope is a powerful one of redemption and hope, and we cherish its message today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Representative from Colorado for putting together this fine ceremony for National Bible Week.

Mr. Speaker, it is kind of fitting that we be here on the floor of the Congress. I am not sure how many people realize, in this day in which so many people run from the Bible, the degree to which the Bible itself had such a great influence on the building we stand in and in the room we stand in right here.

Look in front of us: "In God We Trust."

For people who aren't aware back home, around us we have the reliefs of 23 wise men: Mason, Hannibal, Justinian, Hammurabi, Solon. But the one who gets the greatest place of honor behind us here is that of Moses, who, of course, wrote the first five books of the Bible.

When you review the statements of our Founding Fathers, again and again you find statements of this. And I will lead off by quoting William Penn:

I do declare to the whole world that we believe the Scriptures to contain a declaration of the mind and will of God. We accept the Bible as the Words of God himself.

The first Chief Justice of the United States, John Jay, was the president of the American Bible Society.

Can you imagine that happening today? You can barely become a Justice if you are a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Noah Webster said: "Education is useless without the Bible." Noah Webster, of course, known as the father of American education.

Again and again, people of that era learned to read by learning the Bible.

When you review the statements or the Bible quotations of the early Founders, the Bible Book that they quoted the most was the Book of Deuteronomy, which is perhaps not surprising, because in Deuteronomy were largely laid out a lot of the laws that eventually God's people of Israel were to live under. So it is not surprising that Deuteronomy was quoted so frequently.

Early American Presidents like John Adams and, later, Abraham Lincoln, looked to the Bible as they declared days of fasting and prayer.

Again, when we look in our history, there is no book that had more to do with the founding of our country and the type of country our forefathers anticipated than the Bible, so it is only fitting that today we honor the Bible.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SPANO).

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAMBORN, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard about the opportunity to talk this evening in

celebration of National Bible Week, I was really, really excited. I was excited because it gives me the chance to talk about something very special to me.

When I was a boy, I remember seeing my mother read her Bible daily at our kitchen table. Every now and then, I would look over her shoulder at her open Bible to see numerous passages underlined or highlighted, notes and prayers written in the margins. I also I remember my mom quoting verses from the Bible in response to the circumstances of our lives.

□ 1815

As I grew, my mom encouraged me to read the Bible. She assured me it had the answers to life's questions, how to live, how to treat others, how to know God's plan for my life. Most importantly, it would show me how to connect with God, how to have a relationship with him that would change my life here on this Earth, but also in the life to come.

Like many young people, I wasn't a very good listener, so I didn't give the Bible much attention in my early years until I hit a particularly hard stretch and was driven to my knees as a younger man. It was then that I remembered what my mother had told me, the Bible has the answers.

I began spending time every day reading the Bible. I learned about how God created the Heavens and the Earth; how he created man with a free will and so would never force man to love or serve Him; how He called the Nation of Israel to be his chosen people; how He sent his only son, Jesus, to live a perfect life and then to die a cruel death to pay the price for every man's sin, if they would just accept Him and the forgiveness that He offers.

These are important things. But the Bible also helps me today. It helps me know how to love and care for my wife and my children. It shows me how to love unlovable people, how to let hatred go and to forgive, and how to have peace in my heart that passes all human understanding. It gives me hope on tough days, at times when I can't understand what is happening around me.

And now today, although it is hard to explain and probably as difficult to understand, after 30 years eating and drinking, figuratively, from the truth of the Bible, I can't get enough of it. I can't go even one day without it. My soul becomes hungry and thirsty. I become weak and discouraged. You see, now I can't live without this Book. It is absolute life to me.

This is a crazy, messed up world, and it only makes sense to me when I see it through God's lens when I see how the story ends and how He redeems this mess and reconciles man to Himself once and for all time.

Yes, all of that is in this very special book called the Bible. And so, if you are searching for meaning today, if you are searching for truth, longing and thirsting for the answers to life's most

important questions, I encourage you to do the same thing that I was encouraged to do. Pick up this book and begin reading it every day. I promise you; it will change your life. The words and truth contained in it will give you hope and peace and purpose like you have never before experienced.

I would like to take this last moment to thank you, God, for using the Bible to show me how to live, and, most importantly, how to live forever. I love you.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his heartfelt remarks, and I wish him the best in the future.

Another reason why I believe that we can use our reason to believe in the Bible and not just blind faith—as some accuse us of who are believers—is archaeology. There are many archeological discoveries which have validated Biblical accounts, even accounts that weren't believed in the first place, but later archaeology proved them to be true.

This gives us trustworthiness that we ascribe to the Bible during this National Bible Week. Archaeology has time and time again shown that Biblical personalities, locations, and events actually existed in time and space. Claims by critics that a Biblical statement was simply made up have been debunked by later archeological discoveries more times than we can say.

For instance, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the late forties and fifties proved the credibility and authority of Scripture. The discovery of those scrolls shine light on the oldest record of the worldwide flood and the longstanding authority and accuracy of all of the events of the Bible.

Jewish archaeologist, Nelson Glueck, has said: It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted or contradicted a Biblical reference.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), who I am going to miss greatly as he retires and goes into a new life at the end of this year. I sat next to him in Armed Services for 13 years up until now, and I cherish our relationship. He is someone that I deeply trust, and I acknowledge his integrity.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) for those overly kind words, and I certainly appreciate his sentiments for my service. And I, too, will miss our Armed Services Committee hearings and sitting beside him. He is a terrific God-fearing man, and I am better for having known him in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I was blessed to be raised in a God-fearing Christian family. Not everybody gets that blessing, but I did. I have never not known about the Bible or Christ or God throughout my entire life.

My mother believed in being at church every single Sunday morning, regardless of the consequences or whatever else was going on.

At the age of nine, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior. And you can become a Christian with knowing a limited amount of the Bible, but I don't believe you can lead a good Christian life without studying the Bible, without understanding God's truths that are contained therein and the instruction that that gives us as to how to conduct our lives.

Mr. Speaker, Second Timothy 3:16 has already been quoted, but I will quote it again. It says:

All Scripture is breathed out by God, the Word of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation is at a crossroads, and we are a divided Nation across a lot of lines, the partisan divides we fight in this House day in and day out. There are other moral lines of which our Nation is divided across. The Bible is important because it is that one place where the truths never change.

Customs come and go, ideologies come and go, but the truths of God don't. So if we are to heed the instructions of our Founding Fathers, that John Adams said, as was mentioned, that are a moral and religious people, then we need a guidebook. We need an understanding of what those morals are based upon. If the morals are based upon what I think are correct or you think are correct, then that is a pretty flimsy stance to take. We need a foundational truth that is there regardless of who is Speaker, regardless of who is President. God is always on that throne, and so, the Bible is obviously important for that regard.

Mr. Speaker, there is a verse in Second Chronicles that I think contains both a promise for our Nation and a solution for our Nation. The backdrop on that was that the Nation of Israel, God's chosen people, if you read through the Old Testament, they had a running narrative of where their hearts would be good, right with God, things would be going well, and then within a generation or two they would fall off, their hearts would get wrong with God, they would be doing things that would offend God and their mighty ways, and God would use awful, horrible things to reset that narrative, reset the Nation of Israel's hearts, so that they could, in fact, be his chosen people.

That tool is still in God's toolbox. I believe the United States is a Nation of God's chosen people. If you look at what our Nation has done over the last 100 years, I would argue that no Nation on Earth has ever done as much good as we have done for the rest of the world and asks so little in return as this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that is God's divine mission for us as a people. But do we continue to be worthy of that mission?

And I would argue that as God looks at this unblissable thing that is going

on in our Nation that we may be rapidly becoming unworthy of that mission. And if we lay that mantle down, if it is taken away from us, Mr. Speaker, who will pick it up?

Russia, China, radical Islam?

I don't believe so.

I believe it is important not only for America to continue to be that God-fearing Nation but also important for the rest of the world.

That verse in Second Chronicles 7:14 says:

If my people, who are called by my name love themselves, turn from their wicked ways, seek my face and pray, then I will hear them in Heaven. I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land.

Our land needs healing. That is God's promise. It is written in stone. God doesn't change any of his promises. And that promise is available to us as a Nation. That is the promise.

The solution, however, lies with us. We must be that people who will turn from our wicked ways, seek God's face, pray, and then he will hear us from Heaven, he will heal our land, and forgive our sins.

Mr. Speaker, our land needs healing, probably more so than at any time since the Civil War. We are a divided Nation, and only God's guidance and God's divine intervention, I believe, can make that happen. We have to be, however, God's instruments to make that happen.

The Bible is important to me. It is important to our Nation. It is important for the ongoing safety of this world. God bless each and every one of you. God bless Texas. And God bless the United States of America.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I would like to say that this country is a better place because of your service. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, quickly I am going to give a quote from one of our Presidents, our Founding Father, and then John Quincy Adams, the sixth President.

George Washington said: It is impossible to rightly govern a Nation without God and the Bible. So he began a rich history of Presidents leaning on the Bible for wisdom and guidance.

John Quincy Adams, the sixth President said: "The first and almost the only Book deserving of universal attention is the Bible." So those are great quotes from some of our Founding Fathers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), my friend and colleague.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, my colleague, and my brother in Christ for yielding and for hosting this Special Order.

To follow up on what Congressman LAMBORN said, the very first book that the United States Congress authorized

to be published at taxpayer expense was a book called the Bible.

Not only that, I would also point to a quote, as there is a lot of talk about socialism and how it would work in this country. Dostoevsky hypothesized about it at the end of the 1800s, and Solzhenitsyn didn't hypothesize it, he lived what Dostoevsky said, and that is, the problem with socialism is not economic, the problem with socialism is atheism. And that is diametrically opposed to how this country was started.

In fact, I had asked for the Congressional Research Service to give me information about the role of the church and the Bible in our founding, and this is derived from that.

The first Christian church services in this United States Capitol were held when the government moved to Washington in the fall of 1800. They were conducted in the Hall of the House. During church services the Speaker's podium was used as a preacher's pulpit.

Within a year of his inauguration, President Jefferson began attending church services in the Chamber of the House of Representatives. Throughout his administration, Thomas Jefferson permitted and encouraged church services in executive branch buildings. Sermons regarding the Old and New Testaments of the Bible were conducted in the Supreme Court Chambers while the judicial branch was located in the old north wing of the Capitol.

And by the way, that was until the Supreme Court began to think of themselves as God, and at that time they said you can't talk about God or you can't be doing this kind of stuff in schools and other places.

But the term "separation of church and state" was not found in the Constitution, it was in a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptists, in essence, saying, we are not going to pick a specific official denomination.

President James Madison, who was often recognized as the author of much of our Constitution, followed Jefferson's example as President of coming to church in the Capitol and worshipping God here and using the Bible as the foundational support for that.

If you look at President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address, it is inscribed on the inside of the north wall of his memorial, he said of North and South, "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged."

But he goes on to ultimately say: "Yet if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondsmen's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago," in the Bible, "so

still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.'"

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I would I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition of National Bible Week by my namesake from Colorado, Douglas Lamborn, for always being so faithful to this.

Christians believe the Bible is the divine and inherent Word of God. I believe that. And we hear a lot of things in this society today that would try to denigrate that, denigrate the faith, and, indeed, there is nothing wrong with what the Bible says as a guidance for life.

□ 1830

The Ten Commandments: there is nothing wrong with living by those even if you don't believe in the Bible.

It is indeed, we know, the best seller, the most quoted, a treasure for all of us to go by.

So as I contemplate here what we are doing tonight, I just want to leave you with this as a guidance for working in this town, in Proverbs 4:23-27:

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

Rid yourself of a deceitful mouth and keep devious speech far from you.

Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.

Keep straight paths of your feet, and all your ways will be established.

Do not turn to the right or to the left; turn your foot from evil.

Indeed, if we could do more of that around here, we would be much better off.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his great words.

In conclusion, it has been an honor to commemorate National Bible Week this evening. I am grateful to my colleagues who joined me.

The Bible claims to be more than a mere book. It claims to be the inspired words of God. As it says in the first book of Peter:

All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever.

So I am thankful for the Word of God on my life and all the lives of those who have spoken today.

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

THANK YOU FOR THE HONOR OF SERVING IN THIS HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from Iowa (Ms. FINKENAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FINKENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say thank you to this body and to the constituents of Iowa's

First Congressional District for giving me the honor to serve these last few years, and also my incredible staff, who both here and in Iowa have given their all to Iowa and to this country. You have made me proud every single day to know you.

Importantly, I also want to say thank you to my family: my husband, Daniel, who has been my rock and been with me every step of the way; to my siblings and nieces and nephews, who have taught me to never take myself too seriously; and to my parents, who I know are watching right now because, as I found out within the first 6 months of being in Congress, they actually DVR and record C-SPAN every day so that they can find me on the floor during votes.

You know, I think back to the day that they came to visit right before swearing in. My very first visitors to my congressional office, where my dad, Jerry, a UA retired union pipefitter welder, and my mom, a retired public school secretary, held hands and walked through the door of their 29-year-old daughter's congressional office.

I can't imagine what they thought, but I hope it was better than when I told them and sat them down at the age of 24 and said I was running for Iowa's State House, where my mom blurted out, "Why in the heck are you doing that?"

Well, it has been 7½ years since mom asked that question, and I hope every day they have seen the answer.

The reason I entered public service was because of them. You see, my parents couldn't give me a trust fund or debt-free college, but what they gave me was worth a hell of a lot more.

They taught me about treating people with respect, and seeing work to be done and doing it; about standing up for those who need a voice; and, most importantly, to never think you are better than anyone else no matter what you do or where you go.

The work I have done both in Iowa and here in Congress has been shaped by the stories and the lives of my constituents and my family, from my late grandfathers, one a firefighter and one a Purple Heart World War II vet who worked in a meat packing plant, to my uncles; from a former UPS driver to a small business owner; and my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law, both who are heroes and nurses.

Because of them, my fight for working families, wage protections, collective bargaining, paid leave, workplace protections, have continued to be, in every sense of the word, personal, and that is the way policy should be.

These laws we pass—and, unfortunately on some occasions don't pass because of stalemates—aren't just dollars and cents on a page. They are affecting people's lives.

I hope for this body and for the American people that we can have a Congress and a Senate who sees that and understands the value of public service.

Until we get there fully, I hope that young people across the country find their "why" and run. We need you. And when you get here, I hope you do the work and I hope you find an incredible staff like I did to help you do it.

You see, this place is not about the crystal chandeliers or the fancy titles. It is about the work. It is about the people in your district. It is about finding common ground where you can and just getting things done.

I have been proud to get to work with my staff the way that we did passing my first bill within the first 2 weeks, becoming the youngest woman in the history of this body to ever pass a bill through this floor; to working on the Small Business Committee and beginning to chair the Rural Development, Ag, Trade and Entrepreneurship Subcommittee, where we got to fight for things like better access to markets for our farmers and for our small business owners; to stepping up for our childcare workers, who need it most right now; and the work that we did on that Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, along with the honorable Chairman DEFAZIO, getting to help pass some of the best investments in rural infrastructure that has ever come out of either one of these Chambers; to standing here, I think in this very spot, having to fight back against attacks on Davis-Bacon wages, good wage protections, in the middle of a pandemic; to helping our farmers, our biofuel industries, trying to fight for and also getting done the biodiesel tax credit extender; to, again, one of the things I might be most proud of, standing here sharing a story that was hard to tell about my own battle with endometriosis, and then fighting and working with my staff to help double that funding for research that had been at the bottom of the National Institutes of Health's research for years.

I also just want to say a special thank you to the staff in Iowa, who have been there for my constituents in one of the toughest years we've ever had, this pandemic, where they have taken calls from folks wondering about their unemployment checks, wondering about how they are going to be able to feed their family because they are unemployed right now through no fault of their own, to then, on top of it, going almost 2 weeks without electricity post-derecho in my district, which was basically like a Category 4 hurricane that came through and decimated large parts of my district.

The way that my staff stepped up when, again, they themselves didn't even have electricity or WiFi is extraordinary. You make me proud every day.

And the way that my constituents came together, it made me proud to be a Congresswoman and to be an Iowan.

You see, I, again, just want to say one last big thank you to my staff. You are all incredible public servants that I am blessed to have known and some of the best public servants I have ever

met. And I should know, because I met one of the best.

That late grandfather I talked about, that firefighter, he was the one who taught me what all of this was. You see, he is the guy that I would sit around the kitchen table with when I was 10 talking about what was happening in the world. And he is also the guy that taught me what public service should be. You see, when he would run into a burning building to save people's lives, he didn't call and ask first: What color is your skin? Where are you from? Who do you love? What language do you speak?

He just showed up and he helped people, and he did his job.

That is what I have tried to do here every single day, both here in Congress and my 4 years in the State House in Iowa. It is what I will continue to do in whatever I do next.

It has been an honor and a privilege to get to serve in this body and represent this district and this country.

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

RECOGNIZING MISSISSIPPI'S LINEMEN AND POWER COMPANIES FOLLOWING HURRICANE ZETA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in recognition of the linemen of Mississippi.

Following the recent Hurricane Zeta, almost 100,000 homes in our area were left without power due to the heavy rains and winds.

Nearly 1,000 of Mississippi's linemen jumped to action to serve their neighbors during our time of need. These storm teams are expertly trained and well-equipped to reinstate normalcy following a storm, and I am proud to acknowledge their work here today.

As one of America's most dangerous jobs, these individuals go to work knowing they serve a critical cause providing the power that empowers our daily lives.

So when you make a call to a loved one, use hot water, turn on an air-conditioner, or stay up to date on the news, remember the brave linemen who make these services possible.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a moment to thank Mississippi Power, Coast Electric Power Association, Singing River Electric Power Company, Pearl River Valley Electric Company, Dixie Electric Power Association, and the many other workers within Mississippi and from out of State who banded together to restore power back to our area.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our gratitude to these unsung heroes. Without them, our future would be a lot less bright.

RECOGNIZING THE MISSISSIPPI 1A STATE CHAMPION FOOTBALL TEAM, LUMBERTON HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a high school football team within the Fourth District of Mississippi that now can claim the prestigious title of State Champions.

The Lumberton Panthers defeated Biggersville High School, 20-14, at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium.

This is the Panthers' fifth State title in school history and the first State title for head coach Zach Jones.

Their win was secured with just 24 seconds left of play and a tied scoreboard after senior receiver K'nylan Willis carried a touchdown pass from a junior quarterback named Rodney Parker.

The Panthers were 12-1 this season, a record to be proud of.

2020 has brought many challenges to our Nation and has not left our students and sports teams untouched.

In my opinion, there are few things better than a community coming together to celebrate the resilience and strength of young athletes.

Congratulations again to Lumberton High School, all of their players, coaches, staff, and many supporters. This will truly be a football season to remember.

RECOGNIZING THE MISSISSIPPI 5A STATE CHAMPION FOOTBALL TEAM, WEST JONES HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a high school football team within the Fourth District of Mississippi that now can claim the prestigious title of State Champions.

The West Jones Mustangs defeated West Point High School, 33-27, at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium.

This is the Mustangs' first State title in school history and for head coach Scott Pierson, a 27-year coaching veteran.

The Mustangs were behind with 50 seconds to go when senior quarterback, Alan Follis, rushed 63 yards for the touchdown.

West Jones' season concluded with a 13-2 record, showing that, even in times of adversity, victory is possible.

Seeing a group of young athletes come together to rise above the challenges they face and a community circle around them is very special, especially in a year like 2020.

Congratulations again to West Jones High School, all of their players, coaches, staff, and many supporters. I am sure this will be a season they never forget.

□ 1845

RECOGNIZING OAK GROVE HIGH SCHOOL ON STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a high school football team within the Fourth District of Mississippi that now can claim the prestigious title of State champions.

The Oak Grove Warriors, led by Head Coach Drew Causey, defeated Oxford High School, 29-28, at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium. This is the Warriors' second State title in school history.

The Warriors were 1 point behind with 7.1 seconds to go after a touchdown when junior quarterback Kabe Barnett made the split-second decision not to kick the extra point to take the game into overtime and, instead, rushed 10 yards for a 2-point conversion to win the game.

Oak Grove Warriors' season concluded with a 13-0 record, a perfect season even in the midst of so much uncertainty in the world.

These young athletes have risen above all the chaos that 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic has brought. They have shown great strength and leadership and brought a community together in a divided time.

Congratulations again to Oak Grove High School, all of their players, coaches, staff, and many supporters. 2020 will truly be a season to remember.

HONORING 2020 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS IN FOURTH DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition today of two Mississippi elementary schools that were awarded the 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools award. This prestigious award is given in acknowledgment of overall progress and closing achievement gaps and/or being among the State's highest performing schools.

The first school was Popp's Ferry Elementary School, located in Biloxi, Mississippi. Popp's Ferry is a title I school for kindergarten through third grade, serving 500 students.

I want to congratulate the principal at the time of the nomination, Dr. Todd Boucher; the current principal, Dr. Vivian Malone; Biloxi Public Schools Superintendent Marcus Boudreaux; as well as all members of the Popp's Ferry faculty and staff.

The second school is D'Iberville Elementary School in D'Iberville, Mississippi. D'Iberville Elementary is a title I school for kindergarten through fourth grade, serving more than 700 students. This is their second Blue Ribbon Schools award, having previously been honored in 2009.

I want to congratulate Principal Cindy Dusang, Harrison County Schools Superintendent Roy Gill, and all D'Iberville Elementary faculty and staff members.

It is an honor that two of the four Mississippi schools awarded the National Blue Ribbon Schools award call the Fourth District of Mississippi home.

Mississippi is fortunate to have schools and educators dedicated to preparing the next generation. So congratulations again to Popp's Ferry and D'Iberville elementary schools on this incredible achievement.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF RUPERT H. LACY

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize a true leader of Mis-

issippi for his outstanding career of service, Mr. Rupert H. Lacy.

Mr. Lacy has served as the director of emergency management, homeland security, and e-911 for Harrison County, Mississippi, for 13 years.

He was appointed director in December 2007 and has been responsible for a wide range of public safety activities, including emergency planning, hazard mitigation, emergency communications disaster response, and recovery for Mississippi's second most populous county, comprised of five cities and more than 200,000 residents.

A native Mississippian, Mr. Lacy was touched by disasters growing up and saw the chaos they could cause firsthand.

In the late 1970s, he started as a volunteer firefighter but has served in many capacities since then, including deputy director of Harrison County Emergency Management, warden of Leake County Correctional Facility, captain of support services for Harrison County Sheriff's Department, and training officer for Harrison County Sheriff's Department.

An expert in all-hazards comprehensive emergency management, Mr. Lacy has been a leader on several high-profile incident management teams and delegations.

During Hurricane Katrina in 2005, he served as logistics section chief. From 2008 until 2020, Mr. Lacy served as co-chairman of the National Hurricane Conference's response committee, helping scores of coastal communities share their best practices and lessons learned.

He is detail-oriented, organized, and prioritizes safety above all, which is precisely the type of person you want running point during hurricane season or an unprecedented pandemic.

Mr. Lacy was mentored by the late former Harrison County Emergency Services director, Wade Guice, and has since continued this tradition of mentorship with his coworkers and all who come in contact with him.

When asked about Mr. Lacy, many of his coworkers responded that he is a strong father figure in their lives and has taught them so much through his positive example.

After many years of faithful and distinguished service, Mr. Lacy retired as EMA director on December 1, 2020.

A resident of Saucier, Mississippi, he is married to Ivy Lacy and is the proud father and grandfather of three children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren, who all certainly enjoy the extra time with him.

We thank his family for being so understanding of his long hours spent serving others. Over the door in his office, Mr. Lacy kept a plaque that said: "Remembering the past and working in the present to protect the future of Harrison County."

It is safe to say he lived this creed well. Mr. Lacy's length and breadth of experience in public safety are to be applauded.

I know many join me in wishing him a happy and restful retirement. It is my honor and privilege to recognize the remarkable career of Mr. Rupert H. Lacy.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT E. CARTER

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the legacy and the outstanding life of service of Purple Heart recipient Staff Sergeant Robert E. Carter.

He was born September 2, 1986, in San Luis Obispo, California, to Rick and Linda Carter. Staff Sergeant Carter attended Rio Vista High School and San Joaquin Delta College as a firefighter for a degree in fire science. He was also in the process of completing his bachelor of science in public health at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Staff Sergeant Carter joined the United States Army on April 25, 2007, and attended training at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he graduated as an 11 Bravo Infantryman.

Staff Sergeant Carter's first deployment was in 2007 to Baghdad under the Dagger Brigade in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

His second deployment was from November 2008 to November 2009 for Operation Iraqi Freedom as a rifle team leader and platoon designated marksman in charge of Small Denial Team's counteroffensive for IEDs. It was during this deployment on April 5, 2009, that he sustained injuries from an IED explosion while conducting dismounted clearance of a hostile village in Balad Ruz, Iraq.

His final deployment was in July 2011 to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During this deployment, he created and implemented the Afghanistan National Army's sniper course.

His last assignment before retirement was to serve as a sniper-observer course trainer.

A few of Staff Sergeant Carter's awards and decorations included: Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Valorous Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, NATO Medal, Expert Infantryman Badge, and Combat Infantryman Badge.

He earned each of these accolades and will be remembered for his unwavering service to his country.

Staff Sergeant Carter was laid to rest on October 19, 2020, at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery.

He is survived by his fiancée, Erica Farmer. Staff Sergeant Carter was a beloved son, brother, and friend to all who knew him.

He accomplished more in just his 34 years on this Earth than most do in a lifetime. I had the pleasure of meeting with and presenting Staff Sergeant Carter with his Purple Heart award on January 24, 2020.

He was a true American hero, motivated by the love of his fellow man. We

are all indebted to the sacrifices he made through his unwavering commitment to boldly defending our country.

It is an honor to recognize Staff Sergeant Robert E. Carter's life and legacy of service.

HONORING THE WORKS OF CANNIE LEE CODY

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the outstanding career of service of Mr. Cannie Lee Cody.

Mr. Cody hails from Jacksonville, Florida, and volunteered at 18 years old to serve his country in the United States Coast Guard.

After a few years, he decided to follow the path to become a detective. At the age of 29, Mr. Cody graduated as valedictorian from the Duval County Patrol Academy. He served as a highway patrolman for 5 years, eventually reaching the rank of detective sergeant at the Duval County Sheriff's Office.

In the 1960s, riots began to break out in Jacksonville, Florida. One riot occurred on March 23, 1964, and on that evening, Mrs. Johnnie Mae Chappell, a mother of 10, was shot and killed. Mrs. Chappell had returned home by bus and then walked to a local store. Upon arriving home, she realized she had left her wallet and went to look for it along the highway.

According to witnesses, a dark sedan slowed down and a shot was fired from the vehicle, which killed Mrs. Chappell. The case was left open and unsolved.

Five months later, Mr. Cody and his partner encountered a young man who they suspected was involved in the murder. This encounter led them to three other assailants who also confessed to Mrs. Chappell's murder.

By this time, they had tracked down the murder weapon and enough evidence to close the case. They gave the uncovered information to the chief of police, but sadly, they were removed from the case and lost their jobs a year later.

Mr. Cody had spent the following decades trying to get justice for Mrs. Chappell and her family. For years, he sought vindication and to expose the corruption of the officials involved.

Mr. Cody went on to write a book called "The 14th Denial: A Civil Rights Memoir," which inspired the movie "Wanted Justice: Johnnie Mae Chappell." Both the book and movie are thought-provoking and share an incredibly important story.

For his service, Mr. Cody is being honored by the Department of Veterans Affairs for his dedication to our country and the civil rights movement.

Mr. Cody has spent his life fighting for what is right and serving others. It is an honor to recognize the heroic career of service of Mr. Cannie Lee Cody.

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

CAPITOL HILL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the

gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for his great remarks about these wonderful heroes, men and women in uniform who served our country valiantly overseas and here in law enforcement.

I had the honor of attending the funeral of a constituent who passed away when the helicopter went down in Sinai a few weeks back because he was one of my constituents in San Antonio, and it was a great celebration of his life.

I want to thank the gentleman from Mississippi for honoring these great folks, your constituents in Mississippi. I appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, here we are, as predictable as Christmas. We are at it again, a 7-day continuing resolution, which the American people look at in wonder and amazement during the Christmas season, that every year their illustrious leaders in the House of Representatives can find their way to be even more incompetent, year to year, in how we conduct the affairs of this great Nation.

We might as well call these funding debacles the Capitol Hill Christmas Pageant. We show up. We put on a show. We sell out the American people. We close up and head home. And we do it like clockwork.

I don't know if anybody has noticed, but we are almost at \$28 trillion in debt. We are blowing past our gross domestic product, a general sign in history of a nation in decline, which none of us, of course, would want to acknowledge that the United States of America would be facing.

□ 1900

I am in amazement as I watch my colleagues running around talking about budget caps. I am a fan of budget caps, but there are no budget caps here. Anyone who is talking about budget caps, going over them or going under them, we don't adhere to budget caps. We set budget caps in 2011, and had we adhered to them we would have saved almost \$800 billion since then.

But what do we do? We have these deals. We come together. We jack up the budget caps. We blow out spending in defense. We blow out nondefense discretionary spending. And then we all kind of wave at each other and complain about spending and go home. That is we do.

What are we going to do next week? We are going to spend another \$1.4 trillion, which, again, will bust existing caps by at least a little, and then some will jockey around about that, about whether we should save the \$12 billion and try to adhere to those caps, forgetting the fact that we are \$300 billion over the 2011 caps. In other words, there are no caps.

We have already spent \$2.6 trillion on COVID relief spending.

So what does that mean next year, Mr. Speaker? We are blowing past \$30 trillion in debt.

Think about it. Yes, tonight constituents back home, or anybody watching, the 14 people watching C-SPAN right now, there is nobody else in the Chamber. This is our version of debate, Mr. Speaker. This is what our constituents' House of Representatives, their people's House, this is what we do. This is what debate looks like.

So we are continuing to spend money that we don't have, and we are going to now debate another COVID relief bill, another trillion-dollar bill.

But we refuse to help the people government is actually running over. We are not helping the small businesses that governments across this country are using their power to shut down. Small businesses are getting destroyed by government tyranny.

Now, you can say, Mr. Speaker, and pat yourself on the back that it is in the name of public health, and everybody can go back home and say: Oh, aren't we nice. But you are shutting people's livelihoods down and walking away, and yet this body is refusing to do anything about it.

I was proud to work with my Democratic colleague DEAN PHILLIPS this last summer to pass the PPP Flexibility Act to try to keep a lot of these businesses alive. I was thanked by hundreds, if not thousands, of people in my district for doing so. But what good is that if we are failing them now?

Mr. Speaker, 100,000 restaurants are already closed, and 10,000 more restaurants have closed since our last survey in July. Forty percent of remaining restaurants were closed without more support. Jobs at bars and restaurants are down 2 million this year.

Seventy-one percent of hotels report they will only be able to last 6 more months, and 63 hotels have less than half of pre-crisis staff.

Forty percent of small business owners report they will close in the next 12 months if things do not improve.

What did the Speaker of the House do? The Speaker of the House admitted that she withheld relief from small businesses and struggling workers for political gamesmanship. She acknowledged it. She said it.

Why aren't we debating that? Why aren't we having conversations about that? Why aren't we debating a clean PPP bill right now?

This Chamber is empty. We just adjourned, passing a 7-week CR that blows our spending out of proportion, setting up the table for next week doing the same thing for a year, and this Chamber is empty. Everyone is flying home. It is absurd.

The American people look at this every day, and they wonder what in the world, and now we are going to pass a \$1 trillion bill that bails out, in many cases, the very State and local governments that are shutting down these local businesses with their tyrannical activity.

More than that, when we actually spend the money, we are going to fund the very institutions that are crushing

the American way of life. We fund, as I said, the tyrant mayors and city councils, like Mayor Adler in Austin, Texas, who are killing small businesses. The good mayor had the unbelievable hutzpah to record a video in Cabo San Lucas telling Austin residents to stay home.

We fund the very schools that are failing our kids, the very schools that are locking down our kids from an education. Suicide rates are up, failing grades are up, fear levels are up among our children, and the very schools that are indoctrinating our kids to hate this country and what it stands for, to apologize for this country, to declare this country is evil, to tear down the statues in this country, the very education system doing that, we are going to fund, while we blow past caps, passing to those very children a massive amount of debt.

We fund the very local governments that are defunding police but expect them to enforce lockdowns.

We fund corporate cronyism by giving a bailout that undeniably favored massive retail corporations that can absorb the costs that small businesses can't. Mom-and-pop shops are getting killed, and great big companies are getting rich.

Where is this body? It is nowhere to be found, an empty Chamber.

We just passed a defense bill yesterday that will burden those small businesses even further with potentially more regulations.

Mr. Speaker, you can't even make this up.

A defense bill has language in there that will hurt small businesses even when they are at their low point getting beat up by a virus and tyrants are shutting them down.

We fund an immigration system that fails immigrants, fails Americans, empowers cartels, and is a national embarrassment while we have people who are held hostage in homes in this country by cartel-driven illegal enterprises. It is happening right now at our border, and this body is empty. Mr. Speaker, 67,000 people were apprehended at our border in October.

Where is this Chamber talking about anything about border security? It would be better for immigrants and better for our country, but we won't do it.

We fund a massive healthcare system that reduces doctor availability but empowers insurance companies, and we are doing it by the second. You have to ask an insurance company about how to get healthcare.

Why? Because this body is failing.

We fund ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and on and on and on in myriad countries around the world—I can't even count them—despite not having passed an authorization of force in almost 20 years.

World War II, Mr. Speaker, went from December 7, 1941, to August of 1945. We have kids today enlisting in the military who were not alive when

we passed the authorization of force in 2001 under which they are operating.

What kind of a people's body is it that won't even debate an authorization of force? We are nowhere to be found.

Steak dinners or on airplanes flying home right now, that is where the 400 colleagues are—if they were even here in the first place, because they have been voting by proxy from home sitting on boats.

We fund election systems that fail us. What is this House doing to ensure election integrity?

There is a lot of politics flying around the air right now about elections, but do you believe in our elections, I ask the ladies and gentlemen who are watching this. Do they believe every vote is counted? Do they believe that every vote was legal?

In 2012, The New York Times admitted that mail-in ballots are a problem. Votes cast by mail are less likely to be counted, more likely to be compromised, and more likely to be contested than those cast in a voting booth, statistics show. Election officials reject almost 2 percent of ballots cast by mail, double the rate for in-person voting.

The Carter-Baker Commission—that is former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State Jim Baker—was formed in 2005: "Absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter fraud"—bipartisan, 2005.

Citizens who vote at home, at nursing homes, at the workplace, or in church are more susceptible to pressure, overt and subtle, or intimidation. Vote buying schemes are far more difficult to detect when citizens vote by mail—bipartisan, Jimmy Carter, Jim Baker.

Why won't we even talk about it here? Why are we making this all about the President, not the President, the votes?

We had a massive increase in mail-in ballots this year, and we are wondering whether our election system is even working.

Examples of known fraud: In 2016, 83 registered voters in San Pedro, California, received absentee ballots at the same small, two-bedroom apartment. Prosecutors rarely pursue this type of case.

In 2018, a North Carolina congressional case, a Republican operative, McCrae Dowless, Jr., had allegedly requested more than 1,200 absentee ballots on voters' behalf and then collected the ballots in voters' homes.

In 2017, an investigation of a Dallas city council election found some 700 fraudulent mail-in ballots signed by the same witness using a fake name.

I could go on and on. There are problems with mail-in ballots.

What did we just see this year, Mr. Speaker? In Georgia, 2016 general election, 208,000 mail-in ballots; this year, 1.3 million mail-in ballots. In Arizona, 2016, they had 2.4 million mail-in ballots; this year, 3.6 million mail-in ballots. Pennsylvania, 2016, 314,000 mail-in

ballots; this year, 3.1 million mail-in ballots.

I am not suggesting that I know what the numbers should or shouldn't be in Georgia, Pennsylvania, or Arizona in this case. What I am suggesting is that even minor changes in rejection rates on these ballots—of which there are very large questions right now about the rejection rates—would impact the election.

Regardless of what you want to see happen with the election, Mr. Speaker, do you not want to know that you can believe in your election?

Why are we not holding hearings? Have we had a hearing this week on this, bipartisan, calling it in, making sure that we believe in our elections? Is the Senate holding hearings?

The American people are raising legitimate questions about our elections, and this body is missing in action and doing nothing.

But I will tell you where Congress is, Mr. Speaker. It is passing bills like yesterday which amount to political garbage masquerading as defense authorization.

We passed the defense authorization bill which does, in fact, contain critically important components to support America's troops but, in fact, actually fails our troops in many respects.

Mr. Speaker, we were all told to vote for it, you see. We were told to vote for it because you can't vote against a defense authorization bill because you are voting against pay increases and you are voting against badly needed resources for your men and women in uniform. Yet the people telling us to vote for it have no qualms about holding our Armed Forces' pay hostage with no ability to amend the bill on the floor and no ability to debate the bill.

Has anybody seen an amendment brought down here to the floor, an open amendment, saying: "Hey, I am Congressman ROY. I have got an amendment, and I would like to offer it?" Has that ever happened in this body? Has anybody ever seen that happen down here?

It doesn't happen.

We fund 20-year wars with no clear mission and no clear end date. We fund a war that is now older than millions of young Americans signing up to fight in it, as I said before.

This defense authorization bill has a cheap diversity officer and other race-based programs in it, which I personally find deeply un-American, while defense is increasingly challenged by China and Iran.

When you pass something like that, Mr. Speaker, you are saying that the body values waging a war with no clear mission and appeasing leftwing diversity political mob rule more than protecting the American citizens whose lives are threatened every single day by cartel violence, by people coming across the border, and by what is going on in Iran and by China.

The bottom line is the American people hire all of us to do a job, and we are

failing them, which brings me to my point, in my view, about 2021.

The Framers created this branch, Congress, to debate and deliberate, to represent the people. But we pass pre-made bills cooked up behind closed doors by committee, in rules committees, and by a handful of committee cardinals, and we never debate them or amend them here on the floor of the House of Representatives, and we are increasingly passing by proxy vote.

For the American people back home, proxy vote means a Member of this body whom you hired to do a job under the Constitution—you gave them your vote under the Constitution—and that Member comes to a Member of this body and says: "I want you to vote for me."

So your vote, citizen, that you entrusted into your elected Member of Congress is being given to another Member here in the body.

We have been in session for fewer than 40 days since March, I am told. Mr. Speaker, you can fact-check that, and you can go double-check it, but I can tell you we have been here precious few days.

Think about that: While in the middle of a pandemic, while running \$28 trillion in debt, while mounting up trillion-dollar deficits, multitruillion-dollar deficits, while China is right at our heels, while we are dealing with men and women in uniform in Afghanistan and the Middle East, while we have healthcare costs going up and crippling people, and while small businesses are struggling, the Speaker is playing games not bringing small businesses relief to the floor.

□ 1915

Mr. Speaker, we have been here for fewer than 40 days. The Speaker broke with over 230 years of precedent to authorize the unconstitutional proxy voting scheme.

Last week, ladies and gentlemen, for the first time in the history of the United States, the House of Representatives used proxy votes—those are votes for Representatives who are not present in the Chamber to achieve a quorum, as the Constitution requires. Because the Constitution contemplates our being here, doing our job, I say ironically, with my voice echoing in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, not a single floor amendment, not a single open rule—the most closed rules since 1993. Now, that is boring for the people back home.

What does a closed rule mean? It is what I am saying. It means that Congressman ROY cannot offer an amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives. That is what a closed rule is, and that is what we operate under. We never have debate and deliberation. We are ruled by a handful.

As I said before, I am under the understanding that we have not had a single debate of an amendment open on the floor of the House of Representa-

tives since May of 2016 where a Member could just come down, a bill is put on the floor, a Member says, "I would like to amend it." No body functions that way—not the people's House.

Do we think things would be better or worse if we were actually down here offering amendments, offering debate, debating and discussing?

When the NDAA was on the floor yesterday—and there was a provision in the NDAA to place massive burdens on small businesses, but it was jammed in there to get it across the line—if we could have had an amendment on the floor, I could offer an amendment to strike it, and we would know where everybody in this body stands on adding those regulations to small businesses. But I was denied the ability to do that because we operate under a closed rule.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of a people's House is that?

You want to know why we are pushing \$28 trillion in debt, and we are about to blow past \$30 trillion? You want to know why we never get really good legislation?

Because I am never able to work with the Speaker or with any of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle because we can't come down here and offer amendments and have rigorous debate to force the conversations.

We are ruled by a handful on both sides of the aisle who tell us what we are voting on. They come in and they say, Here is your 2,000-page bill. Figure out how you are going to vote on it. Figure out how you are going to message it back home.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in history, we opened an impeachment inquiry without a vote in the House. Now, I am not trying to open up impeachment. That has long since kind of come and gone from the minds of Americans, it seems like, but that is a big deal.

In 2021, for the House to work, the following, in my opinion, should be nonnegotiable:

Members should have 72 hours to review the legislation in the form to be voted on before they are required to vote. That is not a very big ask, ladies and gentlemen. We should have time to look at 2,000-page bills in the form that we are voting on it to see what is in it.

We should have an open amendment process, giving all Members an opportunity to amend bills on the floor. Bills should cover single subjects and not be subject to division of the test under rule XVI we are applying. We should have single-subject bills, like the bill—by the way—that DEAN PHILLIPS, my Democrat colleague from Minnesota, and I offered on the floor.

There was a PPP Flexibility Act, and it was 7 pages long. We should have that bill, put it on the floor, debate it, amend it, vote.

And proxy voting should be prohibited on the floor of the House of Representatives. It is unconstitutional. I look forward to the U.S. Supreme Court taking that up, and I believe and

hope that they will find it to be unconstitutional as it is.

Mr. Speaker, finally, a note about the coronavirus. Many Americans have been impacted by the virus. I have friends and family that have been impacted by it. I have had staff who have been impacted by it. I missed Thanksgiving with my 78-year-old father and 72-year-old mother because I had been around someone who had been positive. I wanted to protect them. We are all doing these things. We are all making sacrifices, figuring out how to adjust to make sure we protect the vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation should be open. Our businesses should be open. Our schools should be open. Our restaurants should be open. Our baseball and football and basketball stadiums should be open. Our churches should never, ever close again. And we should use our own judgment to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas without local, petty tyrants attempting to tell us what to do. But here we are, as I hear Joe Biden and others talk about national mask mandates in 2021, and I continue to hear about restrictions and social distancing, even if we get a vaccine.

Have any of you been to the restaurants that are shutting down? In Arlington, Virginia, they run over and grab your beer or Diet Coke at 10 p.m. right on the dot. They can't make money. They can't survive.

Are any of the local, petty tyrants shutting them down going to pay their bills or are they going to come here to this Chamber and expect us to pass another trillion-dollar bill to fund them because the local governments are shutting them down?

Because that is what is happening. The big businesses are doing fine. But the small restaurants, the local dry cleaners, the small hotels, the local music venues, the artists—the backbone of this country is getting decimated because we are shutting down. America doesn't shut down.

Leftists run around bleeding about how we should be locked down, but expecting workers to bring them their lattes or take-home Chinese or tacos, expecting workers to clean the streets

and pick up the garbage and serve them while they pat themselves on the back for being enlightened.

Mayors like Mayor Adler in Austin, who I already said went to Cabo and recorded a video telling us we should stay home.

Mayors like the mayors in L.A. turning off utilities while policing people's home.

Oh, my gosh, how many cars do you have in front of your house?

The mayor in Denver saying everybody has got to stay home, but what does he do?

He flies home. Rules for thee, but not for me.

My fellow Americans, these local tyrants, tell them a simple word; tell them "no." You local businessowners that are opening up, God be with you. I am with you. Open up. We are Americans. We don't close down.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is a large and vibrant economy and large and vibrant country that thrives on free enterprise, freedom of religion, freedom to interact and engage as a society. It is who we are as Americans. We will remain the economic engine of the world.

And I, frankly, don't really care to listen to countries around the world lecture us about their alleged lockdown successes and results—much of which are easily disputable—when the world lives off the very sacrifices we make.

We fund the world's defense, ladies and gentlemen. We fund, through our economic engine, a good deal of this world. We feed a large chunk of this world. We provide energy for an enormous part of this world. So forgive me if I don't want to be lectured to by Australia or anybody else about how their success in their lockdown worked out for them. Because these things are all interacting.

When we make decisions, it impacts real lives. You read reports about 140 million people that may be starving because we are not distributing the same number of products because of the virus. And then you come talk to me about a few thousand that are impacted by the virus. We have got decisions to make that impact people's lives, and we do it by staying open.

Our own lockdowns that we have chosen to do, predominantly by local governments have been devastating. We have seen devastation in our schools, devastation in small businesses. We have seen people forced to die alone. We have seen increased suicides, people that have died from diseases, cancer, heart disease, and more, all because of virus policies. And to all of that, I say, simply, "enough."

Mr. Speaker, this body, this House of Representatives should no longer be operating in fear. We are leaders. We should be here. We should be debating. We should be present. We should be in this Chamber, and we should not be wearing masks. We should be looking each other in the face and in the eye, and we should be doing our job. Take tests, take our temperature, whatever it takes, but lead.

We are running around in fear, and it is embarrassing. We have these fake cleaning exercises between votes as a threat because of precious time if we dare congregate for 5-minutes and debate some issue that is on the floor of the House of Representatives.

This is no way for the House of Representatives to function while we are leading a Nation. We should reject fear and favor of our faith, reject fear and favor of our family, our friends, and the thriving society Americans deserve.

And simply put, America must never again shut down. America must always be open for business. And more importantly, America must always be open for life.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 4(b) of House Resolution 967, the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon (at 7 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 10, 2020, at 9 a.m.

BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF PAYGO LEGISLATION

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, the attached estimate of the costs of H.R. 1570, the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act of 2020, as amended, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

ESTIMATE OF PAY-AS-YOU-GO EFFECTS FOR H.R. 1570

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—											
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2021–2025	2021–2030
Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Impact	–130	–220	–240	–161	–173	–75	–2	121	246	452	–924	–182

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that H.R. 3797, the Medical Marijuana Research Act, as amended, would have no significant effect on the deficit, and therefore, the budgetary effects of such bill are estimated as zero.

[Omitted from the Record of December 8, 2020]

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that H.R. 7146, For the relief of Victoria Galindo Lopez, as amended, would have no significant effect on the deficit, and therefore, the budgetary effects of such bill are estimated as zero.

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that H.R. 7489, the Long Bridge Act of 2020, as amended, would have no significant effect on the deficit, and therefore, the budgetary effects of such bill are estimated as zero.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-5928. A letter from the Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Swap Data Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements (RIN: 3038-AE31) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-5929. A letter from the Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendments to Regulations Relating to Certain Swap Data Repository and Data Reporting Requirements (RIN: 3038-AE32) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-5930. A letter from the Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Real-Time Public Reporting Requirements (RIN: 3038-AE60) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-5931. A letter from the Deputy Administrator for Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Child Nutrition Programs: Rescission of Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Flexibilities: Notice of Vacatur [FNS-2020-0037] (RIN: 0584-AE84) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-5932. A letter from the Secretary, Division of Clearing and Risk; Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Swap Clearing Requirement Exemptions (RIN: 3038-AE33) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-5933. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense, transmitting a report titled, "Summary Report to Congress of the Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2019 Inventory of Contracted Services", pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2330a(c)(1); Public Law 107-107, Sec. 801(c)(1) (as amended by Public Law 114-328, Sec. 812); (130 Stat. 2269); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5934. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Restriction on the Acquisition of Tantalum (DFARS Case 2020-D007) [Docket: DARS-2020-0035] (RIN: 0750-AK94) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5935. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final

rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Inflation Adjustment of Acquisition-Related Thresholds (DFARS Case 2019-D036) [Docket: DARS-2020-0002] (RIN: 0750-AK76) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5936. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Treatment of Certain Items as Commercial Items (DFARS Case 2019-D029) [Docket: DARS-2019-0052] (RIN: 0750-AK66) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5937. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of DFARS Clause "Substitutions for Military or Federal Specifications and Standards" (DFARS Case 2019-D023) [Docket: DARS-2020-0006] (RIN: 0750-AK60) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5938. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of DFARS Provision "Alternate Preservation, Packaging, and Packing" (DFARS Case 2019-D022) [Docket: DARS-2019-0056] (RIN: 0750-AK59) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5939. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of DFARS Provision and Clause on Reserve Officer Training Corps and Military Recruiting on Campus [Docket No.: DARS-2020-0030] (RIN: 0750-AK89) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5940. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of DFARS Clauses related to Taxes Applied to Foreign Contracts in Afghanistan [Docket No.: DARS-2020-0018] (RIN: 0750-AL11) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5941. A letter from the Director, Regulations Management Division, Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Change in Initial Guarantee Fee and Annual Guarantee Fee [Docket No.: RHS-20-MFH-0027] (RIN: 0575-AD15) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5942. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's Major final rule — Enterprise Regulatory Capital Framework (RIN: 2590-AA95) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5943. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's policy Statement — Statement on Central Counterparties Authorized under the European Markets Infrastructure Regulation Seeking to Register as a Clearing Agency or to Request Exemption from Certain Requirements Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 [Release No.: 34-90490] received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5944. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's policy statement — Commission Statement on Certain Provisions of Business Conduct Standards for Security-Based Swap Dealers and Major Security-Based Participants [Release No.: 34-84511; File No.: S7-24-18] (RIN: 3235-AL10) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5945. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Management's Discussion and Analysis, Selected Financial Data, and Supplementary Financial Information [Release No.: 33-10890; 34-90459; IC-34100; File No.: S7-01-20] (RIN: 3235-AM48) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5946. A letter from the Chief of Staff, OSHA, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Cranes and Derricks in Construction: Railroad Roadway Work [Docket ID: OSHA-2015-0012] (RIN: 1218-AD07) received November 17, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

EC-5947. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

EC-5948. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Report to Congress on "The 12th Review of the Backlog of Postmarketing Requirements and Postmarketing Commitments", pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 355(k)(5)(B); June 25, 1938, ch. 675, Sec. 505(k)(5)(B) (as added by Public Law 110-85, Sec. 921); (121

Stat. 962); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-5949. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Revision of the Commission's Part 76 Review [MB Docket No. 20-70]; Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative [MB Docket No. 17-105]; Revision of the Commission's Program Carriage Rules [MB Docket No. 11-131] received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5950. A letter from the Program Analyst, Office of Economics and Analytics, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Establishing a 5G Fund for Rural America [GN Docket No.: 20-32] December 9, 2020, 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.

EC-5951. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's NUREG report — Dry Storage and Transportation of High Burnup Spent Nuclear Fuel Final Report (NUREG-2224) received December 7, 2020, 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.

EC-5952. A letter from the Chairman, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's Office of the Inspector General Semi-annual Report to the Congress, for the period April 1, 2020 — September 30, 2020; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

EC-5953. A letter from the Branch of Delisting and Foreign Species, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reclassification of the American Burying Beetle From Endangered to Threatened With a Section 4(d) Rule [Docket No.: FWS-R2-ES-2018-0029; FF09E22000 FXES11130900000 201] (RIN: 1018-BD46) received December 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-5954. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's Annual Report to Congress on Investigation, Enforcement, and Implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act Requirements, pursuant to 34 U.S.C. 20991; Public Law 109-248, Sec. 635; (120 Stat. 644); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5955. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Reports of Lobbying Disclosure Act Enforcement for 2017 — 2019 and January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5956. A letter from the Agency Representative, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Trademark Fee Adjustment [Docket No.: PTO-T-2019-0027] (RIN: 0651-AD42) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5957. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Breton Sound, New Orleans [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0684] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5958. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Home-

land Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; J5D Optic Line Replacement, Detroit River, Detroit, MI [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0610] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5959. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; East River, New York, NY [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0600] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5960. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Fleet Week Demonstration Area, San Diego, CA [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0655] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5961. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Special Local Regulation; Boat Parade; San Diego, CA [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0656] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5962. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Breton Sound, New Orleans, LA [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0684] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5963. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Lower Mississippi River, Mile Marker 721-725, Memphis, TN [Docket No.: USCG-2020-0564] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received December 2, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5964. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation and Policy Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Reimbursement of Qualifying Adoption Expenses for Certain Veterans (RIN: 2900-AQ01) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5965. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Extension of Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) Application Periods in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (RIN: 2900-AQ98) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5966. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Administrative Procedures: Guidance Documents (RIN: 2900-AQ92) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5967. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Authority of VA Professionals to Practice Health Care (RIN: 2900-AQ94) received December 2, 2020, 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.

EC-5968. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Disclosure of Certain Protected Records Without Written Consent (2900-AQ64) received December 2, 2020, 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.

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. DEFAZIO: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 3632. A bill to ensure that authorizations issued by the Secretary of Transportation to foreign air carriers do not undermine labor rights or standards, and for other purposes (Rept. 116-636). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. DEFAZIO: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 5756. A bill to amend the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to extend the provision of assistance for critical services with respect to certain disasters, and for other purposes (Rept. 116-637). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

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. LANGEVIN (for himself and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington):

H.R. 8906. A bill to amend title XXIX of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the program under such title relating to lifespan respite care; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BERGMAN (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CRENshaw, and Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana):

H.R. 8907. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to establish a unit within the Office of the Inspector General to audit United States contributions to multilateral and international organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 8908. A bill to require Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to report information related to allegations of misconduct of law enforcement officers to the Attorney General, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 8909. A bill to require the Natural Resources Conservation Service to review the national conservation practice standards, taking into consideration climate benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 8910. A bill to require a study of the barriers to conservation practice adoption on

leased agricultural land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. CASE (for himself, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. SAN NICOLAS, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. SABLAN):

H.R. 8911. A bill to amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to provide public benefits to citizens of the freely associated states, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Ms. HAALAND, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. TITUS, and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 8912. A bill to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to establish in the Department of State a Chief Diversity Officer and the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to promote increased diversity in the Foreign Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. VELA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 8913. A bill to report data on COVID-19 immigration detention facilities and local correctional facilities that contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Homeland Security, and Ways and Means, 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. CLEAVER:

H.R. 8914. A bill to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to permit certain non-designated clearinghouses access to a deposit account at a Federal reserve bank, to apply certain risk management standards to non-designated clearinghouses receiving certain services from a Federal reserve bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLEAVER (for himself and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 8915. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to provide for the consideration of climate change, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. CLYBURN:

H.R. 8916. A bill to amend the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Act to extend the authorization of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina):

H.R. 8917. A bill to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to extend the authorization of the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RUSH, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

H.R. 8918. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to promote healthy eating and physical activity among children; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CUNNINGHAM:

H.R. 8919. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to consolidate and upgrade

the mail management systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. FERGUSON):

H.R. 8920. A bill to establish a program to develop antimicrobial innovations targeting the most challenging pathogens and most threatening infections; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Veterans' Affairs, Armed Services, the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and 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. ESPAILLAT:

H.R. 8921. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to reimburse qualified health care providers for the costs of purchasing, leasing, installing, and operating qualified equipment for cold storage of COVID-19 vaccines; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. GABBARD (for herself and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 8922. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to limit interactive computer service immunity; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. GABBARD:

H.R. 8923. A bill To amend title 18, United States Code, to ensure a health care practitioner exercises the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois (for himself, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. MENG, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. NADLER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mrs. TORRES of California, and Mr. SCHIFF):

H.R. 8924. A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to treat the lease for a dwelling unit under certain federally assisted housing programs as a simultaneous application for voter registration in elections for Federal office, to designate owners of dwelling units under certain federally assisted housing programs as voter registration agencies for purposes of such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. HALL:

H.R. 8925. A bill to amend the Help America Vote of 2002 to require States to complete prior to the date of an election for Federal office the tabulation of ballots for the election which were cast or received prior to the date of the election, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. MOULTON (for himself, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 8926. A bill to amend chapter 261 of title 49, United States Code, to provide for high-speed rail corridor development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. NORTON:

H.R. 8927. A bill to permit a State to impose a sales tax on qualifying purchases at

any gift shop on Federal property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUSH:

H.R. 8928. A bill to direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission to require portable generators to meet certain standards relating to carbon monoxide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. PANETTA, and Mr. DEUTCH):

H.R. 8929. A bill to improve the procedures of the national instant criminal background check system in the case of firearm transfers by federally licensed firearms importers, manufacturers, and dealers before the completion of the related criminal background check, and to provide for annual reports on default firearm transfers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself and Mr. RICE of South Carolina):

H.R. 8930. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow 10-year straight line depreciation for energy efficient qualified improvement property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mr. SCHRADER, and Mr. WALDEN):

H. Con. Res. 126. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should direct the Secretary of State to immediately issue a notice of intent to terminate the commercial and power coordination provisions of the Columbia River Treaty between the United States and Canada; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. BASS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. CLAY, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. EVANS):

H. Res. 1253. A resolution designating room H-150 of the United States Capitol as "The Joseph H. Rainey Room" to honor the historic life, career, and legacy of Representative Joseph Rainey of South Carolina on the 150th anniversary of his seating as a member of the House of Representatives; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H. Res. 1254. A resolution establishing a task force to recommend an appropriate recognition of the historic life and career of Representative Joseph Rainey of South Carolina on the 150th anniversary of his becoming a Member of the House of Representatives; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mrs. HAYES:

H. Res. 1255. A resolution commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

ML-218. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 24, memorializing the Congress and the Louisiana congressional delegation to take such actions as are necessary to fully fund the Livestock Indemnity Program in response to the negative impact created by losses to the Louisiana livestock industry as a result of Hurricane Laura and Hurricane Delta; to the Committee on Agriculture.

ML-219. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 30, memorializing the Congress to take such action as are necessary to pass a stimulus plan that includes funds for unemployment, housing, local government, struggling businesses, education, and health care; to the Committee on Appropriations.

ML-220. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 283, urging the Congress of the United States to Allocate Funding for States That Have Established Broadband and Expansion Block Grant Programs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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. LANGEVIN:

H.R. 8906.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3

By Mr. BERGMAN:

H.R. 8907.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 8908.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 8909.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 8910.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. CASE:

H.R. 8911.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 8912.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 8913.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Constitutional Authority—Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. I, Sec. 8, Clause 18)

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION,

ARTICLE I SECTION 8: POWERS OF CONGRESS.

CLAUSE 18

The Congress shall have power . . . To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 8914.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 8915.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. CLYBURN:

H.R. 8916.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CLYBURN:

H.R. 8917.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 8918.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. CUNNINGHAM:

H.R. 8919.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. 1, Sec. 8, Cl. 1 "The Congress shall have Power To . . . provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States;"

Art. 1, Sec. 8, Cl. 18 "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. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 8920.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. ESPAILLAT:

H.R. 8921.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One of the United States Constitution, 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 this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof

By Ms. GABBARD:

H.R. 8922.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The U.S. Constitution, including Article 1, Section 8.

By Ms. GABBARD:

H.R. 8923.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 (General Welfare Clause) and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 (Necessary and Proper Clause), Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2 (Property).

By Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois:

H.R. 8924.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. HALL:

H.R. 8925.

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 of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and

interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. MOULTON:

H.R. 8926.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 8927.

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. RUSH:

H.R. 8928.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. SCHNEIDER:

H.R. 8929.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

By Mr. SCHNEIDER:

H.R. 8930.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 40: Mr. HALL.

H.R. 590: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 763: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 949: Mr. GIBBS.

H.R. 1042: Ms. BARRAGÁN.

H.R. 1570: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1605: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.

H.R. 1685: Ms. LEE of California.

H.R. 1966: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 2178: Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 2350: Ms. SPANBERGER.

H.R. 2927: Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 2975: Mr. HALL.

H.R. 3711: Ms. SCANLON.

H.R. 4022: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

H.R. 4408: Mr. HALL.

H.R. 5297: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 5986: Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Ms. SPANBERGER.

H.R. 6698: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 6741: Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 6788: Mr. LAMB and Mr. KIM.

H.R. 6802: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.

H.R. 6958: Ms. STEVENS and Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 7033: Mr. TIFFANY.

H.R. 7073: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 7181: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 7217: Mr. HALL.

H.R. 7854: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 8179: Ms. CRAIG.

H.R. 8443: Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 8517: Mr. JOHN W. ROSE of Tennessee.

H.R. 8529: Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina.

H.R. 8617: Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 8662: Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 8702: Mr. MORELLE, Mr. MEUSER, Mr. SIMPSON, and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 8745: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 8764: Mr. TIFFANY.

H.R. 8772: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.R. 8781: Mr. GUEST.

H.R. 8805: Mr. SUOZZI.

H.R. 8808: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.

H.R. 8812: Mr. HORSFORD and Mr. RYAN.

H.R. 8819: Mr. BERGMAN.

H.R. 8830: Mr. VAN DREW.

H.R. 8840: Mrs. AXNE, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 8867: Mr. DEFazio and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 8871: Mr. NEGUSE and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 8893: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. LAMB, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mrs. WAGNER, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. REED, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, and Mr. VAN DREW.
H. Con. Res. 40: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H. Con. Res. 123: Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. COHEN, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. POSEY, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H. Res. 114: Ms. FRANKEL.
H. Res. 1191: Mrs. LOWEY.
H. Res. 1207: Mrs. LOWEY.
H. Res. 1216: Mr. PHILLIPS.
H. Res. 1243: Mr. BERA.
H. Res. 1252: Mr. BABIN and Mr. JORDAN.

DELETION OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 1434: Mr. GROTHMAN.



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No. 208

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we praise You that You continue to rescue us from ourselves. We will tell about the wonders You have worked on our behalf. We are born in sin and formed by iniquity, but Your power continues to transform.

Lord, You have kept us from stumbling and disgrace. Continue to provide our Senators with the blessings of Your mercy and peace. Lead them not into temptation, but deliver them from evil.

Use our lawmakers to restore health and unity to a nation desperately desiring Your purposes to prevail. May Your favor keep us all secure.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

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

RECOGNIZING THE IOWA AIR NATIONAL GUARD'S 185TH AIR REFUELING WING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on November 27, it was announced that the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Air Refueling Wing in Sioux City, IA, has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

This award was earned for the wing's exceptional service to the Air Force in 2019, which included the usual thousands of flying hours and refueling, but it also included things like the humanitarian efforts of this wing's effort in the multiple Puerto Rican natural disasters.

In addition, the 185th Wing has been working tirelessly to support cleanup efforts from this great windstorm in Iowa called the derecho, which wiped out 800,000 acres of crops through the middle of Iowa. It also included such things that they may not be recognized for enough—helping with the COVID-19 testings in the State of Iowa.

So I say congratulations to the 185th Wing, and, most importantly, thank you for your dedication to serving our State and country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the American people are hurting. We are in the thick of one of the worst national crises in modern memory, and people's eyes are fixed on Congress. They need the House and the Senate to stop chasing our tails and make a law.

There are small business employees who have held onto their jobs all this time because of the Paycheck Protection Program but are facing the prospect they might be laid off now, with vaccines just around the corner, because Washington fumbles the ball in the red zone.

There are medically vulnerable Americans who have watched Operation Warp Speed appear to succeed at a historic pace, but Congress can't even agree to fully fund the distribution efforts that will get the vaccines to people.

There are Americans who have been thrown out of work, through no fault of their own, who are watching Federal aid programs tick toward expiration in a few weeks, even though neither side in Congress opposes extending them.

Senate Republicans have made one offer after another after another to try and make law on all the significant areas where nobody even disagrees. We spent July, August, September, October, and November trying different ways to create common ground, but the Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader have been just as consistent. At every turn, they have delayed, deflected, moved the goalposts, and made the huge number of places where Congress agrees into a hostage—into a hostage—of the few places where we do not agree.

Back in the summertime, I pointed out the obvious. I said leading Democrats simply just didn't want any more help to reach American families before the election occurred. The other side claimed great offense; how insulting to even suggest that such cynicism might be at play.

And now they are admitting it out loud. Yesterday, on CNN, the Democratic whip was asked point-blank why the Speaker and the Democratic leader were so unwilling to play ball back in the autumn. The No. 2 Democrat responded: "[Well], there was some exuberance involved because an election was coming." Well, he gets points for candor: "because an election was coming."

A few days ago, Speaker PELOSI told reporters why she reversed months of

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



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statements and suddenly began discussing comparatively more reasonable sums of money. Her answer was simple. She thinks the Presidential election went the way she wanted. The Speaker of the House views it as a success that she denied struggling people relief they badly needed for months because she thinks she got the political result she was after.

I count no fewer than 10 separate times that top Democrats rejected or blocked various Republican efforts to jump-start the process, so here is just a partial sampling.

In July, Republicans sketched a comprehensive plan for safe schools, jobs, and healthcare. We could have made law in July, but the Democratic leader wouldn't even engage with it. Just before August, Republicans tried to at least extend unemployment aid before it expired. Democrats blocked that as well.

In September, we tried something else: a targeted effort to spend hundreds of billions of dollars for PPP, vaccine development, and other priorities. Every Democrat who voted blocked us from even debating it, and they did it a second time a month later in October.

Last week, after speaking with the administration, I made yet another overture. The Democratic leader said: No thanks. And just yesterday, the Speaker and the Democratic leader brushed off two different overtures in the space of about 2 hours.

I suggested that both sides drop what seemed to be the most controversial demand in the eyes of our counterparts. Democrats continued to oppose commonsense legal protections that university presidents have been begging for, and Republicans see no need to send huge sums of money to State and local governments whose tax revenues have actually gone up—gone up.

Negotiating 101 suggests we set those two controversial pieces aside and plow ahead with a huge pile of things that we agree on, but that would require both sides to truly want to get an outcome.

Just hours after Democrats poured cold water on that, Secretary Mnuchin tried another new tack and sent over an offer, and in a bizarre and schizophrenic press release, the Speaker and the leader said the administration was obstructing negotiations by negotiating. Two more brush-offs in about 2 hours. More deflection, more delay, and more suffering for innocent Americans.

Can anyone point to a single sign—a single sign—from April through now, that Democratic leaders have seriously wanted another bipartisan deal to become law? Can anybody name one way—just one—the Democratic leaders would have behaved differently if their singular goal was to kill any compromise? That hypothetical world looks suspiciously like the world we have been living in.

Think of it. We have a Speaker of the House from San Francisco who has

spent months ensuring that unemployed Californians can't have jobless aid extended and California restaurants can't get another round of PPP unless the Governor of California gets a Federal slush fund out of proportion to any proven need.

Do working families agree they should not get any more help themselves unless the Governors and State legislators get a controversial bailout? Are struggling Americans saying: Thank goodness the Democrats are bravely—bravely—blocking help for me and my family unless my State politicians get some more cash? I would say not.

Our people need more help. There is a huge list of helpful policies that both sides agree on. This need not be rocket science. But we can't do a thing unless the Democrats decide they actually want to make a law.

CHINA

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on another matter entirely. Last week, the struggle to preserve freedom and autonomy in Hong Kong was dealt another disturbing blow.

On Thursday, Jimmy Lai, a prominent media figure and pro-democracy activist, was denied bail. The Chinese Communist Party continues cracking down on dissent and free speech. Not long ago, the international community hoped China's modernization would create more respect for basic freedoms. Unfortunately, the CCP has just marshaled new tools for making its oppression even more stifling.

Internationally, we have seen the Chinese Communist Party find more success exporting its warped vision into the global public square than the free world has had getting Beijing to respect the rules of the road.

For the last 4 years, thanks to this administration's leadership and this Senate, we have begun exchanging the old naivete about China for a smarter and tougher approach. Through new national security and national defense strategies, the United States has committed to deterring a new wave of threats from near-peer competitors like China and Russia.

Reforms to our budgets and policies are underway. We have used NDAA's and appropriations to invest in a military that is prepared to meet and defeat these threats. Maintaining our edge will mean sustaining these reforms, along with strong diplomacy, to counter China's influence.

In coordination with the executive branch, our Intelligence Committee has highlighted the need for everyone to strengthen their defenses against the CCP's espionage, intellectual property theft, and political influence campaigns.

Senators CORNYN and FEINSTEIN, in particular, have led bipartisan efforts to reform CFIUS and protect against predatory foreign investments aimed at threatening or stealing high-tech

and critical infrastructure. Allied countries are following our lead, and public and private sector cooperation has improved to defend the institutions, alliances, and international order the CCP wants to disrupt.

The administration has worked with international partners to ensure the security of 5G, reassert freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, and blunt harmful elements of China's exploitive Belt and Road Initiative.

Of course, more needs to be done, particularly on human rights. The treatment of Hongkongers in the spotlight reminds the world of the ways we know Beijing is treating Uighurs and Tibetans in the shadows.

And if China treats its own citizens with brutal violence, just think how it plans to treat its neighbors. So I welcome the latest sanctions imposed by the administration and the latest authorities granted by Congress. We are raising the stakes for China's repression, but our work isn't over. Our partners will continue to look to us to lead with a tone of zero tolerance for this behavior. The United States must continue to work alongside China's peaceful neighbors and our democratic allies, like Japan and Australia. We must give voice to those in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet who have been repressed and jailed. We must stand against the worst instincts and actions of the Communist Party.

REMEMBERING EMMANUEL "MANNY" CAULK

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, last week, students and families in Kentucky were met with tragic news. On Friday, Manny Caulk, the superintendent of Fayette County Schools, passed away unexpectedly.

Manny was the first member of his family to graduate from college. In 2015, he assumed responsibility for the second largest school district in Kentucky. An education had changed his life, literally, and he wanted to share that gift with others. And by all accounts, he did just that.

Manny encouraged his students to aim high and helped them exceed expectations, starting with his first students in a county detention center, and, in 2018, his colleagues chose him as Kentucky's "Superintendent of the Year."

I was glad to have Manny's partnership as we worked to protect Kentucky families from COVID-19. At every step, he kept focused on the well-being of Lexington students.

Over the weekend, condolences poured in as we reflected on Manny's lasting contributions. I would like to add the Senate's gratitude for this top-tier educator. Our prayers are with Manny's wife Christol and their children at this very difficult time.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Allen Dickerson, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2025.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I am hoping that we will be able to pass a COVID relief bill before Christmas. As the leader has said earlier, we don't need to resolve all of our differences to pass a bill. We can pass targeted legislation that focuses on the priorities that we all agree need to be addressed. As the leader pointed out earlier this morning on the floor, Republicans here in the Senate have tried repeatedly, going back to last summer, to move legislation that is targeted, that is fiscally responsible, and that addresses the key needs that are being experienced and the challenges that are being felt by the American people during the pandemic.

In fact, as recently as October, we had a majority of U.S. Senators here on the floor that attempted to get on a bill—a targeted, fiscally responsible bill—that addressed the needs that our small businesses have, with additional funding for the PPP program; that provided an extension for unemployment insurance for people who were unemployed; that provided funding for vaccine distribution; that also provided funding for frontline workers and, I should add, funding for schools and universities. It was a very targeted, fiscally responsible bill. It was voted on here in the Senate not only once but twice.

Both in September and October, we brought a bill to the floor and couldn't even get on it because the Democratic leadership decided to block that bill. So we didn't even have a debate. Not

only could we not get a vote on something that represented a good-faith effort at addressing the key needs that are being felt by the American people as a result of the pandemic, but we couldn't even get on the bill to debate it.

So we are trying yet one more time, and I hope this time we will meet with success because I do believe that we need to pass COVID relief before the end of the year, and I hope Members of the Democratic leadership will decide that they are willing to move forward to meet our country's most critical COVID priorities.

REMOTE AND MOBILE WORKER RELIEF ACT OF 2020

Mr. President, on the subject of COVID relief, there is another issue that we should address before the end of the year, and that is tax relief for remote and mobile workers. The complicated tax situation facing mobile workers has been an issue for a while now, but it has been thrown into especially sharp relief by the pandemic.

As everyone knows, medical professionals around the country have traveled to hard-hit areas this year to help hospitals deal with the influx of COVID cases. But what many people don't realize is that these medical professionals, like other mobile workers, are likely to face a complicated tax situation this year as a result. For the majority of Americans, State income tax is fairly uncomplicated. Most Americans work in the same State in which they reside. So there is no question as to which State will be taxing their income.

For mobile workers, however—like traveling nurses or technicians or the medical professionals who responded to COVID in hard-hit areas—the situation is a lot more complicated. Like most Americans, their income is subject to taxation in the State in which their permanent home is located, but any income that they earned in a State other than their State of residence is also subject to taxation in the State in which they earned it.

Now, individuals can generally receive a tax credit in their home State for income tax paid to another State, thus avoiding double taxation of their income. I would add, however, that for States that don't have an income tax—and there are many of those across the country, including my home State of South Dakota—there is no tax credit against income tax paid because there is no income tax paid in the home State.

But mobile workers' income tax situation is extremely complicated, as they generally have to file tax returns in multiple States, and it is made even more complicated by the fact that States have a multitude of different rules governing just when income earned in their State starts to be taxed. Some States give up to a 60-day window before income earned by mobile workers in their State is subject to taxation. Other States start taxing mobile workers immediately.

Navigating different States' requirements can make for a miserable tax season for mobile workers, and it can also be a real burden for their employers. It is particularly challenging for smaller businesses, which frequently lack the in-house tax staff and tracking capabilities of larger organizations.

The situation has long cried out for a solution. For the past four Congresses, I have introduced legislation, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act, to create a uniform standard for mobile workers. It is a bipartisan bill, and under that bill if you spend 30 days or fewer working in a different State, you would be taxed as normal by your home State. If you spend more than 30 days working in a different State, you would be subject to that other State's income tax in addition to income tax from your home State.

In June of this year, I introduced an updated version of my mobile workforce bill: the Remote and Mobile Worker Relief Act. Like my original mobile workforce bill, the Remote and Mobile Worker Relief Act would create a uniform 30-day standard governing State income tax liability for mobile workers. But my new bill goes further and addresses some of the particular challenges faced by mobile and remote workers as a result of the coronavirus.

The Remote and Mobile Worker Relief Act would establish a special 90-day standard for healthcare workers who travel to another State to help during the pandemic. This should ensure that these workers don't face an expected tax bill for the contributions that they make to fighting the coronavirus.

My new bill also addresses the possible tax complications that could face remote workers as a result of the pandemic. During the coronavirus crisis, many workers who usually travel to their offices every day have ended up working from home. This doesn't present a tax problem for most employees, but it does present a possible problem for workers who live in a different State than the one in which they work.

Under current State law, these workers usually pay most or all of their State income taxes to the State in which they earn this income rather than their State of residence. However, now that some workers who usually work in a different State have been working from home, there is a risk that their State of residence could consider the resulting income as allocated to and taxable by it as well. That could mean a higher tax bill for a lot of workers.

My bill would preempt this problem by codifying the prepandemic status quo. Under my bill, if you planned to work in North Carolina but had to work from home in South Carolina during the pandemic, your income would still be taxed as if you were going in to the office in North Carolina every day, just as it would have been if the pandemic had never happened.

Relief for mobile workers is a bipartisan idea. A version of my original mobile workforce bill has passed the House of Representatives multiple times, and the only reason it hasn't advanced so far in the U.S. Senate is because of the opposition of a handful of States, like New York, that aggressively tax temporary workers.

New York, of course, was the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States early on, and medical professionals from across the country came to New York to work and to help out. Now, one would think that their presence would be an occasion for profound gratitude, but New York Governor Andrew Cuomo apparently also regards them as an opportunity for a tax windfall. That is right. Despite the fact that these workers provided indispensable help to New York in the worst period during the pandemic, in May Governor Cuomo announced that these workers would nevertheless be subject to New York's substantial income tax for the time that they spent working in the State.

It is unconscionable that we would allow healthcare professionals who risked their lives—risked their own lives—to care for individuals in coronavirus-stricken States to be punished with unexpected tax bills. And we need to make sure that Americans who work from home to help slow the spread of the virus don't face a complicated tax situation or an unexpectedly high tax bill as a result.

It would be wonderful to see the Democratic leader who, of course, hails from New York, speak up to endorse remote and mobile worker relief. He should make it clear whether he agrees with Governor Cuomo's decision to cash in on COVID relief workers' assistance or whether he thinks these vital medical professionals should be spared unexpected tax bills.

I really hope that he is not actively standing in the way of my bill in order to protect Governor Cuomo's efforts to boost New York's coffers at healthcare workers' expense. I encourage him to make it clear where he stands on this issue.

I intend to do everything I can to ensure that my bill receives a vote in the Senate before Christmas. Passing this legislation would spare a lot of workers a lot of misery when April comes around.

Americans have been through enough this year. Let's not add unexpected tax bills to the equation.

FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY, TREATMENT, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2020

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 3451 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3451) to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the Scott of South Carolina 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 amendment (No. 2695), 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 "Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2020" or the "FASTER Act of 2020".

SEC. 2. FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 201(qq)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)(1)) is amended by striking "and soybeans" and inserting "soybeans, and sesame".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to any food that is introduced or delivered for introduction into interstate commerce on or after January 1, 2023.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the "Secretary") 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 that includes—

(1) descriptions of ongoing Federal activities related to—

(A) the surveillance and collection of data on the prevalence of food allergies and severity of allergic reactions for specific food or food ingredients, including the identification of any gaps in such activities;

(B) the development of effective food allergy diagnostics;

(C) the prevention of the onset of food allergies;

(D) the reduction of risks related to living with food allergies; and

(E) the development of new therapeutics to prevent, treat, cure, and manage food allergies; and

(2) specific recommendations and strategies to expand, enhance, or improve activities described in paragraph (1), including—

(A) strategies to improve the accuracy of food allergy prevalence data by expanding and intensifying current collection methods, including support for research that includes the identification of biomarkers and tests to validate survey data and the investigation of the use of identified biomarkers and tests in national surveys;

(B) strategies to overcome gaps in surveillance and data collection activities related to food allergies and specific food allergens; and

(C) recommendations for the development and implementation of a regulatory process and framework that would allow for the timely, transparent, and evidence-based modification of the definition of "major food allergen" included in section 201(qq) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)), including with respect to—

(i) the scientific criteria for defining a food or food ingredient as a "major food allergen" pursuant to such process, including recommendations pertaining to evidence of the prevalence and severity of allergic reactions to a food or food ingredient that would be required in order to establish that such food or food ingredient is an allergen of public health concern appropriate for such process; and

(ii) opportunities for stakeholder engagement and comment, as appropriate, in considering any such modification to such definition.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall make the report under subsection (a) available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The bill (S. 3451), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3451

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 "Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2020" or the "FASTER Act of 2020".

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(1) descriptions of ongoing Federal activities related to—

(A) the surveillance and collection of data on the prevalence of food allergies and severity of allergic reactions for specific food or food ingredients, including the identification of any gaps in such activities;

(B) the development of effective food allergy diagnostics;

(C) the prevention of the onset of food allergies;

(D) the reduction of risks related to living with food allergies; and

(E) the development of new therapeutics to prevent, treat, cure, and manage food allergies; and

(2) specific recommendations and strategies to expand, enhance, or improve activities described in paragraph (1), including—

(A) strategies to improve the accuracy of food allergy prevalence data by expanding and intensifying current collection methods, including support for research that includes the identification of biomarkers and tests to validate survey data and the investigation of the use of identified biomarkers and tests in national surveys;

(B) strategies to overcome gaps in surveillance and data collection activities related to food allergies and specific food allergens; and

(C) recommendations for the development and implementation of a regulatory process and framework that would allow for the timely, transparent, and evidence-based modification of the definition of "major food allergen" included in section 201(qq) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)), including with respect to—

(i) the scientific criteria for defining a food or food ingredient as a "major food allergen" pursuant to such process, including recommendations pertaining to evidence of the prevalence and severity of allergic reactions to a food or food ingredient that would be required in order to establish that such food or food ingredient is an allergen of public health concern appropriate for such process; and

(ii) opportunities for stakeholder engagement and comment, as appropriate, in considering any such modification to such definition.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall make the report under subsection (a) available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, March 23—March 23 has been a long time from this date, and a lot of things have happened in America since March 23. Over 200,000 American lives have been lost. Millions of Americans have been infected with the COVID virus. Our families have changed. Our lives have changed. We have tried to adjust to the worst pandemic America has seen.

We know that we have fallen short many times in providing the resources that were needed in a timely way. I can remember in the early stages of this pandemic when in my State of Illinois there were desperate phone calls from the Governor asking if I could find some way to help, in Washington or any other place, to provide protective equipment for the people in the healthcare field.

We know as well that many people have seen businesses close in their communities. In my hometown of Springfield, IL, our favorite restaurant is clinging to its business life, and we are finding excuses to order food out as often as possible to keep them open. Others haven't been so lucky. Their businesses are closed, and their jobs have disappeared.

Millions of Americans are drawing unemployment. Many are waiting in long lines for food. Desperate decisions are being made because people are in desperate circumstances.

A lot has happened since March 23. The reason I mention that date is that was the day we passed the CARES Act. It was a momentous, historic effort—\$3 trillion to try to rescue this economy, to help the American people through this crisis, to provide resources that were needed—and it was overwhelmingly bipartisan. It passed the Senate by 96 to 0.

Since then, many things have happened. We have also learned that the CARES Act was not enough. We thought this crisis would end long ago, and it didn't. Perhaps now with vaccines coming online, we will see some dramatic changes in the few months ahead, but what are we going to do in the meantime? Are we going to continue to help those drawing unemployment? Are we going to continue to help the businesses that are struggling to survive and to help their employees make it through another week or another month? Are we going to do what is necessary to help State and local governments that have seen losses in their revenues in historic terms? Are we going to take care to provide the logistical support for the actual vaccinations that are necessary across America? That question is unanswered because we have done nothing—virtually nothing—since March 23.

A group of Senators several weeks ago met for a socially distanced, safe dinner at one of the homes of my colleagues and talked about another approach—a new approach, a bipartisan approach—to try to deal with COVID relief. If the leaders were unable to act, perhaps we could start the conversation.

I signed up for that effort with a number of Republican Senators and Democratic Senators, and we set out to write a COVID relief bill—with our staff's help, of course. I didn't realize what I was getting into in terms of time commitment. We have spent literally hour after hour after hour, day after day after day—multiple times in a day sometimes—dealing with the difficult issues of what America needs now in emergency relief because of this COVID-19 crisis.

We have come to a general conclusion on all but one issue as to what we would propose, and we believe it should be done quickly. You see, on December 26, 12 million Americans will lose their unemployment insurance. Businesses struggling now will close between now and then if we don't do something.

Unfortunately, the speech given by the Republican leader on the floor this morning suggests that whatever we came up with and proposed is not going to be taken seriously. That is unfortunate. I think there is real wisdom, bipartisan compromise in our proposal.

It is within the power of the Republican leader to call this matter to the floor, and that is all we ask. Make it subject to amendments, if you wish, but let's get this debate underway. This silent, empty Chamber is no answer to the cries of American people who are desperate for help in the midst of this pandemic. Political posturing and press releases from one side or the other won't put food on the table, won't give a father peace of mind, won't give a mother the help she needs with childcare, won't give a student the broadband service they need to continue their education.

There is an issue that still is unresolved, and it is the issue of liability.

We don't know what to do with that, but we ought to look at the evidence. So far in this calendar year, with 15 million people infected with COVID-19, fewer than 3 lawsuits per State—3 per State—have been filed in medical malpractice or consumer personal injury claims. There are a lot of other lawsuits between businesses and with insurance companies—by prisoners in jail saying that their confinement is dangerous to their health, people filing lawsuits against Governors for issuing orders to stay at home and close down businesses—but when it comes to the personal injury claims, there are very few. Very few.

We know why—those of us who have been involved in the practice of law. One of the things that you have to prove to recover in a case is causation. That is rare in a case dealing with coronavirus, to be able to pinpoint exactly when you became infected and what the circumstances are. That is why so few lawsuits have been filed.

The Senator from Kentucky is insisting that there be immunity to liability as part of any agreement. It is a thorny topic, a difficult topic, a controversial topic, but I plead with him to hold to another day the overall issue of liability. Accept this emergency bill that we have put together as a bipartisan group of Senators to address this issue in the reality of the world we live in. To hold it back because of some other major issue that has not been resolved is unfair to American families and workers and students and health workers. We owe it to them to do everything in our power to help them now.

How can we in good conscience go home for Christmas knowing that the day after Christmas, 12 million Americans will see their unemployment insurance disappear because of our inability to act? What kind of spirit is that of any holiday season? I think we need to be mindful of the fact that there are a lot of helpless people counting on us to do something.

I hope we realize that this bipartisan effort put together by a group of Senators, which I have been honored to be part of, is a good-faith effort to answer the basic questions of what is needed now in America and what is needed on an emergency basis. It is a good bill—far from perfect. It deserves a vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

If Senator MCCONNELL has another proposal that he wants to put on the floor as well, he certainly has that right as the majority leader, but to close the door on this bipartisan effort is to reject a good-faith undertaking by Senators from both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans.

I plead with the majority leader, let's not claim some political victory when this is all over at the expense of a lot of helpless people across America who are battling this pandemic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF SEAN J. COOKSEY

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, in a few moments, we are going to be voting on a series of nominations to the Federal Election Commission, one of which is of personal interest to me. It is the nomination of Sean Cooksey to be a Commissioner of that body.

I know Sean personally because I have had the great privilege of working with Sean for the last 2 years while he has served as the general counsel in my office. Sean is a native Missourian. He comes from the eastern part of the State, just north of St. Louis. He is a proud graduate of Truman State University in the State of Missouri. He comes from a working family there in the State, and his family still lives there.

Sean has rendered exceptional service to me this last year and a half. In fact, when I came to the Senate not even 2 years ago, I have to say Sean had more experience than I did, having served in this body for several years before in the office—on the staff of Senator TED CRUZ of Texas.

Sean has done absolutely outstanding work in the last year and a half in my office helping us pass important legislation, including my first bill signed into law in the Senate, the Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis Act. This is a law that will direct new funding to police officers and other law enforcement all across the State of Missouri and across the Nation to get the help and support they need when they are exposed to violence, when they are exposed to situations that require followup help, counseling. It gets them the resources especially in small and local police departments in rural areas, like those across my State. Sean was instrumental in drafting this legislation and in getting it passed. It was a proud day almost a year and a half ago when President Trump signed that bill into law.

This is just one example of the outstanding service Sean has rendered not just to my office but to the people of Missouri and not just to the people of Missouri but to the people of the United States. That is why, while I am sorry to see Sean go on a personal level, I am absolutely delighted for the country because my loss is going to be the gain of the United States of America.

I want to congratulate Sean on this nomination and what I think will soon be his confirmation in just a few moment's time.

I want to congratulate his family. I know this is a very proud day for them. I believe Sean will be the youngest member of the Federal Election Commission, maybe in the history of this body. I can't think of anyone more de-

serving. I know that he will render distinguished service to the country in this capacity.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON DICKERSON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Dickerson nomination?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 258 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeben	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Paul	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

NOT VOTING—4

Harris
Loeffler

Perdue
Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Shana M. Broussard, of Louisiana, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2023.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

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

Mr. LEE. I ask for the yeas and nays. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 259 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Baldwin	Gardner	Reed
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Risch
Bennet	Graham	Roberts
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blumenthal	Hassan	Rosen
Blunt	Heinrich	Rubio
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Boozman	Hoeben	Sasse
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Brown	Inhofe	Schumer
Burr	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cantwell	Jones	Shaheen
Capito	Kaine	Shelby
Cardin	Kelly	Sinema
Carper	Kennedy	Smith
Casey	King	Stabenow
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Toomey
Cotton	Markey	Udall
Cramer	McConnell	Van Hollen
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Daines	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murkowski	Wicker
Enzi	Murphy	Wyden
Ernst	Murray	Young
Feinstein	Peters	

NAYS—4

Cruz
Hawley

Paul
Scott (FL)

NOT VOTING—4

Harris
Loeffler

Perdue
Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Sean J. Cooksey, of Missouri, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Cooksey nomination?

Mr. HAWLEY. 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 260 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blackburn	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	King	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Enzi	Murkowski	

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Sanders
Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Blumenthal	Jones	Schumer
Booker	Kaine	Shaheen
Brown	Kelly	Sinema
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the most important item on the Senate's to-do list before the end of the year is a bipartisan emergency relief package for a nation suffering the worst month of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Negotiations continue between a bipartisan group of Senate and House Members who, last week, agreed in principle on a \$900-plus billion emergency relief proposal. As the details continue to get sorted, Speaker PELOSI

and I have encouraged everyone to use this bipartisan proposal as a framework for negotiations.

Yesterday, the White House presented us an offer of similar size, around \$900 billion—an encouraging sign that Republican leadership is moving in the right direction by endorsing the size of the Gang of 8's bill. But the President's proposal must not be allowed to supersede or obstruct the bipartisan congressional talks that are underway. That is where the real action is and where bipartisan agreement on the basic concepts will ultimately be forged.

The President's proposal, for instance, completely misses the mark on unemployment benefits and aid to American families. In order to include \$600 stimulus checks, it actually cuts proposed unemployment benefits by greater than a factor of 4, from \$180 billion to just \$40 billion—an unacceptably low amount—while tens of millions of Americans remain out of work, almost all of whom have lost their jobs because of COVID.

Economists from every end of the spectrum, including the conservative U.S. Chamber of Commerce, are warning us that the United States faces the prospect of a double-dip recession without another round of emergency fiscal stimulus. A robust unemployment benefit is crucial—crucial—to that program. Earlier in the pandemic, it helped keep 12 million Americans out of poverty and propped up consumer spending. We shouldn't be cutting unemployment benefits now, as the President's team proposes; we should be extending them.

Now, the Republican leader, as usual, gave a very angry speech this morning accusing Democrats of all manner of things, including intentionally blocking aid to thwart President Trump. I don't know what evidence he has of that, but there are actual reports—honest-to-God reports—in the New York Times and the Washington Post that Leader MCCONNELL was warning the White House not to cut a deal on COVID relief before the election.

Here is the Washington Post: "McConnell warns White House against making stimulus deal as Pelosi and Mnuchin inch closer." That is from October 20—2 weeks before the election.

Meanwhile, Democrats have continually lowered our proposals, now by over \$2 trillion, to move closer to our Republican colleagues in the spirit of compromise and for the sake of getting something done for the American people. It would do a whole lot of good if the Republican leader would drop the daily tirades and diatribes, which seem to be based in some alternative reality, and join the rest of the Senate in urging the bipartisan negotiations now underway to continue.

Families all over the country are nearing a point of desperation, unable to put food on the table, a roof over their children's heads. By January, nearly 12 million renters will owe an

average of nearly \$6,000 in back rent and utilities—a shocking figure.

We need to deliver an emergency relief package to keep American families, workers, and businesses afloat until the crisis finally begins to subside. The only way to get that done is in a bipartisan fashion. The sooner the Republican leader realizes it, the better.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on Biden nominations—President-Elect Biden continues to roll out an impressive slate of Secretaries-designate to lead Cabinet agencies in his administration.

Yesterday, he selected Lloyd Austin to be the next Secretary of Defense, another groundbreaking selection. Mr. Austin would be the first African-American to lead the largest Cabinet agency in our government. Secretary-designate Austin is a familiar face to many of us on Capitol Hill, and I am also pleased to say he is a familiar face to many in the North Country in New York. He is the former commander of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum—the pride of Jefferson County.

Like all of President-Elect Biden's national security nominees, Senate-designate Austin is deeply experienced and familiar with our Nation's national security, as well as the many issues that face our servicemembers and their families each and every day. Lloyd Austin served our Nation for more than four decades, and his willingness to serve his country again is admirable. He will make an excellent Secretary of Defense.

Now, an hour ago, I met with President-Elect Biden's economic team by teleconference, including Secretary-designate of Treasury, Janet Yellen, to discuss priorities with the incoming administration on how to get our economy back on track. I urged them, once President-Elect Biden becomes President, to go bold. Austerity right now is not what America needs but a bold program to stimulate our economy and get things moving, to help get people jobs—good-paying jobs—because our economy is suffering. I look forward to our continued conversations.

A few weeks ago, I predicted that we would see some crocodile tears from the Republican majority about Biden's Cabinet nominees, but I didn't think it would occur this fast. It began when several Republican Senators raised some objections over Neera Tanden's Twitter feed. After 4 years of pretending that they "didn't see" President Trump's latest online outburst, it seems that Senate Republicans have rediscovered their Twitter passwords now that Joe Biden is the President-elect.

This week, after President-Elect Biden announced that Xavier Becerra is his pick to be the next Secretary of Health and Human Services, Republican Senators raised concerns, in their minds, about Mr. Becerra's qualifications. The senior Senator from Texas said:

I'm not sure what his Health and Human Services credentials are. It's not like Alex Azar who used to work for pharma.

With all due respect to the senior Senator from Texas, working for the pharmaceutical industry is not the only way to get experience in healthcare. Some might argue it is the wrong kind of experience for an HHS Secretary.

The truth is, Xavier Becerra is eminently qualified. He worked in the House of Representatives for two decades, always very involved in advancing the healthcare of his constituents, and he has a particularly long track record as an advocate of women's health. As the attorney general of California, he became one of the foremost legal experts on our Nation's healthcare laws.

I must say, it is particularly rich for this Republican majority to raise "concerns" about whether Biden Cabinet nominees have every last pristine qualification for their posts. Not so long ago, nearly every Republican in this Chamber lined up to make an oil executive the Secretary of State. I don't remember too many Republican "concerns" when President Trump nominated a retired neurosurgeon to be the Secretary of HUD or when he put Rick Perry in charge of the Department of Energy—an agency he wanted to abolish before learning it maintained the Nation's nuclear stockpile and that he would be in charge of it. If memory serves, this Senate Republican majority confirmed a Secretary of Education whose only qualification for the job was she used her inherited fortune to try to privatize American schooling.

Look, the country needs to move on from the past 4 years, but Senate Republicans can't pretend like it never happened. After the sordid caliber of nominees that this Republican majority confirmed over the past 4 years, it will be impossible to take these complaints about Biden's nominees very seriously.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES.

77

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Foreign Relations Committee from further consideration of S.J. Res. 77, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the United Arab Emirates of certain defense articles and services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I am asking our colleagues to stand up for two very important principles. One is the congressional oversight over arms sales abroad and, secondly, to ensure that these sales, in fact, promote and protect the long-term national security of the United States.

Colleagues, I wish we didn't find ourselves in the position of having to discuss our concerns with this sale in this kind of forum. The United Arab Emirates has, indeed, been an important partner in the fight against terrorism and across the region and, I believe, will continue to do so. However, a sale of this magnitude requires the appropriate due diligence.

For the past few decades, the executive branch has respected the congressional oversight of the arms sales process, a critical piece of which is an informal review period during which we get answers to pressing questions. We have an opportunity to review sensitive information so that, when sales come up for the formal notification, which is what we have before us now, we have a clearer path forward. Unfortunately, in this case, the Trump administration decided to simply ignore congressional rights here and the review process, formally notifying the sales of these complex weapons systems, along with other weaponry, totaling \$23 billion.

Beyond obliterating the congressional review process, the administration also seems to have rushed through the interagency review of a sale of this magnitude. Whereas, a sale of this scope would normally merit months and months of detailed deliberations between the Departments of Defense and State, this sale was announced with more missing than a few dotted i's and crossed t's.

I will go into more detail later before we vote, but the bottom line is that there are many outstanding issues that are critical to U.S. national security that have not been addressed, including, by way of example, the United Arab Emirates' present and future military relationships with Russia and China. My understanding is that there are negotiations to have with China regarding an airstrip for the Chinese military off of the UAE. Is that in the national interest and security of the United States?

Should we not have a definitive commitment from the UAE that it will not move forward if these arms sales move forward, including with the most sophisticated stealth jet fighter that we have? How do we work to safeguard U.S. technology? the guarantees we will have in place about how U.S.-origin weapons will be used given the Emirates' history of transferring weapons to a terrorist organization and violating the U.N. arms embargo in Libya? the longer term implications of an arms race in the region? and then, yes, the impact that it could have on both our and Israel's qualitative military edge?

If we aren't going to be willing to ask these questions, then we have to think about the magnitude of the sale without caring about the consequences.

I have heard a number of my colleagues advocate in support of these sales because they believe it will help our like-minded partners better posture against Iran. Now, no one is more clear-eyed in this Chamber or has pursued Iran and its threat of nuclear weapons more than I, and we are clear-eyed about the threat Iran continues to pose to national security interests, but we have yet to understand exactly what military threat the F-35s or armed drones will be addressing vis-à-vis Iran. Furthermore, according to the Trump administration, as recently as last year, the UAE continued to host a number of companies that facilitated Iranian financial transactions in violation of various U.S. sanctions.

So Iran is a threat, but you are helping it facilitate U.S. financial transactions. It is not that I have said so but that the Trump administration has said so. Meanwhile, over the past year, Iran has ramped up its nuclear capabilities amidst American diplomatic fallout.

So, if we really want to talk about countering Iran, we need a comprehensive, diplomatic strategy. Arming partners with complex weapons systems that could take years to come online is not a serious strategy with which to confront the very real and timely threats from Iran.

I have also heard some of our colleagues argue that, if we do not sell these weapons, the UAE will turn to China and Russia. Well, let's be clear: They already do. They already do. Our own Department of Defense's inspector general recently reported that the UAE may be funding the Russian mercenary Wagner Group in Libya. U.N. reporting implicates the UAE's use of Chinese-manufactured drones, in violation of the U.N. arms embargo, also in Libya.

So, while I absolutely agree that we have to counter Chinese and Russian influence in the region, again, this requires a real strategy, not simply more arms. Isn't this a conversation and a commitment that we should get in writing from the UAE as part of such an arms sale? We don't have that. Furthermore, if we go forward with these sales, yet deny similar requests to countries like Qatar or Saudi Arabia, where will they go for their advanced weaponry to keep pace, and what reaction will Iran have to them? Do we really think we can sell this just to the UAE and not have those other countries come knocking on our door, starting a very sophisticated arms race in a tinder box of the world?

Finally, let me be very clear: I applaud the Abraham accords as a historical turning point for Israel and the Arab world. These new, formal relationships have the possibility of transforming the region much more broadly and bringing peace, stability, and prosperity to people who desperately want

and deserve it. Yet, as the administration and the Emirates have continued to stress, these sales are neither a reward nor are they part of these accords.

So why can't we take a little more time to really assess the best way forward? We are in the midst of promoting a sale—this is the administration—that has some of the most significant transfers of advanced U.S. technology without clarity of a number of key details regarding the sale or sufficient answers to critical national security questions. This is far more than about congressional prerogative, although I would argue that it is a critical element of our policies on arms sales; this is about national security concerns to which we should have an answer before those arms sales move forward.

Again, colleagues, the bottom line is this: There are far too many outstanding questions and very serious questions about long-term U.S. national security interests. Perhaps, after considerable engagement with the executive, we would assess that all of these sales do, in fact, advance our national security. Given the length of time it will take for the delivery of these systems, it would seem quite reasonable to expect to have 40 days to evaluate these questions.

So I urge my colleagues to stand up for Congress's role in the process of determining arms sales as well as for having clear answers to the critical questions that are posed to long-term U.S. national security interests.

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

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to speak to resolutions upon which we will begin voting today regarding arms sales proposed by the administration to the United Arab Emirates.

I am on the floor today to ask my colleagues to support these resolutions of disapproval upon two grounds: one, the protection of congressional prerogative and, two, a question of U.S. national security.

First, let me cover the question of congressional prerogative. We have traditionally debated arms sales here on occasion, and the reason why we don't have constant debates in this body on arms sales, the reason why we don't have resolutions on every sale that is noticed by the administration, is because we have built into our practice an ability for the Senate to consult with the administration beforehand on a bipartisan basis.

Over the years, since the passage of the law allowing for Congress to have a

role in the sale of arms to foreign nations, administration after administration, Republican and Democrat, has observed a period of consultation with Congress in which the administration comes to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, comes to the House Foreign Relations Committee, presents the reasons for the sale, and then addresses concerns raised, often in a bipartisan manner, by Republicans and Democrats.

Again, this has happened in both Democratic and Republican administrations, with Democratic and Republican Congresses, and often that consultative process results in issues that Congress has being resolved so that you never have to have a vote on the Senate floor.

Something different happened with this sale. The administration was so desperate to rush through the sale before the end of their administration that they blew through the consultation process. It just didn't happen. There was no ability for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to weigh in on this particular sale. It was rushed to notice, and our only option was to bring it before the full Senate.

Now, under any circumstances, I would argue that the Senate should stand up for our right to have a role. The reason that we built in this consultative process was because the Senate was actually unhappy with the amount of input it had decades ago and was threatening to dramatically expand its oversight role on arms sales. Instead, a deal was worked out in which the administration said they would come for this consultation.

Now it appears that those consultations are no longer the practice. That reduces our role as a foreign-policy-making body. And remember, we have abdicated all sorts of responsibilities over the years when it comes to what should be a coequal responsibility to set the broad direction of U.S. foreign policy with the executive branch. This would be yet another chip away at Congress's participation in the setting of U.S. national security policy. I am not sure we will ever get it back.

But on this sale, in particular, the consultative process was really important because this sale is as big and as hairy and as complicated as you get. We are, for the first time, selling F-35s and MQ-9 Reaper drones into the heart of the Middle East. We have never done it before. There are only 14 countries that currently operate the F-35, and almost all of them are NATO allies. Turkey was on the list for a period of time, but because they ended up making a choice to go with the Russian missile defense system, they were taken out of the program. So the partners that remain are the ones that you would suspect—Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, Denmark, Canada.

There are even fewer countries that we have sold Reaper drones to—Australia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, UK, and India.

This is the first time that we would sell these incredibly lethal, incredibly complicated technologies into the heart of the Middle East—a region that, arguably, is not in need of more weapons.

What we risk doing here is fueling an arms race. Today we may be selling the F-35s and the MQ-9s to the UAE, but the Saudis are going to want it, the Qataris have already requested it, and it just fuels Iran's interest in continuing to build up its own military program.

But, more specifically to this sale, we have to ask ourselves whether the UAE is ready for this technology or whether their behavior over the past several years makes them an unworthy partner for this set of highly complicated U.S. defense technology.

I will stipulate, as I think every Member of this body will, that the UAE is often a very important ally of the United States. There is an important cooperative relationship that exists between the United States and the UAE. We share counterterrorism information together. We were both involved in the fight against ISIS. We work together to counter Iranian influence in the region. And, of course, the UAE's recognition of Israel is good for the United States as well.

But for as many places as we cooperate with UAE, there are many points of division, and those points of division often involve the use of U.S. military technology against the interests of the United States.

The UAE has been, for years, involved in a civil war in Yemen that is terrible for U.S. national security interests. They may not be as involved as they were a couple of years ago, but they are still a barrier to peace. They still refuse to make humanitarian contributions to help the situation on the ground. So far in 2020, there are zero dollars from the UAE put into the U.N. appeal to try to fight off starvation and cholera inside Yemen.

At one point, they took U.S. equipment and they handed it to extremist militias inside Yemen. That is open-source reporting. The UAE copped to it when the reporters asked them whether they had done it. They gave our equipment to Salafist militias inside a theater of war. There are other reports that they were dropping American-made TOW missiles out of the sky into areas of that country that were controlled by al-Qaida-aligned elements. And they are, right now, as we speak, in violation of the Libya arms embargo.

The U.N. Panel of Experts came to the conclusion that the majority of arms transfers into Libya to the Haftar armed forces were either from Jordan or the United Arab Emirates. The panel found that the UAE was in repeated noncompliance with the arms embargo.

And guess what is on the list of the weapons that the UAE was transferring into Libya in violation of a U.S.-supported arms embargo—armed drones.

We are talking about selling the UAE the most lethal, most advanced armed drone technology in the world today, and as we speak, the UAE is in violation of the arms embargo to Libya, fueling that civil war, specifically sending drones into that theater.

So I am not here to say that we shouldn't be in the security business with the UAE. There are a lot of important common projects. But the question is, with a country that is part of the problem more often than part of the solution in Yemen, a country that is in existing violation of an arms embargo in Libya, a country that has just within the last several years transferred our weapons to al-Qaida-aligned militias, without resolving those issues, is this the moment to be selling, for the first time ever, F-35s, armed drones into the heart of the Middle East?

One last caution. The countries that I mentioned on this list are by and large in business with the United States and not with China and Russia. The UAE has pretty deep and complicated defense relationships with China, Russia, and Chinese and Russian companies. Query whether we can be absolutely certain that the technology on board those fighter jets, those drones, is going to stay in the right hands.

There arguably is no other country on the list for the F-35s that does as much business with China and Russia as the UAE does. In fact, as I mentioned, we pulled the F-35 program from Turkey because they are involved with Russia on a very complicated and important ground defense system, and we are just learning about the nature of the partnerships that the UAE has with the Chinese and the Russians.

It stands to reason that this would be one of the issues that a consultative process with Congress would resolve. It also stands to reason that we could probably come to a conclusion during that consultative process.

If the UAE really wants those weapons, wants to be the first country in the heart of the Middle East to get the F-35 or the Reaper drones, then I assume they would want to be able to assure Congress and the administration that there is no chance of technology transfer into the wrong hands. That is what the congressional consultative process would have gotten us, but it didn't happen in this case, and so we are stuck with this vote—a means for Congress to stand up for its right to participate in this question of arms sales.

Believe me, my Republican colleagues are going to want that right when a Democratic administration comes into office. You are not going to want to send a signal today to the Biden administration that they don't have to consult with you as the majority party, potentially, in 2021. But if you vote against these resolutions, then you are essentially saying the Biden administration doesn't need to

consult with Congress on it. They probably will because they want to do the right thing, but anybody who votes against these resolutions is essentially endorsing an end-around of Congress by any administration, Republican or Democratic.

It is also important to say that on policy grounds, it is not time to do these sales. There are too many outstanding questions about who the UAE transfers weapons to, what they are doing in Libya, why they haven't been part of the solution in Yemen, and what their relationship is with some of our most important adversaries around the globe. Until we satisfy the answers to those questions, we should not move forward with this sale.

Finally, there is no threat to the accords between UAE and Israel unwinding if we simply press pause on this sale until those questions are answered.

I do want to be in business with the UAE. I think they are an important defense partner. But I think there is far too much at stake with the sale of these weapons right now to rush it through, and I don't think there is any downside risk if we were to say "not now" until we get all of our t's crossed and all of our i's dotted.

Let's stand up for Congress's prerogative on the sale of arms to foreign countries. Let's slow down this process that has been rushed, potentially to the great detriment of U.S. national security. Let's support these resolutions of disapproval this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

CORONAVIRUS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to really highlight the important work that has been underway by Members on both sides of the aisle in the Senate and Members on both sides of the aisle in the House to try to come up with an agreement to deliver urgently needed relief to address the challenges from the coronavirus that people are facing across this country. I also hope that we can work together to get this across the finish line and that Senate leadership will be willing to join in that effort.

I think most of us are painfully aware of the devastating impact this pandemic has had in communities across our Nation, but the numbers do bear repeating. More than 15 million Americans have been infected with the virus, more than 285,000 Americans have now died from COVID, and we recently hit a new record high of 102,000 people hospitalized with COVID. Just to provide some context, our largest city in New Hampshire is Manchester. It has 112,000 residents. So we have enough people in the hospital across this country to fill the city of Manchester.

The situation is dire. People need help. Every one of those numbers that I have referenced is much more than a number; it reflects an American life, an

American family, our communities. The human toll of this crisis is crushing, and we are up against the clock as our hospitals run out of beds.

This crisis has been all-encompassing. In addition to the severe strains on our healthcare system, so many others are being battered by this pandemic.

Small businesses are closing, and even more are on the verge of collapsing if we don't get them some help.

Our transportation networks, from buses to airplanes, have been forced to lay off staff, cut routes, and in some cases just discontinue service altogether.

American families are going hungry. We have all seen the long lines on the news at night showing the number of people waiting to get food from food banks.

Too many people are facing homelessness. In New Hampshire, in the city of Manchester alone, we have 35 homeless encampments—35. Two years ago, we did not have that number of homeless.

Parents are struggling to help their children continue their education at home, sometimes with no access to broadband or really bad access. We know women are leaving the workforce because of the strains of trying to provide support to their children and deal with the other challenges of COVID.

State and local governments have been stretched to the maximum. In New Hampshire, we are facing severe budgetary shortfalls, and many of our communities may have to make some difficult decisions to cut first responders or teachers or other municipal workers if they don't get help.

We hear every day the number of people who need our help, and they can't wait any longer. This is the holiday season, the end of the year. We are headed into the worst months of winter. In New Hampshire, we have restaurants that can no longer be open because they don't have outdoor seating. We have small businesses that are worried about getting through the next few months.

For the past 3 weeks, we have had a group of bipartisan lawmakers in both the House and Senate—so bipartisan and bicameral—who have been engaged in good-faith negotiations to get a relief package out the door as swiftly as possible. We were able to reach an agreement on a broad bipartisan framework last week, and we have continued negotiations around-the-clock since that was announced.

In New Hampshire and throughout this country, our small businesses have been some of the hardest hit by this pandemic. In New Hampshire, we are a small business State. They are the lifeblood of our economy. They account for 99 percent of all of our businesses and more than 50 percent of our workforce. In the country as a whole, two-thirds of our jobs are created by small businesses.

In the bipartisan framework that we are negotiating, we have another round

of the Paycheck Protection Program, which has been instrumental for so many of our small businesses since back in March when we passed it and created the program in the CARES Act.

Overall, our bipartisan relief proposal would provide significant financial assistance for our small businesses, for our restaurants, for our live venues, which in many cases have been shut down completely, and for our childcare centers.

In New Hampshire, if we don't get some help for our childcare centers, at the end of this pandemic, we will have lost fully 50 percent of our childcare centers. That means the families who depend on that childcare so that they can go to work are not going to have any safe place for their kids.

I hear frequently from New Hampshire businesses that have used the PPP program effectively to keep workers on payroll and make rent that they still need more assistance if they are going to get through this winter.

Our tourism and hospitality industries are particularly hard hit, and they are vital to New Hampshire's economy. They are our second biggest industry.

Restaurants in New Hampshire account for nearly 70,000 jobs and for \$3 billion in sales, according to the National Restaurant Association. We have to provide some help for them.

The future of our small businesses in New Hampshire and throughout the country hang in the balance. If we fail to act, we fail them.

For many American families, the past 9 months have been the most difficult economic challenges of their lives, and the bleak jobs report last week reaffirms what we have been seeing in our communities. Nearly 10 million jobs have been lost since the start of the pandemic. That means people are out of work, struggling to put food on the table for themselves and their families, struggling to keep a roof over their heads. The eviction moratorium is about to expire. That is the story for 10 million families.

In the bipartisan framework that we have been negotiating, we have urgently needed funding for additional unemployment insurance. We provide rental assistance to help not just those people who might lose their housing but also the landlords, who have been hit very hard because people haven't been able to pay their rent. It also increases funding for food assistance programs to combat the surging food insecurity in our communities.

We can't afford further delay in delivering these resources. The unemployment benefits are due to expire at the end of the month, and time is of the essence.

One of the important areas of concern that this bipartisan proposal addresses is the need for Federal funding to help our State and our local communities. They are facing massive revenue shortfalls—at least in my home State

of New Hampshire—and that threatens their ability to provide essential services. We can't afford to lose those people who provide those services, who, if they are laid off, may be forced to go someplace else and won't be available when we have the money to rehire them. We can't afford to lose the teachers, and already we are seeing too many teachers who are retiring or leaving the profession because they are worried about safety and exposure, or they don't have the resources to be able to do the online teaching that is required now. If we don't get this funding out the door, we are going to see more of those losses.

In New Hampshire and in our cities and towns, they are being stretched to the limits. We are at the precipice of this crisis. Cases are continuing to go up. Hospitalizations are going up. The death toll is going up. People need help, and they need it now.

In New Hampshire, our nursing homes have been especially devastated by this crisis. We have the highest percentage of COVID deaths in our long-term care facilities of any State in the country. Eighty-one percent of our death toll has been tied to nursing homes.

Our bipartisan relief framework includes necessary Federal support for the Provider Relief Fund, and it allocates urgently needed help for our nursing homes that are on the frontlines.

We also provide help to address substance use disorders and mental health. What we have seen across the country is that COVID-19 has exacerbated what already existed in the opioid epidemic. We were beginning to make some progress in New Hampshire and in many States across the country until the coronavirus hit, and now we are seeing that progress being lost.

Our plan bolsters support for Federal investments in a number of programs that respond to the substance use disorder crisis in our communities, and it also addresses suicide prevention.

This pandemic has created significant burdens for those who are struggling with substance use disorders. And, of course, we have heard the number of mental health issues has been greatly exacerbated.

Our bipartisan plan addresses three of the most important pieces of the strategy to get on the other side of this pandemic: testing, tracing, and vaccine distribution. As overwhelming as this crisis has become, we can't just throw our hands in the air. We have to continue to prioritize robust testing and contact tracing so we can track and contain community spread. Of course, we need to follow the CDC guidelines—wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, staying home as much as possible, hand washing—so that we can help flatten the curve and help our hospitals. And now, as we are, we hope, just weeks away from having a vaccine, we need to ensure that every measure is taken so we are ready to go on day

one. The manufacturing and distribution of a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine are critical to putting an end to this pandemic, to reopening our economy, and to restoring normalcy in our society. Our COVID framework boosts funding for each of these three priorities.

When the Senate came together during the early days of this crisis, we worked in good faith to deliver the CARES Act that provided relief to Americans throughout the country. We did it before, and I believe we can do it again.

This bipartisan framework is the only bipartisan measure in Congress. It is the only bicameral measure in Congress. It is the only proposal that has an opportunity to clear both Houses.

We aren't done, obviously. Negotiations are ongoing. There are a lot more people who have to see this work and, hopefully, will decide to support it, and we still have more concerns to sort out. But this is a compromise. It doesn't have everything I want to see. It is not what I would have written if I had been able to write it by myself, but it is a compromise that I believe we can get majority support to pass.

Of course, it is step one. It is a relief bill to help Americans stay afloat over these next very difficult months, and our work doesn't end if we can provide this relief. We are still going to need a stimulus bill to get our economy moving again. But, right now, the most urgent need is to address those concerns that individuals and families have.

If Congress fails to act and get this over the finish line, the consequences will be dire. Our hospitals are already overwhelmed. Too many small businesses are closing. Families are going hungry and facing homelessness. Inaction is really not an option. We need to get this done.

There is no reason we can't come to an agreement. We have done it before. I urge Senators on both sides of the aisle to join in this effort. I urge Leader MCCONNELL and Leader SCHUMER to move forward with us to help us get this proposal over the line so that together we can deliver much needed relief to Americans and do it before the holiday season so that people will have something to look forward to.

I yield the floor.

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

TRIBUTE TO DIANE DEATON

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to speak for a few moments today about a Baton Rouge and Louisiana rock star. I am talking about Baton Rouge's own Diane Deaton.

This week, Diane announced that she is going to retire from her post as a weather forecaster at WAFB-TV, which we refer to as Channel 9, where she has served on "9News This Morning" and on "Early Edition" for many years.

Diane is known—widely known—affectionately as Queen D. She has been reporting the weather for the people of Louisiana, particularly Southeast Louisiana, for 37 years—37 years—and all

at the same station. Over a WAFB career spanning, what, nearly four decades, Diane has become a beloved fixture in our State and in our State capital.

Her compassion has been on regular display—and not only in the way that she has walked Louisianians through hurricanes and tornadoes. Weather is important to us in Louisiana. Diane has invested in first and second graders at Buchanan Elementary in East Baton Rouge Parish through an extraordinary program called the Reading Friends program. She has built new homes for families through Habitat for Humanity, where she currently serves as a board member. Diane has been a part of LSU Tiger HATS pet therapy program. That is a program where she and her colleagues visit young patients and their families at one of our leading hospitals, Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital.

Diane's awards are many. I won't list them all, but they include the Louisiana Association of Broadcasters' Lifetime Achievement Award, the Holly Reynolds Humanitarian of the Year Award—that was from the Capital Area Animal Welfare Society—and the Ulli Goodman Volunteer of the Year Award from the Baton Rouge Ballet Theater. I don't know how she finds the time, but Diane is also certified as a Delta Society Pet Partner for her work using therapy animals.

Yet I noticed that Diane's announcement was characteristically humble as she steps away after 37 years. Here is what she said: "I have never taken for granted the honor and privilege you have given me over these many years by choosing me and my colleagues here at WAFB-TV to keep you and your family safe and informed."

I think that the gratitude among Louisiana and Baton Rouge residents is certainly mutual.

I am glad to hear that Diane will not be leaving our great State. I want to emphasize that. She is going to retire in Louisiana, and I hope she enjoys every moment—every single moment—she gets to sleep in after December 18. No one can argue—no fair-minded person can argue—that she hasn't earned a rest, even though her familiar weather forecast will be sorely missed in a State that takes more than our fair share of beatings from Mother Nature.

I thank you for the chance to honor Diane Deaton. I thank you for the chance to honor Diane Deaton for all of her hard work on behalf of everyone who relies on WAFB-TV for news and for everyone in Louisiana and Baton Rouge whom her volunteer work has touched—and that numbers in the hundreds of thousands.

Diane, may the years ahead bring as much joy to you as you have brought to our State and our community. God bless you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, for many years, I have supported the annual National Defense Authorization Act. The bill always contains many worthy provisions, and it usually passes with large majorities. After all, who wants to vote no when the common refrain to pass the bill is "Support the troops"? But at some point you have to draw the line, and this year is where I draw it.

Just look at these bills over the last few years. Five years ago, the NDAA was 968 pages—not unusual around here and something you can get your hands around. But last year, the NDAA report was 1,794 pages, and this year the report is an astonishing 4,517 pages—not even counting the classified annexes. I doubt anyone really knows what is in it except maybe some lobbyists.

And get this: As the bill grew more than sixfold in length, we had even less time to read it. The number of people who could read the bill at any one time was restricted. Social distancing—"Can't have too many people in the room," we were told. That is fine. I understand. We are still in a pandemic. But then we should have had more time to review the bill, not less. Yet Armed Services Committee members were asked on this floor last week to sign the bill after having only a couple of hours to review it.

As this massive bill was written in secret and then rushed to a vote, some seem to have forgotten to consult with the Commander in Chief or recall that he has veto power. It is pretty well known that the President wants the bill to reform or repeal section 230, the giveaway to Big Tech oligarchs who get to censor the American people without consequence.

The bill stiff-arms the President. There is not a word in more than 4,500 pages about section 230. The sponsors claim they couldn't airdrop provisions into the bill at the last minute. I take the point. I am not sure the President will, though, and he is the one with the veto.

But there is more. The bill condemns the President for proposing to move some troops out of Germany and restricts his ability to do so, even though NATO's frontier has shifted hundreds of miles to the east and Germany hasn't exactly carried its share of the NATO load. The Senate didn't debate this major policy change. Our earlier bill didn't even mention it. As far as I am concerned, this provision was, to borrow a phrase, airdropped without appropriate consultation with committee members. And for the record, I am a senior member of the committee, but I only learned about this provision in the newspaper on Friday, 2 days after I was asked to sign the bill.

It would appear the standard for airdropping provisions into the bill is that we won't airdrop things that support the President's priorities, but we will airdrop stuff that thwarts his priorities. I doubt that will get past the President's veto either.

This failure to consult committee members is not an isolated incident. The President's 5G plan released valuable but unused spectrum owned by the government. The Pentagon protested mightily but only with vague evidence. We had a hearing on this issue, and it sharply divided committee members. Yet, again, this bill disrupts the President's plan, and, again, we learned about it only after the fact.

Another thing that happens behind closed doors is broken promises. We were promised last summer that the radical Warren amendment wouldn't survive the conference committee. Not only did it survive; not a single word was changed.

You may have heard about the Warren amendment. You probably heard that it would merely rename some Army bases that are named after Confederate officers. There is no harm in having that debate. I have always found it curious that we don't have a base named after say U.S. Grant or John Pershing.

Yet the Warren amendment is far more radical than merely renaming a few bases. The amendment explicitly applies to all military property. That is a lot more than bases. It includes military museums, service academies, and cemeteries. Do you think I am exaggerating? I am not. Read the bill: no exceptions for museums, for academies, even for cemeteries.

Let me give you just one example. The West Point library contains portraits of Grant and Lee in close proximity, two commanders of the Civil War, juxtaposed as today's cadets learn the history of our Nation, our Army, and their own school. But that painting may have to come down. So I suppose tomorrow's cadets may learn that Grant defeated an unnamed enemy with an unnamed commander and accepted surrender from no one at Appomattox.

But if you really want to see the radical consequence of the Warren amendment, just look across the river to Arlington National Cemetery, our Nation's most sacred ground. Those gardens of stone stretch in symmetrical rows across the horizon, except for a single odd section laid out in circles, rather than rows, and with pointed headstones, rather than rounded ones. The 482 graves in Section 16 contain the remains of Americans who rebelled against our country. That section also contains a memorial to those who died in that rebellion.

We should be grateful that those rebels and their cause lost on the battlefield. Yet we should also be mindful of the historical context of this patch of our most sacred ground. Section 16 of Arlington was created as a symbol not of secession but of reconciliation by the very men who had fought for the Union.

President William McKinley—a decorated veteran of the Union Army, promoted three times for battlefield valor—oversaw its creation. In a display of magnanimity, he declared—in

front of the Georgia legislature, of all places—that the Federal Government would assume responsibility for Confederate graves. He then signed a bill authorizing the reinterment of Confederate soldiers at Arlington.

Senator WARREN apparently believes that she knows better how to handle the legacy of our Civil War than did the Union veterans who bled and defeated the Confederacy on the field of battle, or even Barack Obama, who continued a longstanding Presidential tradition in 2009 of sending a wreath to the Confederate section of Arlington on Memorial Day.

If the professor gets her way, a crane may drive into Arlington and rip out the memorial whose history dates back to President McKinley and which was honored just a few years ago by President Obama. Again, I am not exaggerating. In the committee markup, Senator WARREN said that is exactly what she wants to happen. And if that happens, maybe the professor will be applauded in faculty lounges, but my perspective is a little different.

I served at Arlington with the Old Guard. My soldiers and I laid to rest our Nation's heroes. A lot of those funerals started in Section 16. Before those funerals started, we talked sometimes about that odd section and the war that occasioned it. After all, the Army has a lot of amateur Civil War historians. We were proud to wear the uniform of and be the heirs to Grant and Sherman and Sheridan—the great warriors who saved the Union and vindicated freedom and equality for all.

We also had a little humility. We didn't presume that we knew better than Grant and McKinley how to heal our Nation's wounds after the Civil War, or that we knew better than Abraham Lincoln, who called for "malice toward none, with charity for all."

Maybe Senator WARREN and the Jacobins in our streets repudiate the wisdom of Lincoln and Grant and McKinley. Perhaps they think Lincoln should be canceled. A mob tried to tear down his statue just a few blocks from here last summer. Too many of these Jacobins condemn our Nation as racist to its core. They look at the Confederacy and see not a rebellion against America but the true heart of America. So, naturally, their iconoclasm doesn't stop with tearing down statues of Lee but moves right away to statues of Washington, Lincoln, and Grant. They tried to tear down those last summer, too, if you recall.

I will never stand by while Jacobins tear down statues of Washington, Lincoln, and Grant, nor will I support a bill that permits a crane to drive into Arlington and desecrate that sacred ground. We celebrate the triumph of the Union and the cause of freedom and equality and the defeat of the Confederacy, but why does it follow that we have to rip paintings off the walls of libraries and museums and tear down war memorials in Arlington National Cemetery?

And I suspect a lot of other Senators wouldn't support this bill either if they knew what it does. And that takes me back to a larger problem. We were promised this radical language wouldn't be part of the final bill, but that promise was discarded behind closed doors. Now, we have a 4,500-page bill at the last minute in the rush to fund the government and pass another coronavirus relief bill before the holidays, all with the Presidential veto hanging over it.

An overlong bill negotiated behind closed doors, dropped at the last minute, major policy shifts without consensus or even much debate, broken promises, wishful thinking about a veto threat—these are the hallmarks of an NDAA process that has deteriorated rapidly in recent years. That has to change. If it doesn't change this month, mark my words, it will change next year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO DOUG JONES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, sadly, I return to the floor today to say farewell to another Member who will conclude his time in the Senate at the end of the term, the junior Senator from Alabama, DOUG JONES.

We all know DOUG came to the Senate as a storied courtroom lawyer and U.S. attorney, but fewer people know about his more humble origins. DOUG was born and raised in Fairfield, AL, just outside of Birmingham, the son of a steelworker, the grandson of a coal miner. When he was 19 years old, he spent his summer working at the local cotton tie mill, 10 hours a day, 6 days a week.

One day, a freak accident sent a bit of shrapnel flying his way, and he came within inches of losing an eye. Several stitches later, DOUG went right back to work—early evidence of a stubborn streak. Only at the end of the summer did DOUG decide it was time to focus a bit more on his studies.

That same work ethic—the sometimes stubborn work ethic—followed him his entire life. He brought it next to law school. On the one occasion DOUG decided to skip class, it wasn't to throw a pigskin around the quad or engage in some extracurricular activity with friends. No, DOUG skipped class to attend the trial of the Klansman ring-leader of the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, a tragedy that had shaken the conscience of a nation.

A young DOUG JONES was moved by the disposition of justice in that trial, but he was left with the impression that other members of the conspiracy had escaped the reach of the law. Only

a scriptwriter could have imagined that 24 years later, that law school truant would become the U.S. attorney in Alabama and that his office would uncover the evidence to bring charges against two more Klan members involved in the bombing, and that 40 years after that awful crime, DOUG JONES would win the conviction of the remaining conspirators, delivering a long-delayed yet righteous justice.

History would repeat itself a few years later, when DOUG would again find himself at the center of events. DOUG was eating breakfast one day just blocks away from the scene of the bombing of the All Women Health Clinic. He took charge that day and made sure that investigators and first responders worked together in perfect unison. DOUG would later go on to secure the indictment of Eric Rudolph, the perpetrator of that heinous bombing, as well as the Olympic Park bombing 2 years later.

Of course, not every one of DOUG's cases involved matters of life and death. The U.S. attorney's office once prosecuted local officials for trying to steal an election by bribing absentee voters with cash, beer, and a little liquor for good measure. Now, if only the defendants had known about DOUG's affinity for bourbon.

Kidding aside, kidding aside, those years revealed for DOUG something profound about public service and government: You can have the best laws in the world in principle, but it takes dedicated effort to make the law work for everyone in practice, to take our ideals of justice and equality and fairness and opportunity and make them real in the everyday lives of citizens.

DOUG brought that revelation with him to this Chamber. He worked with his trademark determination to finally repeal the widow's tax. He helped pass legislation to permanently fund historically Black colleges and universities. He has worked across the aisle to combat veteran suicide, strengthen the VA, and support our military bases—so important to the great State of Alabama.

Not every issue would be so easy or so bipartisan, especially for a new Senator facing a difficult reelection, but every time DOUG approached a politically sensitive vote—and I marveled at this—he was untroubled. He would do what he always did: He would act on principle. He would vote his conscience—politics be damned. President Kennedy had a phrase for Senators whose abiding loyalty to their conscience triumphed over all personal and political considerations. He called them profiles in courage. DOUG JONES is a profile in courage for our times.

But before I get carried away with too many grand compliments, it is important to remind colleagues that DOUG JONES, as a human being, is just a joy to be around. Just ask his good friend, the Senator from Montana. More than once DOUG would catch Senator TESTER giving an impassioned

speech on the floor and think to himself: I will bet you he didn't turn his phone off. Let me give him a ring and see what happens.

(Laughter.)

Just look at DOUG's office, festooned with memorabilia of every particular: Crimson Tide footballs and keepsakes from his favorite bands. You can go see his rocking chair—one of those southern-veranda, sweet-tea-drinking chairs—and baseballs signed by Presidents, statesmen, and most impressively to this Yankee fan, Joe DiMaggio.

If DOUG JONES has one hobby besides hunting, it is autograph hunting. He has managed to collect a signature on a baseball from every Senator in this Chamber today, including its newest Member. The junior Senator from Arizona was sworn in only a week ago, but 5 seconds after he lifted his hand from that Bible, there was DOUG to congratulate him, furnishing a clean baseball, ready for Mr. KELLY's John Hancock.

That is DOUG JONES—someone who never let the immense pressure of this job change who he is, someone who has made life a joy for everyone in our caucus, and someone who understands that, at the end of the day, we get sent to this Chamber to make life better for our constituents, to do it courageously even when the odds are not in our favor.

I will end with one final story. Several years ago, DOUG was asked to participate in a stage adaptation of his favorite work of fiction, "To Kill a Mockingbird," which, of course, includes his literary icon, another great Alabama lawyer, Atticus Finch.

Hearing DOUG's life story, you would be forgiven for thinking it was ripped from the pages of that Harper Lee classic, so perhaps it was fate that one day DOUG would be asked to play a part in that story. There was just one hiccup: DOUG was asked to play the judge. So he never got to deliver that passage, shortly after the death of Mrs. Dubose, when Atticus explains to his son that real courage is not a man with a gun in his hand; "[real courage is] when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes"—sometimes—"you do."

DOUG spent his time in the Senate—indeed, his whole life—embodying the courage that Atticus describes. The story of the 16th Street bombings is a reminder of the fact that even against tremendous evil and seemingly impossible odds, if you are dogged and determined and see it through no matter what, sometimes you do win and justice prevails.

So while DOUG didn't get to play Atticus Finch that weekend at the Virginia Samford Theater in Birmingham, that is OK. It was already the role of his lifetime.

DOUG has said that it is the greatest honor of his life to fill the seat of his mentor, Senator Howell Heflin.

DOUG, you upheld the honor of that seat, and you have set an example for every Senator who will follow in it.

Whatever the next chapter of your life may bring, the entire Senate Democratic family wishes you and your family the very, very best and politely requests that you do not call us when we are in the middle of giving a speech.

(Laughter.)

I yield to my friend, the very distinguished and wonderful, wonderful, wonderful junior Senator from the great State of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. JONES. Mr. President, I thank the minority leader for those remarks. I am humbled.

You know, everyone knows the old saying "My, how time flies when you are having fun." My time here has drawn to a close, but despite the difficulties, the challenges, despite the rancor that we often see in this body, as well as Washington, DC, I can honestly say I have had a lot of fun. The last 3 years have been amazing, and I have loved being a Member of this body.

I actually was able to accomplish a few things, thanks to you. But you have been fun; you have not just been kind. It has really been good.

By the way, your staffs have been awesome. I know you hear that a lot from constituents. Maybe you don't hear it enough from other Senators. Your staffs have been amazing to us, and I really very much appreciate it.

You know, as the minority leader said, everybody knows I am a baseball fan. If you go into that office, you will see in my reception area all 100 baseballs that I had signed. And it was fun getting them—either here on the floor or in a committee room, at the retreat that the Democrats had. There were so many who had never signed a baseball, and you figured out that it wasn't easy to sign a baseball.

(Laughter.)

And even those who signed in their office, when we sent them to their office, they always came up and talked about it. It was a time to put politics aside and just talk a little bit—something we really don't do enough of around here, leaving the weighty politics and responsibilities that we have just to sign a baseball and talk about how much fun it was.

I remember, right after I was elected, I was talking to a friend of mine, dreaming big about the things that we could accomplish that would make a difference in the lives of the people of Alabama and the people of America. We talked about the possibility that we could work on a bill as important as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But I knew—I knew, though—that such opportunities were not likely, especially in what I knew to be a 3-year window and not knowing what the future would hold—

although, I have got to be honest, I had a pretty doggone good idea when I got here.

If there was one thing my momma always taught me, it was to be realistic about things. I knew it was going to be tough, but to even have an opportunity to talk and work on things that bring such transformational changes—those kind of things come along once in a generation, if we are lucky. They are that legislative equivalent of a perfect game in baseball. You are lucky if you get to be part of that in your career, but you always have to hope and you have to strive for the possible, not just the likely.

For those of you who really don't know about baseball—there may be a few—a perfect game is just that: nine innings, three outs, three up, three down. Everything has to work together in synchrony. It is not just the pitcher who throws balls and strikes; it is the outfielder who catches the fly; it is the second baseman who has to get the out and throw the runner out at first. Everyone has to fall in line and work together as a team—as a team. And it is not just that; it is the people on the field. They are all working and they are all striving for the same goal. As it turned out, I didn't get a chance to be part of a perfect game. I didn't think I would, but I didn't get that chance.

Sometimes I worry, as many of you do—especially if you listened to the farewell speeches of LAMAR ALEXANDER and TOM UDALL and MIKE ENZI and others—you worry if those perfect games can ever be had in this Senate again. I worry about that. But we always come close, and I came close.

Right after I got here, I got invited to be part of the Common Sense Caucus, which I had to explain to people in Alabama that that is really not an oxymoron, that there is common sense up here.

But within 6 weeks of being up here, I was at SUSAN COLLINS' office with so many here—some 20 Senators, Republican, Democratic—talking about immigration, working on immigration reform. It was the hottest topic of the day, an important topic that is still important today. I just marveled at the fact that here I was, 6 weeks into this, and I was in that room being a part of those discussions.

What was even more astonishing to me is that people actually wanted to hear what I had to say. That didn't happen, having raised three children, been married. I don't always get that, when people want to know what you have got to say. But they did, and I was so gratified, and I was so honored.

We would meet in Senator COLLINS' office. We would meet in hideaways. It was exciting. And we came so close. You all remember that? We came so close, within about three votes of doing what they said couldn't be done, of doing something that was possible but not probable.

That sense, what I saw of my colleagues, is why we ran for the Senate.

I could see it. I could feel it in those rooms, in those discussions. I could see it on the floor that day as people were voting. It is why we wanted to be in this body.

I remember sitting in the cloakroom, and I was as disappointed as ever when we failed. And for a long time, probably still to this day, when I am asked “What is your most disappointing day in the Senate?” I will always talk about that vote that failed so close, which was so important. But what it did demonstrate is, through that effort—effort—that anything is possible. You have got to come close sometimes before you get across the finish line. You have got to play in the red zone a little bit before you get the touchdown. You have got to hit that line.

But whatever we did, it is possible. The Senate is capable of great things, if we do them, of bridging divides that society may view as too wide to cross. We can do that. It is not that wide between here and there. It is not that wide, and people need to know it and respect it.

I am not the first and I certainly will not be the last to talk about the importance of bringing people together who hold opposing views and working toward what is both possible and palatable. But all too often the desire to do that kind of gets lost among other actions that don't quite match the words that we say.

I noticed the other day how many heads were nodding in the farewell speech of Senator ALEXANDER, Senator ENZI, and Senator UDALL. And then what happens? I have looked at a lot of farewell speeches in the last month. They all say a lot of the same things, and everybody, I am sure, nods.

We have got to do better. You have to do better. I don't think I fully appreciated it. And I listened to the minority leader talk about where I come from in Fairfield, but I don't think I fully appreciated it until fairly recently. It seems like I just kind of love a lost cause. It seems like every time that there is something that needs me there, I am there—fighting for justice for others, for others who feel like hope is lost, from the church bombing case to a Senate election in Alabama. I fought for those causes because I believe in hope. I believe in redemption. I believe in the possibility. Some may call that naive, and many have, but I have not been afraid to touch on the so-called “third rail” issues of our political system because I believe that, right now especially, there is no time for caution.

My first speech on the Senate floor was about gun violence. No one could believe a Senator from Alabama actually talked about how we can stop gun violence in a way that made some sense—not from an extreme view on the right or an extreme view on the left but right there in ways that made sense.

It was a topic that I knew could have easily been twisted into a negative

campaign ad—which, by the way, it was.

(Laughter.)

We saw it coming. But I also knew action was so important. We took some small steps on that issue over the last 3 years, despite a lot of political pressure to the contrary, and I hope you will do more in the years ahead because lives will depend on it.

Everything doesn't have to be a perfect game. There is great satisfaction in the day-to-day triumphs. You can and we did hit a home run or two and more than our share of singles and doubles. I am really proud of the 20-plus bills that I led or co-led, bipartisan bills, that have been signed into law over the last 3 years. None would have been possible without bipartisan work.

One of my first original bills, the Civil Rights Cold Case Records Collection Act would never have become law without the commitment of Senator CRUZ to help bring long-overdue closure to the victims of those terrible crimes.

I see TED in the back. I appreciate Senator CRUZ's involvement in that. I will have to say, it was so much fun, after we got that done, to go back home and tell that to all my Democratic friends. What is your proudest? I said: Well, the proudest moment right now is with my partner, TED CRUZ. They said: Aha.

But it shows what is possible, folks. And it was an important bill. None of those bills have meant more to me, though, than the bipartisan effort that I led with Senator COLLINS to eliminate the military widow's tax that for almost two decades had deprived widows of full survivors' benefits that they deserved.

So many of you went to bat for that bill: Senator REED, Senator INHOFE, and others. You were getting a lot of pressure, not from me or SUSAN COLLINS. You were getting pressure from a lot of those military widows. They had been up here for 20 years, and for 20 years the dollars and cents had prevented that from becoming a reality. We fought on that because we knew what we were doing was right. We knew it was right that you could not put a price on the duty we owe to the men and women of our armed services and their families.

I will never forget that day in December when we passed the NDAA that included the elimination of the widow's tax. In the Gallery, there was a large group of Gold Star widows who had been up here for 20-plus years to try to get that done, never being able to reach the goal. And on that day, we did it. You did it. SUSAN and I got a lot of credit, but it was this body, with the help of some folks in the House, that made it happen. That was just one of the memorable days on the floor.

Swearing-in day was unbelievable—simply an explosion of emotions. To walk on the floor as a U.S. Senator, some 37 years after I left the floor with my old boss as a young staffer to my

mentor Howell Heflin, and to take the oath of office for his seat was just really a remarkable circle of life.

There are two especially significant things about that day too. One is that I hope that you all recognize by now that the freshman class of 2018 will likely go down in history as one of the greatest freshman classes ever. The team of SMITH and JONES can't be beat. It is as American as apple pie. I was really proud and honored to be there with TINA SMITH that day.

I was also honored, if you recall, that there were three Vice Presidents on the floor of the Senate that day. Now President-Elect Joe Biden escorted me in. Former Vice President Walter Mondale escorted Senator SMITH. MIKE PENCE, the current Vice President, swore us in. And, actually, if you now think about it, we had a fourth—soon-to-be Vice President KAMALA HARRIS. That is a pretty remarkable time—pretty remarkable.

It was also a remarkable day when what I hope is going to be a new tradition in the Senate took place: When we had on two different occasions, once each year, six Senators—three Democrats and three Republicans—reading Dr. King's “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” That document remains one of the most significant in American history, and it is as important today as it was when it was written in 1963—and, in some ways, maybe more important for the moment we find ourselves in. I have asked—and I know he will do this—my colleague Senator BROWN to carry on that tradition in my absence.

And then there was the day of the swearing-in in January of 2019. I was here to observe, to pay my respects to all those who were returning and for those who were joining. And as I was standing in the back by the cloakroom, Senator TESTER walks up and says: JONES, what are you doing?

You can't get anything past TESTER. There were probably a few profanities laden in there as well, if you know Senator TESTER.

I said: Well, JON, what do you think I am doing—with probably a couple of other kind of milder profanities.

He said: Look, DAINES is caught in a snowstorm back home and can't make it here, and I would like for you to escort me down when I take the oath.

As it turns out, it is likely to be the only time I get to do that—and it was a true honor, my friend.

Simply sitting at this desk is perhaps the greatest thing, taking this place in and watching each of you, noting the bipartisanship, especially as we close the Congress—especially as we close this Congress—and how Senators move freely from one side of the aisle to the other. Occasionally, I will tell you, I confess, that I just come back here by myself, and I will open this drawer and will read the names of the Senators who sat here: John Kennedy, Ed Muskie, Hubert Humphrey, my colleague Senator SHELBY, and so many others. And it is just overwhelming.

You know, growing up, it was always the Presidents or Presidential candidates who captured my attention. I knew the names of some Senators, but that began to change for me watching the Senate Select Committee on Watergate when I was in college. It was a remarkable time and a remarkable committee. And then everything changed again in 1979 while I was studying for the bar and got a phone call from Senator Heflin's chief of staff, Mike House. I had campaigned for the judge. Mike offered me a 1-year position on Heflin's Judiciary subcommittee, which I eagerly took. That year not only changed my life but brought about a respect for this body, for the Senate—as an institution, as individuals, and for so many of its Members—that I had never had before. From that point on, folks, I was hooked. I was hooked on this body—before being elected to the Senate. And now I have come to love the Senate a lot and, importantly, all of the possibilities that go with it, which is why I don't really want to spend my last moments on the floor talking about what I have done. I want to talk about what needs to be done, what can be done, what is possible.

You know, even back in 2017, people said it was just not possible to elect a Democrat from Alabama to the U.S. Senate—and here I have been.

It is possible to make affordable quality healthcare a reality for all Americans. The ACA right now is the best hope and only plan that is out there. As President Obama said—and everybody should do this—if there is a better plan you can come up with, put it out there. Let's do it. I will publicly support it.

The goal is healthcare for everyone in some way. There are so many in this country and in my State of Alabama who desperately need it—before, during, and after this COVID crisis. It is possible to give people in remote and rural areas access to healthcare, but it is going to take a lot of work, and it is going to take getting out of partisan corners.

It is possible to provide a quality education to every American child. I know education is often funded locally, but it is possible to do it. You just have to roll up your shirt sleeves and get it done.

It is possible to extend broadband—access to broadband—to all Americans and bring every man, woman, and child into the modern era, just like we did—the Congress did—with Franklin Roosevelt in the Rural Electrification Act in the 1930s. Broadband is the new power. It is possible to do that. High speed and affordable, that is key—affordable broadband.

It is possible to ease the burdens on working-class Americans by setting a minimum wage that is not going to hamstring businesses but will raise the quality of living for so many in this country. So many in my State are in poverty, but yet they work. They work.

They work hard, but yet they are still below that poverty level. We need to do what we can to lift them out of that poverty. It takes a lot of work. It takes hard work.

It is possible for law enforcement to serve and protect all Americans—not just some—to root out the systemic racism that exists within law enforcement by enlisting the support of both law enforcement and the communities. It is possible.

I will candidly tell you another great disappointment was when we let that moment pass this summer—hoping that with a new President, maybe a new Senate, maybe a new Congress, we could get something accomplished. I hope that that still happens, but I was disappointed we let that moment pass this summer when all of the country and all of the world was behind us to say: Please do something. Please do something that we have known about for decades, for centuries. Please do something.

Law enforcement said: Let's do something.

We let it pass. But it is never too late to do the right thing. It is never too late for justice.

It is possible to ensure that every eligible voter is able to cast a ballot and have it counted. Now is the most important opportunity we have seen in 2020—concerns about our election process; that it might have been stolen; that there might have been fraud. Use that opportunity to say: Let's don't let these allegations have any credence going forward. Let's get together. The technology is there.

Figure out a way that together we can make our election safe and secure and that all people will have access to the ballot box—all people who are eligible to vote in this country.

It is possible for our system of justice to treat all Americans equally—not just talk about it, but to do it. It is what I have tried to do throughout my career. It is possible.

And this is going to be a challenge. It is possible to restore the American people's faith in government. And we all know right now that that faith has been shaken for many, many reasons. The faith has been shaken, but it is possible to restore it. It is possible for each of us to learn—as Atticus Finch taught us—to see things from another person's point of view, to walk around in their skin or in their shoes, to see things from other's point of view, to find that common ground.

It is possible for us to realize that deep down that progress is not a zero-sum game, that a rising tide lifts all boats.

These things are not easy. They take dedication and hard choices, but they are worthy goals. I know many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are dedicated to the same goals, and though I won't be able to cosponsor anything with you from this point on or debate the amendments in committee—if you get amendments in com-

mittee—I am going to support you in whatever efforts I can, no matter what side of the aisle your desk is on. And I will keep working toward the same goals too, even after I leave this place.

Remember, though, as we get into the vitriol, as we get into political rhetoric—just remember the Jones law of politics, adapted from Newton's third law. Just remember that for every action, even in politics, there is an equal and opposite reaction. If you go too far on one side or the other, you are going to get a reaction on the other side, just as hard. And that makes it harder and harder to reach that common ground.

You know, in Senator BROWN's book about his desk and the people in his desk, he quotes the political philosopher Hannah Arendt who observed: "The good things in history are usually of very short duration, but afterwards have a decisive but a short time of influence"—a long influence—"over what happens over long periods of time."

A short time—and I know you may be thinking, well, DOUG was only here 3 years; so that is what he is talking about. But I am not. In history, I am looking at something bigger—whether it was Martha McSally's 2 years or my 3; Senator GARDNER's 6; Senator UDALL's 12; Senator ALEXANDER's 18; or ENZI's and ROBERTS' 24; or, if you are like PAT LEAHY, since Moses was in the bulrushes.

Our time here is short. There is not anybody on this floor right now who is not thinking about their time since they were sworn in and said that it was just like yesterday, because it was. Our time is short. It is of a limited duration, and we have to act like that. We have to make sure that every day we are moving.

It has been a realization of a long-held dream. I have so many to thank: Doug Turner, who is here; Joe Trippi, on my campaigns; and my late friend, Giles Perkins; and an amazing family: my bride Louise, my rock; my two boys, Carson and Christopher, who have wanted to kill both me and Louise since they have been living at home during the pandemic. They have been incredibly supportive. And then my daughter Courtney and her husband Rip and her two beautiful girls, my granddaughters, who are still the brightest stars in my sky, Ever and Ollie.

I am grateful to each of you, my colleagues, and all that you helped me with.

I am grateful to an amazing staff. I am not going to go all the way through it. They have been true rock stars. I am going to enter something into the RECORD about my staff.

I am grateful for the advice and counsel of Alabama's senior Senator and an old friend, Senator SHELBY. While RICHARD and I may disagree on many policies, we share a commitment to the people of Alabama to make sure that we do all we can to get the people in Alabama the quality of life that

they deserve, and I so much appreciate Richard's service to the people of the State of Alabama, his long and distinguished service—which started out as a Democrat, by the way, just saying. That is where the seed was planted, folks.

I also want to mention briefly the chairmen of the committees I worked on: Senator CRAPO, Senator INHOFE, Senator ALEXANDER—who was one of the first people who helped me come over—and the work that we did together. You pulled me and helped me. Senator COLLINS, who chaired the Aging Committee.

But I am especially grateful for the ranking members of those committees: Senators BROWN, CASEY, MURRAY, and REED. Their friendship and counsel have been invaluable.

Of course, I want to thank the minority leader for all of his work for me and on behalf of me. And as I think you guys know—not always the people of Alabama—Senator SCHUMER never tried to put puppet strings on me. I know I got accused of that, but he never ever tried and, for that, I am very grateful.

To the people of Alabama, I promised to do my best to represent each of you, whether or not you voted for me, and I am proud of the work that we did on your behalf and that I have accomplished on your behalf. Thank you to the people for giving me the honor of serving you as your Senator.

Finally, I am going to resist the urge to tell you what is wrong with the Senate, how it operates today. You hear it virtually every time a Senator gives a farewell address, and, instinctively, you know it deep down. But I will offer you this. There is a book I finished reading recently that Ira Shapiro, a former staffer, wrote. Many of you may remember or know Ira. He wrote a book called "The Last Great Senate." It ought to be required reading for every Senator coming in. It was published 8 years ago, about the two Congresses during the Carter administration and how they operated—Bob Byrd as majority leader, Howard Baker as the minority leader, how they got things done for the American people. The author laments that the Senate doesn't operate today in that fashion. I was here for one of those years. Senator LEAHY was here during that time.

His closing is even more important today as it was when the book was published. He said:

America is adrift in turbulent and dangerous waters. Facing enormous challenges at home and abroad, we urgently need our once-vaunted political system to function at its best, instead of at its worst. To be sure, it is more difficult being a senator today than it was in the 1960's and 1970's. The increasingly vitriolic political culture, fueled by a twenty-four-hour news cycle, the endless pressure to raise money, the proliferation of lobbyists and demanding, organized interests are all well known, and they take a toll. But all of those factors make it more essential that our country has a Senate of men and women who bring wisdom, judg-

ment, experience, and independence to their work, along with an understanding that the Senate must be able to take a collective action in the national interest.

Please remember that as you go about the country's business; remember that as you go about the Senate's business; remember that as you go about your business as a Senator. And as you do, keep and preserve the reverence that the Founders envisioned for this body. As former Majority Leader Mike Mansfield once said, "The constitutional authority . . . does not lie with the leadership. It lies with all of us, individually, collectively, and equally. . . . In the end, it is not the Senators as individuals who are of fundamental importance. . . . In the end, it is the institution of the Senate. It is the Senate itself as one of the foundations of the Constitution. It is the Senate as one of the rocks of the Republic."

Something we should all remember.

One more little bit of advice. Take out the word "negotiation" when you are talking about legislation. Don't talk about negotiating this bill or that bill, whether it is COVID relief or even appropriations. It works, but let me tell you what is happening out there, what is happening out there with the people. They hear those words, and they think this is some side or the other trying to get an advantage. It is like labor and unions. It is like a civil or criminal lawsuit. Somebody is trying to get an advantage to try to do things for their own interests.

We can talk about it from the Democratic side of how we are working for the people; we are negotiating for the people. We can talk about it from the Republican side; that we are negotiating for patriotism and businesses to make sure they are protected. But what is being heard by the American people is this is all about Democrats; this is all about Republicans and getting that political power.

Talk about common ground. Talk about sitting down with the administration or whomever and finding common ground. Talk about the goals that you agree on and how to get there. "Negotiation" is just a bad word, and I hate that, but it is.

As I prepare for the next chapter of my life's journey, there is a sadness of what I am going to leave behind, but there is also optimism—optimism, the glass half full, the men and women who serve in this body and their successors and the staff who support them. And I emphasize that, again, the staff who support them. Leading together will continue to bring a better future for the American people, for your constituents, for each of us together, not as a caucus but together as a Senate.

You are just a damn, unbeatable team. You are an unbeatable team.

May God bless you all. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

Mr. President, with a deep sense of humility and gratitude, I say for the last time, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. What a good speech here. We don't hear them like that every day.

To my colleague Senator JONES, 3 years was not a long time here, but we feel his presence. I can tell you that I have known DOUG a long time. I remember I came to the U.S. House when he came up to work in the Senate for Senator Heflin in the Judiciary Committee and so forth.

I supported him when he was nominated by President Clinton to be the U.S. attorney in the Northern District of Alabama, where he did a tremendous job. I worked with him day after day, as we all do, on a lot of issues that affected the country but affected, especially, our State of Alabama at times, and we worked hand in glove.

We have become friends. We have our differences, but we also have a lot of things that he talked about today where we would come together for the State and for the country.

I wish him well. I think we will hear more from him in the weeks ahead, in the months ahead. I certainly hope so. He has a lot to give.

He has a great family. He has a great wife in Louise and a great partner there.

He has a great staff and we worked together and we will continue to do this.

But one theme—and I like that he kept expounding on it here today—that if we work together in the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, we get things done; if not, things don't happen.

I wish Senator JONES Godspeed and wish him the best.

Mr. President, today I would like to speak about my fellow Alabama colleague and friend, Senator DOUG JONES.

I have known DOUG JONES since he was a young staffer working for Senator Howell Heflin on the Senate Judiciary Committee. During his 3 years as a Member in the Senate, I believe we have worked well together.

He and his staff have shown a lot of professionalism and class while in Washington. He is respected by all of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

While we may not agree on every policy, DOUG understands the Senate and respects the institution. It has been an honor to serve with him.

Annette and I have enjoyed spending time with DOUG and Louise, and we wish them all the best.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I am going to be very, very short.

The truth is that serving with DOUG JONES has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me. This guy's last name shouldn't be JONES; it should be "Justice." He is somebody like nobody I

have ever seen, whose moral compass is so tuned into right that it has just been an incredible pleasure for me to be able to serve with him and to know him and to also wish him the best moving forward.

I don't think we have heard the last of DOUG JONES. DOUG is not the kind of person who will shrink away. There will be another moment where he can exhibit his ability of common sense, as he has done here in the U.S. Senate for the last 3 years.

I am deeply going to miss his friendship and his ability to sort the wheat from the chaff because he has been able to do that from day one and continued today with his farewell speech.

I just want to say, God bless you, DOUG JONES, and God bless your family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I heard a lot about DOUG JONES before he got here from another courageous former U.S. attorney, Hal Hardin from Nashville. I was not disappointed when he arrived.

DOUG JONES reminds me of another former Democrat who was very effective in the Senate, Ted Kennedy. Ted Kennedy would come on the floor and make the most—well, no one could ever say he abandoned his principles, based upon his speeches. He would stand back there in the back, and the things he would say would rally any Republican Lincoln Day Dinner. In fact, all I had to do back in Tennessee to stir up the Republican crowd was to mention Ted Kennedy. I did that on a regular basis.

However, when I made my maiden address, without my knowing it, Ted Kennedy went around and got 20 cosponsors for the legislation I introduced that day, and I got a good dose of what it means to be an effective U.S. Senator, somebody who sticks to his or her opinions but, at the same time, who knows we are here to try to work on some sticky issues and get a result that most of us can vote for and that the country can accept.

In his time here, DOUG JONES did that. I got to watch him because he was a member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Senator Kennedy used to chair that committee, working with Senator ENZI, Senator Gregg, Senator Hatch, and others to produce a lot of legislation. He used to say that committee has one-third of all the jurisdiction in the Senate. Maybe that is about right.

DOUG JONES was one of the newest Senators. We have 23 members. He was way down at the end of the line, but I noticed he always came and he always asked questions and he always listened. He seemed to me to be trying to say what he believed but learn from the witnesses how to get a result.

Let me just mention one contribution he made that I think will stick with him and with the people of Alabama and this country for a long time.

That was the work we did in 2019. Senator MURRAY and I, DOUG JONES, Senator TIM SCOTT, Senator BENNET of Colorado were on it from the beginning to do two things at once that helped low-income Americans who wanted to go to college.

The first was to simplify the dreaded FAFSA, the Federal Aid application form that 20 million Americans fill out every year that is 108 questions long. About 90 of them are unnecessary; everybody agrees. For years, we have been working on that to try to simplify it. Finally, we got a significant part of that done.

DOUG JONES played a major role in that because what that legislation did was to say to the low-income family in Alabama or Tennessee or Arkansas or Illinois—wherever—you don't have to send your tax information into the Federal Government twice and let them then see if they can catch you making a mistake and hold up your Pell grant for 2 months while you figure that out. All you have to do is check a box, and the Internal Revenue Service will fill out the tax questions on your Pell grant application for you so that there is no chance of making a mistake. That made a big difference. And at the very same time, we agreed—Republicans and Democrats—to permanently fund historically Black colleges. It was a goal that had been there for a long time.

So I would say to my friend from Alabama that I hope he puts that on his wall somewhere because that helps a few hundred thousand low-income families in Alabama alone. There is some work still to be done on that to finish the job, to finish the FAFSA simplification, and there may be some other support for historically Black colleges that we might even be able to get done while you and I are still here.

Yet I wanted to acknowledge a Senator who arrived, went to work, stuck to his principles, worked across the aisle, and got results. You can't have a much better scorecard than that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I also rise to acknowledge my dear, dear friend DOUG, but I do it in a different vein. So many good things have been said, and I think anyone who knows DOUG or who has paid attention to what has been said today had found it has been very accurate as far as his having a commitment to the rule of law and his compassion for any person, especially for those who haven't had the same opportunities as all of us have had in life. That is what has moved us all. Yet I have gotten to see him in a different light.

He and Louise invited me down. I got to campaign with them, and it was all about Alabama. I got to go down and spend a couple of days. That tells you of the true person. It not only tells you what he believes and what he feels for the people of his State and how he rep-

resents them, but it truly tells us what the people of his State think of him. I saw it firsthand. I saw it at a football game. Now, Nick Saban and I grew up together in a small, little coal mining community.

I want you to know that Coach Saban and Terry, his wife, send their best. They want to thank you for your service.

To see the fans gather around DOUG and to see the happiness that he and Louise had when we were just out, going through the tailgates, was a wonderful, wonderful sight. That tells me everything about his purpose for being here. I hope those in Alabama know how truly fortunate they are to have this gentleman, who loves Alabama with every fiber and bone in his body. He has given them everything he has and has represented their State better than any State I have ever seen represented with the true passion that he has.

I love you, buddy. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving with many, many Senators of both parties and with very many whom I have applauded. Some stand out specially—some for their longevity and some for who they are. DOUG JONES stands out for who he is.

I think, in listening to his work as a prosecutor—of course, that is near and dear to my heart in my having been a prosecutor—I had never faced what he had. I think of his discussion of the summation he gave in the trial of the people involved with the bombing of the church in Alabama and the killing and maiming of youngsters. In fact, I had a chance to meet one of the survivors of that with DOUG, and I saw how she had felt about him all these years later because he had had the courage to stand up and do something that may not have been popular with some in his State, but that had been the right thing to do. In all of the years I have known him here, what he has done has been the right thing to do.

Now, I have only had one objection about him. He showed me a picture that was taken when this young man, DOUG JONES, was working for Howell Heflin—Judge Heflin, as I recall. They were standing there with these gray beards, and this Senator from Vermont asked: Who is the youngster in the picture?

Senator JONES, thank you for bringing that. I know Ann Berry, in my office, got a kick out of that because she had the opportunity to work with you.

We have done things that we have been able to joke about, like being in an airplane, where he was sitting in the front and I was sitting in the back. Fortunately, it was on the ground. Senator JONES hollered out to somebody, one of the military people there: Where is the button for the ejection seat for the back?

It caught my attention.

I have also seen this man sit there and try to discuss legislation. He would ask: How will that help people? I don't want this because it is politically beneficial to me. How will it help people?

I have heard about towns now in Alabama that I had never heard about. I have also heard things he would tell me about that would make me think of towns in Vermont and make me realize we were talking about the same problems. Never once would he say: These are Republicans or these are Democrats. He would say: These are people in Alabama who need help. So we would work on that.

I will speak further about this, but, Senator JONES, I think of you and your wonderful family. I think of the trips you and your wife and my wife and I have taken together, and I feel that I have been a better Senator for knowing you and traveling with you and listening to you. I will miss you, my friend, and I will speak further on this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there is something about this DOUG JONES. From the earliest stages in his life, he knew he was going to be a little bit different.

When I grew up in East St. Louis, IL, it was expected that my childhood hero would be St. Louis Cardinals great Stan "the Man" Musial. But when you grew up in Fairfield, AL—also a baseball fan as a boy—it turned out that your childhood heroes included Joe DiMaggio, Roger Maris, and Mickey Mantle. I am not sure how that goes over in the Deep South, to say that you are rooting for a team called the Yankees. But you did it, and you knew from the start, in your youth, that you were willing to strike out and do the radical, controversial thing.

You were 9 years old in September 1963 when four members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in nearby Birmingham, killing four innocent, young girls who were not much older than you were. Fourteen years later, you were an idealistic, young law student who skipped class to sit in on the trial of the ringleader of that church bombing. You were mesmerized when listening to Alabama's then-attorney general—the lead prosecutor in the case—tell the jury: "It is never too late for justice." The jury agreed and convicted the bomber.

You would go on to marry Louise, and God blessed you with three beautiful children—two sons and a daughter. Yet the memories of those four little girls who were killed in their church never left you.

In his eulogy for the four fallen girls, Dr. Martin Luther King said that the girls "say to each of us, Black and White alike, that we must substitute courage for caution. They say to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered them but about the system, the way of life, and the philosophy which produced the mur-

derers. Their deaths say to us that we must work passionately and unrelentingly for the realization of the American dream."

I am sure a lot of people heard those words and nodded, but you heard those words, and you were inspired. In 2001, as the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Alabama, you led the successful effort to try and convict the remaining two coconspirators in the church bombing. Both men were sentenced to life in prison.

In that same office, you coordinated a joint State-Federal task force that led to the indictment of domestic terrorist Eric Rudolph. You advocated that Rudolph should stand trial first in Birmingham for the deadly bombing in that city of a women's health center before being tried in Atlanta for the Centennial Olympic Park bombing. All told, these and other bombings killed 2 people and injured more than 150. Rudolph pleaded guilty and was sentenced to four life terms in prison because of your commitment.

I was honored, during the course of the campaign, DOUG, to do a joint fundraiser with you and Louise and Loretta, my wife. I got to sit out on my deck in Springfield and listen to Jason Isbell and Joe Walsh. It was a lot of fun that night. Sometimes campaigns are fun. It certainly was to be with you and Louise on that particular night.

I want to close by saying that you shocked me on the floor of the Senate with your first speech. I couldn't believe that this new Senator from the State of Alabama would give a speech about guns and gun violence. It really told me all I needed to know about you right then and there. You are willing to stick out your neck for something you believe in, even if it is going to be controversial and even if you are going to catch hell for it, because you believe in it sincerely.

I know you are a proud hunter and gun owner, and there is no question in my mind about your views on that issue. Yet, after the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, FL, that took the lives of 49 young men and women—one of the worst mass shootings in the Nation's history—you supported tighter background checks for gun sales and raising the age requirement to purchase a semiautomatic weapon.

I want to personally thank you, as well, for showing exceptional political courage in cosponsoring my DACA legislation in the Dream Act. I will never forget it.

I am also proud that you were an original cosponsor of Justice in Policing. That wasn't an easy one either for anybody and for you especially, but you stood up for what you believed in. That is legislation that I joined in introducing with our friend CORY BOOKER and soon-to-be Vice President KAMALA HARRIS.

So you have left your mark. It may seem like a short time in the Senate, but there are those who have served for much longer who have a lot less to

show for it. You told us who you were on your first day, and you proved it every day thereafter. It has been an honor to count you as a colleague. I know that you are going to continue to find ways to bend that moral arc of the universe toward justice, and I look forward to supporting you in every way that I can in that goal. I wish you the best.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I came to the Senate 2 years ago because the people of Florida entrusted me to fight against the broken ways of Washington and the out-of-control spending that is threatening the future of our children and our grandchildren.

I am fighting every day against the political class in Washington—the same elites that scoff when people like me say that government needs to be run like a business. They say government is too complicated to run like a business, but I say that any elected official or government bureaucrat who believes that should resign tomorrow because they are part of the problem.

It is time to wake up. It is time to wake up to the fact that every dime spent in Washington belongs to American taxpayers, and every dollar spent now is a tax increase for a future generation.

It is time to wake up to the fact that our Nation is more than \$27 trillion in debt. Every cent we spend moving forward threatens our ability to fund our military and our safety nets like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

It is time to wake up to the fact that our position as the leader of the free world is not promised and shouldn't be taken for granted. Irresponsible career politicians who care more about their next election than the future of our country will run this Nation into the ground if we let them, and I am fighting like hell to make sure they don't.

Now, let me be clear. I support another relief measure to help our small businesses and individuals who are hurting because of the coronavirus.

For months, Senate Republicans have been trying to pass responsible and targeted measures to quickly help those in need. And for months, Democrats have blocked these measures because of politics.

NANCY PELOSI admitted it. She said she purposely stood in the way of the deal until after the Presidential election so that politics would be in their favor to avoid "considerations in the legislation that we don't want."

It is shameful and exactly why the American people are fed up with Washington.

Congress has already allocated \$2 trillion in direct and indirect aid to States and localities. And we know, unfortunately, because Congress tried to get this money out the door as quickly as possible, many programs within the CARES Act are riddled with waste, inefficiency, and fraud.

Now a group of my colleagues want to spend another trillion dollars, including almost \$200 billion to bail out liberal States with Governors who can't do the basic job they were elected to do—manage their own budgets. And we don't even know how much is still unspent from the previous coronavirus relief packages.

I have reached out to every single Governor—twice now—to learn exactly how they have spent the hundreds of billions of dollars they have already received, and only 10 have replied. They won't tell us because they don't want us to know there are still billions of dollars left unspent. They don't want us to know that the real purpose is to take taxpayer money meant to help get through this crisis and use it to backfill their inefficient and wasteful budgets and pension programs.

Liberal Governors and mayors around the country think the American people are stupid. They think taxpayers in States like Florida won't realize if the Federal Government uses their taxpayer money to bail out States like New York and California and pay for those States' wasteful spending.

Governor Newsom has had his hand out for a bailout despite the fact that California's tax revenues for this fiscal year are running \$9.9 billion or 18.6 percent above projections. Personal income tax revenue in October was \$1 billion—15.6 percent higher than in the previous October in California, and sales taxes were up 9.2 percent. For the last 4 months, overall revenue in California has exceeded spring forecasts and even 2019 collections.

This is a State that paid \$1.5 million to the chief investment officer of its public pension fund, who was actively investing in companies tied to the Chinese Communist Party, only to later find out this person was personally invested in companies with ties to the Chinese Communist Party. You can't make this stuff up. How is that for pension waste and a national security threat?

It is the same story with Governor Cuomo. New York's overall tax revenue was up 4.3 percent in September compared to September 2019.

These are the same Governors who are OK issuing new stay-at-home orders that are killing small businesses. As long as they get more money from the Federal Government to backfill their budgets and pension plans, they don't care how many people in their States have to suffer. These Governors and mayors don't care, as long as they don't have to follow their own oppressive rules.

Let's not forget about NANCY PELOSI and the hair salon, California Governor

Gavin Newsom dining at the French Laundry, Austin Mayor Steve Adler encouraging constituents to stay home from his timeshare in Mexico.

Do as I say, not as I do.

These liberal politicians who refuse to open their States or spend taxpayer money wisely are seeing high numbers of unemployment. Most of the States with the highest unemployment rate in the country are controlled by Democrats.

On the other hand, Republican-led States that are making the hard choices to get on a fiscally responsible path and reopen their economy safely are succeeding and seeing lower unemployment rates.

Thirty States have halved their unemployment rate since May, while real GDP grew 33 percent in the third quarter, erasing losses from the previous quarter. You can see there, this is from a Wall Street Journal editorial—if you haven't heard, "states are experiencing a surge of—tax revenue." Politicians don't want this good news to get out because they want to get more of our money from States like Florida to pay for the budgets of Illinois, New York, California, and New Jersey. You can see the GDP growth of 33 percent in that quarter.

Over here you can see States have seen a big drop-off in their unemployment rates by half over the last 6 months, and there has been a big growth in private sector employment, but it doesn't stop these liberal Governors and mayors from wanting more money.

Look, I know everyone wants to help our States, and so do I. We help our States by ensuring appropriate spending of the billions of dollars in taxpayer dollars already allocated. We help our States by safely opening the economy and getting Americans back to work. We help our States by sending money to schools to safely reopen and funding vaccine research and distribution.

Most States will be in a strong position to get through this pandemic without more Federal aid, and that is great news for our country. But we know New York, California, Illinois, New Jersey don't need bailouts; they want bailouts so they can use that money intended to address the fallout from COVID to backfill their long-standing budget problems and their pension problems.

I have said all along that I will not support that. It is not fair to the citizens of States like Florida, where over my 8 years as Governor, we made the hard choices—they were hard—that put our State on a fiscally secure path. We paid down our State debt. We cut taxes. We balanced our budget every year without borrowing money.

And \$908 billion—\$908 billion—of spending today equals a tax increase of \$7,000 per American family down the road. It is not money that we have. It is a tax increase of \$7,000 per American family down the line.

Many families in our country right now are trying to figure out how to celebrate this holiday season while they struggle to afford daily expenses. These are people we need to be helping.

You wouldn't run your business or family the way Washington is run—like there is an endless supply and no consequences to racking up unthinkable amounts of debt. That is what many of my colleagues want. But to keep spending money like this means taking away the same opportunities that I have had and others have had to live the American dream, and it will take it away from our children and our grandchildren.

It is time to wake up. It is time to make the hard choices to put our Nation on a path to recovery—recovery from this virus, from the economic devastation it has brought with it, and from the fiscal calamity that decades of politicians have ignored. That includes refusing to bail out wasteful States for their decades of poor fiscal choices.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

S.J. RES. 77

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, later today, we will vote on whether to go forward with the arms sales that the administration notified the Congress of a few weeks ago. These would be arms sales to the United Arab Emirates, equipment sales. These sales clearly would continue the 20 years of growth in our relationship, working side by side against common concerns and common enemies.

This really goes back through three different administrations, going back to 9/11 and beyond, where the UAE has consistently been willing to stand with us in at least six long-term deployments. They come; they stay. They are side by side with us in the field. They have been with us in the air. They are flying what has previously been our best piece of aircraft at a level that we would share it with other countries that are friends of ours.

This sale will continue that. It continues to allow even more interoperability between the United States and the UAE and Israel.

Israel, by the way, is totally supportive of this sale. The Ambassador from the United Arab Emirates and the Ambassador from Israel earlier this week had a public event where they both talked about the support of Israel for this sale.

As you know very well, our law requires a quantitative advantage for Israel when we sell them equipment. We have even a slightly different advantage, but being able to continue this relationship is important.

The F-35 jets, the MQ-9 unarmed aerial vehicles, advanced munitions—I think the total sale is about \$23.5 billion. And this is not any kind of gift from the United States to the UAE. This is the UAE making a purchase totaling \$23.5 billion for equipment that

is made by American companies and almost always by American workers.

In August, we had the first breakthrough in a diplomatic sense in the Middle East in a long time. President Trump deserves credit for that. Israel deserves credit for that. But the UAE deserves credit for that. The Abraham accords, where the UAE formally recognized Israel, began to have flights back and forth and other things that were significant in changing the environment in the Middle East, the most difficult part of the world—the greatest breakthrough in 40 years. But that followed a number of breakthroughs that weren't quite as public, where this relationship has grown—the Israel relationship with the UAE—just like our relationship has gotten stronger over time.

To see the recognition of the two governments together, to see Bahrain follow that—I think we are going to see other countries in the area decide that a region that lives in peace with Israel is a good thing for everybody involved, not a bad thing for anybody. So it is important.

I think how the Congress deals with this is significant. We have been notified as the law requires us to be notified. Under this notification process, I don't believe any sale has been denied, and only one sale has been altered.

The President has to agree. So if we debate this for hours and somehow it narrowly passes and the President vetoes it and we don't have the votes to override the veto, which I am confident we would not have—in fact, I think we very likely have the votes to go ahead and deal with this right here, right now. It is the right thing to do. It is the right time to do it. We will never have more of a long-term runway of how things under the Bush administration, the Obama administration, and the Trump administration have continued to progress to where the UAE has become a trusted ally.

Now, they have become a trusted ally and a trusted diplomatic partner in this important breakthrough. Having this kind of equipment not only allows us to be interoperable, but frankly, it creates the opportunities for American military and American technicians to be working with them every time you have an upgrade, every time you have a significant maintenance issue. That just further enhances, as does working through how that equipment is used afterwards—all of that further enhances the constant dialogue, the constant reinforcement of our friends who see common enemies and are working directly to move their country and their region in a much better direction.

I hope that the Senate today does what it needs to do and sends that message that we understand what Israel would like to see happen, what the UAE would like to see happen, and, frankly, what will happen and happens better if this debate focuses more on what that outcome produces, rather than a debate that makes people won-

der exactly what do you have to do to continue to be a trusted partner of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I would restate my request, whenever I come to the floor, that the Presiding Officer wear a mask because he has people sitting in front of him that could be at risk.

REMEMBERING PAUL SARBANES

Mr. President, this weekend, we lost a former Member of this body who truly embodied the spirit of service that should animate all of our work. His name is Paul Sarbanes. He passed away a few days ago. He was a longtime chair of the committee of the Presiding Officer.

As chair of the Banking and Housing Committee, he was always a voice for consumers and working families, standing up against powerful corporate interests. The accomplishment that bears his name, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, was a landmark law in our efforts to hold corporations accountable. It helped protect Americans who invest hard-earned money for retirement and for their kids' education from corporate banking fraud, the kind that bankrupted families after scandals like Enron.

Senator Sarbanes also never ignored the housing part of our committee's jurisdiction. He fought to make sure that all Americans could find and afford a place to call home. Whenever developers tried to make a deal in Maryland, he was always adamant they include affordable housing in their projects because, fundamentally, he never forgot where he came from. The son of Greek immigrants, Paul Sarbanes grew up a working-class kid, bussing tables at his family's restaurant on the Eastern Shore.

In the Senate, he cared about getting results for the people he served, not about getting the credit. Some of his colleagues called him the "stealth senator." He welcomed the nickname. He told the Baltimore Sun that stealth is "one of the most important weapons in our military arsenal. . . . If you let somebody else take the credit, you can get the result."

Senator Sarbanes was the definition of a true public servant. May he rest in peace as he joins his beloved wife Christine. Connie and I pray for Representative JOHN SARBANES, his son, and the entire Sarbanes family.

I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring Senator Sarbanes by building on his legacy, standing up to the corporations that have too much power in this country, and fighting for the working people we serve. Paul Sarbanes, like many others in this body, understood the dignity of work.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. President, yesterday the House overwhelmingly passed the NDAA conference report by a veto-proof majority of 335 to 78. That bill includes our com-

prehensive bipartisan reform of our anti-money laundering laws.

I would like to thank my colleagues, especially Senator CRAPO and other Banking and Housing Committee colleagues: Senators WARNER, JONES, REED, ROUNDS, and off the committee, Senators WYDEN, WHITEHOUSE, GRAMM, and GRASSLEY, and the Presiding Officer, Senator COTTON, for his work on this legislation.

On the House side, Chairwoman WATERS and Chairman MALONEY and Representative CLEAVER, thank you to all of them for working so hard to ensure that today we have this crucial bipartisan legislation in this defense conference report that will reform our money laundering laws and finally end abuses by anonymous shell companies.

I would like to extend my thanks to a former colleague, Chairman LEVIN, who was chair of Armed Services and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and to President Obama, who both voted on these issues for years. Many of their good ideas are codified in this bill, harvesting some of the seeds they planted years ago.

The Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Corporate Transparency Act are the products of months and months of bipartisan negotiations between and among Members of the House and Senate and certainly the staffs of Senator COTTON and me and Senator CRAPO and others. I thank them for their good work.

The bill is a critical step to fight money laundering and crack down on shell companies. While there are things I would have done differently had we been writing the bill on our own, overall, it is an effective and comprehensive response to the problem of illicit finance. I strongly support it.

Criminals abuse the U.S. financial system to launder money from drug trafficking, organized crime, Medicare and Medicaid fraud, weapons sales, and other criminal activities. I spoke today about this with Sheriff Burke of Toledo, the Lucas County Sheriff, a longtime sheriff, and U.S. Marshal Pete Elliott of Cleveland of the Northern District. They welcomed this language, and they welcome this law. This will help them do their jobs better.

Much of this dirty money that comes from organized crime in Medicaid fraud, weapons sales, drug trafficking, and sex trafficking is laundered through anonymous shell corporations. These are not victimless crimes. They directly hurt Ohio communities, especially those torn apart by the opioid crisis.

Sinaloa cartel actors and Fentanyl traffickers have been destroying thousands of families. They use money laundering to get their drug money in and out of the country. Human traffickers who prey on runaways at truck stops along major interstate highways in Ohio and across the country also use the financial system to launder their profits. We need to give law enforcement new modern tools to stop their crimes.

The bill finally requires comprehensive reporting by U.S. companies of their actual owners—no more hiding these abuses in anonymous shell companies. It cracks down on bankers who look the other way to actively aid money laundering and cracks down on Big Banks that have shoddy compliance systems. If you are helping drug traders hide their illegal fentanyl profits, you deserve more than a slap on the wrist. Banks cannot be too big to jail, and laws can't treat them that way.

I will closely monitor how this critical legislation is being implemented. I spoke this week already with the Secretary of Treasury designee and the Deputy Secretary of Treasury designee about being ready to administer and enforce these laws. I look forward to working with the administration to ensure that Treasury puts in place effective anti-money laundering and corporate transparency rules to implement the bill as soon as possible.

We know that criminals have long been revising their tactics to get around our current laws. This bill will enable us to get ahead of them and stay ahead of them.

I urge my colleagues to support it. They supported this language in the NDAA, and I ask them to support the NDAA.

Taken together, as we designed them, these measures reform, update and strengthen our current anti-money laundering laws and make critical changes to U.S. corporate disclosure laws to combat abuses by owners of anonymous shell companies—including foreign owners from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea and other countries—who have for years been exploiting our system for criminal purposes.

The legislation strengthens the Treasury Department's financial intelligence, anti-money laundering (AML), and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT) programs, modernizing our legal regime and improving communication, oversight, and information-sharing in these areas.

The conference agreement requires much more routine and systemic coordination, communication, and feedback among financial institutions, regulators, and law enforcement, to enable them to identify and act on suspicious financial activities, better target bank resources on critical AML tasks, and increase the likelihood of bad actors being caught by law enforcement.

It also provides for new whistleblower protections for those reporting BSA violations and provides for payment of whistleblower rewards.

It establishes tough new penalties on those convicted of serious Bank Secrecy Act violations, including additional penalties for repeat violators, and imposes a ban on financial-institution board service for those convicted of egregious BSA-related crimes.

It would require important new reporting from the Department of Justice and Treasury to better enable Con-

gress to oversee the use of—and sometimes continuing violations by banks under—deferred prosecution agreements and non-prosecution agreements, which too often are a slap on the wrist by regulators for banks that evade sanctions, violate our AML rules, or otherwise violate banking laws. As I have said, banks can't be too big to jail, and regulators can't treat them that way.

To help accomplish all these goals, the conference agreement authorizes additional funding for the Treasury Department, and we expect the Department to insist on strong accountability for results and to be responsive to congressional oversight as its officials work to implement this legislation.

In addition, the bill finally requires comprehensive reporting by U.S. companies of their actual owners. No more hiding in the dark abuses by anonymous shell companies to commit crimes.

Unlike in most areas of reform and transparency, where the U.S. has led the way, on this issue of anonymous shell companies we have long lagged behind other nations, and failed to require uniform and clear ownership information for firms at the time of their incorporation in the states.

This information is critical to law enforcement. In the U.S. investigators often have to spend precious time and resources issuing subpoenas and chasing down leads—sometimes jumping from anonymous shell company to anonymous shell company—to secure basic information about who actually owns a company. That makes no sense. And with this bill, it will end.

Treasury's National Money Laundering Risk Assessment estimates that around \$300 billion in illicit proceeds from domestic financial crime is generated annually.

Criminals have for a very long time abused our financial system to launder funds gained through narcotics trafficking, organized crime, Medicare and Medicaid fraud, weapons proliferation and other criminal activities. Much of this dirty money is laundered through anonymous shell corporations.

Over the years we have heard all about these abuses, from the "Panama Papers" to the "Paradise Papers" to, more recently this year, the series of news articles called the "FinCEN files."

These exposures of abuses in our system by dedicated journalists and national and international transparency organizations have highlighted problems involving human trafficking, drug trafficking, terrorism, money laundering, fraud, tax evasion, and other crimes involving illicit finance.

None of these abuses are victimless crimes.

Money laundering for drug cartels has a direct line to the opioid crisis in Ohio, where Sinaloa cartel actors or fentanyl traffickers have been destroying thousands of families. Combined with the pandemic, these drugs have hurt thousands of Ohio families.

Human traffickers who exploit the misery of runaways in truckstops along major interstate highways in Ohio and across the country use the financial system to launder their profits.

Medicare fraudsters cost the taxpayers \$2.6 billion in one recent year, according to the HHS Inspector General, and tarnish the reputation of this lifeline for seniors.

That's why anti-money laundering and corporate transparency laws are so critical: they protect the integrity of our financial system, provide critical intelligence to law enforcement to combat crime and help give victims the tools they need to hold bad actors accountable.

Under Treasury's existing rules, banks are already working to secure some of this information from accountholders when they open accounts. And while banks must continue to play a key monitoring role, it's also important that we finally, after all these years, require companies to provide basic information on their ownership when they're formed.

The bill contains a strong definition of "beneficial owner" which includes a two-part test covering individuals who, directly or indirectly, exercise substantial control over an entity or hold or control an ownership interest in the entity. The definition is clear that a nominee, intermediary, custodian, or agent acting on behalf of another individual cannot be the beneficial owner of an entity. Nominees are not beneficial owners; neither are trustees or attorneys acting as agents.

The definition is also clear that employees do not qualify as beneficial owners of an entity unless, apart from their employment status, they hold an ownership interest in the entity or can exercise substantial control over the entity such as the ability to transfer some or all of the entity's assets or earnings to their personal use. The provision defines "beneficial owner" as an individual who directly or indirectly "owns or controls not less than 25 percent of the ownership interests of the entity." When applying this part of the test, FinCEN must consider what to do if no one individual meets the 25 percent minimum, and how that situation may trigger the second part of the beneficial owner test which requires disclosure of the individuals who exercise "substantial control over the entity."

To determine whether an individual exercises "substantial control" over an entity, FinCEN is not intended to devise a numerical, narrow, or rigid test. Instead, the standard is intended to function with flexibility to take into account the myriad ways that an individual may exercise control over an entity while holding minimal or even no formal ownership interest.

They include written and unwritten agreements, arrangements, or understandings, instructions to company directors or officers, letter of wishes,

control over personnel decisions, economic pressure on company shareholders or employees, coercion, bribery, threats of bodily harm, and other legal and illegal means of exercising control.

Evidence that one or more individuals are exercising substantial control over a specific entity is expected to vary widely and may encompass such matters as emailed or telephoned instructions from the individuals suspected of being beneficial owners or their agents, employment or personnel decisions made at the direction or with the approval of such individuals, financial accounts that name such individuals as signatories, investment decisions made at the direction or recommendation of such individuals, or transfers of funds or assets to or at the direction of such individuals.

Requiring companies to provide their ownership information and storing it in a secure federal database like FinCEN's, alongside account holders' banking information, will help address longstanding problems for U.S. law enforcement.

It will help them investigate and prosecute cases involving terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug trafficking, money laundering, Medicare and Medicaid fraud, human trafficking, and other crimes. And it will provide ready access to this information under long-established and effective privacy rules.

Without these reforms, criminals, terrorists and even rogue nations could continue to use layer upon layer of shell companies to disguise and launder illicit funds. That makes it harder to hold bad actors accountable, and puts us all at risk.

The bill also contains certain exemptions. The basic justification behind the bill's exemptions is that each exempt category refers to entities that already disclose their beneficial owners to the government in one way or another and so don't need to duplicate that disclosure in the FinCEN database.

For example, publicly traded companies already disclose their true owners to the SEC, and banks already disclose their true owners to federal bank regulators; there is no reason to require those entities to disclose the same information to FinCEN. Each of the exemptions should be interpreted as narrowly as possible to exclude entities that do not disclose their beneficial owners to the government.

Exemptions created for pooled investment vehicles, dormant companies, and certain nonprofits require especially narrow interpretations to limit those exemptions to entities that provide some level of ownership disclosure to the government.

The exemption for pooled investment vehicles is intended to be available only to PIVs that rely for investment advice and services on a regulated bank or on a securities broker-dealer, investment company, or investment adviser

that is registered with the SEC, has disclosed its own beneficial ownership information to the federal government, and has filed a Form ADV disclosing the PIV's legal name and any other information related to the PIV that the federal government may require.

In addition, PIVs formed under the laws of a foreign jurisdiction must file with FinCEN a certification identifying every individual that exercises substantial control over the PIV, providing the same information required for beneficial owners.

Because evidence shows that criminals, fraudsters, and U.S. adversaries are increasingly using PIVs to launder funds and commit other wrongdoing, this exemption is of special concern and should be subject to continuous, careful review by Treasury as provided in the new 31 U.S.C. 5336(i) to see whether it should be retained or removed.

The exemption for dormant companies is intended to function solely as a grandfathering provision that exempts from disclosure only those dormant companies in existence prior to the bill's enactment; those grandfathered entities are also required to immediately disclose their beneficial owners to FinCEN as soon as their ownership changes hands, they become active entities, or they otherwise lose their exempt status. No entity created after the date of enactment of the bill is intended to qualify for exemption as a dormant company.

The exemption provided to certain charitable and nonprofit entities also merits narrow construction and careful review in light of past evidence of wrongdoers misusing charities, foundations, and other nonprofit entities to launder funds and advance criminal and civil misconduct. This exemption is intended to apply only to entities that are engaged in charitable or nonprofit activities, and not to entities engaged in for-profit businesses or for-profit activities.

The exemption is based, in part, upon provisions in U.S. and state laws that enable federal and state officials to regulate and investigate nonprofit organizations to ensure, for example, that the individuals behind them are not using the entity's assets to inappropriately enrich themselves, unfairly compete against businesses that pay taxes, or advance other inappropriate objectives.

In addition, the exemption given to entities that "operate exclusively to provide financial assistance to or hold governance rights over" a charitable entity is intended to be even more restrictive; it is confined to entities that qualify as U.S. persons under U.S. tax law, have only U.S. citizens or residents as their beneficial owners, and derive "at least a majority" of their funds from U.S. persons—meaning the exemption is not available under any circumstance for entities formed under foreign laws, established for foreign beneficial owners, or funded primarily with foreign funds.

Again, these exemptions are intended to be narrowly interpreted to prevent their use by entities that otherwise fail to disclose their beneficial owners to the federal government.

To ensure the bill's exemptions function as intended, the Treasury, FinCEN, OCC, IRS, SEC, CFTC, and other federal regulators should review and, if necessary, strengthen their filing forms to ensure that beneficial as well as nominal owners are disclosed to the federal government by the specified exempt entities, including investment companies, investment advisers, pooled investment vehicles, money transmitting businesses, and all entities registered with the SEC, among others.

The justification for the exemption of entities that have both physical operations and at least 20 employees in the United States is that those entities' physical U.S. presence will make it easy for U.S. law enforcement to discover those entities' true owners. Like other exemptions in the bill, this exemption should be narrowly construed to exclude entities that do not have an easily located physical presence in the United States, do not have multiple employees physically present on an ongoing basis in the United States, or use strategies that make it difficult for U.S. law enforcement to contact their workforce or discover the names of their beneficial owners. This exemption should be subject to continuous, careful review by Treasury under the new 31 U.S.C. 5336(i) to detect and prevent its misuse.

Extending the disclosure exemption to subsidiaries whose ownership interests are owned or controlled by one or more of certain identified exempt entities is, again, intended to be interpreted as narrowly as possible to exclude subsidiaries that never disclose their true owners to the federal government.

The exemption is intended to apply only to subsidiaries that are wholly owned or controlled by one or more of the exempt categories of entities; that's why the provision does not contain any reference to the 25% ownership figure that appears in the definition of beneficial owner.

The Federal Reserve, Treasury, OCC, SEC, CFTC, FDIC, and other federal regulators should review their filing requirements to ensure that the entities that report to them, such as banks, publicly traded corporations, securities dealers, exchange operators, or commodity brokers, include requirements to disclose the subsidiaries they wholly own or control. This exemption, like others, should be subject to continuous, careful review by Treasury under the new 31 U.S.C. 5336(i) to detect and prevent its misuse.

For their part, FinCEN identifiers are intended to simplify beneficial ownership disclosures by eliminating spelling and naming issues that can cause confusion or mistakes related to the precise individuals or entities in an ownership chain.

FinCEN should design rules that will encourage both individuals and entities to obtain and use FinCEN identifiers in their beneficial ownership disclosures. When assigning FinCEN identifiers to entities, FinCEN should first ensure that the entity has already disclosed its beneficial ownership information to FinCEN. An entity that has not disclosed its beneficial ownership information to FinCEN does not qualify and should not be granted a FinCEN identifier.

It is critical that, from the beginning, FinCEN issue rules that ensure only one identifying number is assigned to each individual and to each entity, including all successors to a specific entity. FinCEN should also establish mechanisms to detect and correct any procedure or database field that may lead to the same individual or entity possessing or using more than one FinCEN identifier.

Chairman CRAPO and I agreed two years ago that we must get this done in this Congress—we must finally enact sweeping legislation to require complete ownership information—not of front men and women, not of those forming companies on behalf of those who will pull the strings from behind the curtain—but of the actual owners of companies to be available to appropriate law enforcement, intelligence and national security officials in our government who need it to combat crime.

This bill lays out a system to do that simply, efficiently and effectively, without unduly burdening small businesses or others, and while providing extensive protections for the information. In Europe, that information is included in a public database. This approach is different, imposing some limits on who will have access, and under what circumstances.

For example, it provides that federal agency heads or their designees—and agencies can extend that delegation as far down in their organizational chain as they like—can provide access to the database to appropriate law enforcement authorities once per investigation, so they do not need to keep repeating that authorization for the same investigation. And those delegations can be made on a bulk basis, so groups or classes of employees can be authorized to access the data as needed.

For State, local or tribal law enforcement, they must get approval by a tribal, local, or state court of competent jurisdiction, which need not be a judge—it can include an officer of the court like a magistrate, court clerk or other administrative officer.

While I saw no reason to treat federal, state and local law enforcement officials differently, my Republican colleagues insisted on this differential treatment, and I am hopeful that the flexibility we have built in should make it workable.

It is far more workable than the scheme some had pushed, to require ap-

proval by a federal judge each time law enforcement wanted to access the database—an approach which would have gutted the bill, tied up our federal courts, and effectively rendered it inaccessible to state and local law enforcement. But the key here is a robust, functional and effective database at FinCEN to house this information and make it readily available.

FinCEN should take immediate steps to create the new database needed to contain beneficial ownership information. It should use state of the art technology, procedures, and safeguards to ensure the database is secure, easy to search, easy to audit, and easy to correct and update. FinCEN should use its new hiring authority to hire the information technology specialists needed to create the new beneficial ownership database. In designing the database, FinCEN should survey other beneficial ownership databases to determine their best features and design, and create a structure that secures the data as required by law. FinCEN should ensure that federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement can access the beneficial ownership database without excessive delays or red tape in a manner modeled after its existing systems providing law enforcement access to databases containing currency transaction and suspicious activity report information.

FinCEN should allow federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement to access the beneficial ownership data for both criminal and civil purposes, including law enforcement activities designed to combat terrorism, money laundering, trafficking, corruption, evasion of sanctions, noncompliance with tax law, fraud, counterfeit goods, market manipulation, insider trading, consumer abuse, cybercrime, election interference, and other types of criminal and civil wrongdoing.

FinCEN should also provide appropriate access to beneficial ownership data for foreign law enforcement requesting the information for criminal or civil purposes, including appropriate requests made by a prosecutor, judge, foreign central authority, or competent authority in a foreign jurisdiction, keeping in mind that U.S. law enforcement will be seeking similar information from those same foreign law enforcement agencies on a reciprocal basis. FinCEN should endeavor to design a system that will provide appropriate beneficial ownership information to foreign law enforcement without excessive delays or red tape.

As part of its implementation effort, FinCEN should take immediate steps to work with states and Indian Tribes to determine how to confirm that all covered entities formed or administered by those states or tribes actually file and update the beneficial ownership information required by law.

We expect FinCEN to include any resulting procedures or audits in the rule implementing the law. FinCEN should also include appropriate provisions in

the implementing rule requiring federal, state, and tribal agencies to cooperate with its efforts to ensure an accurate, complete, and highly useful database of beneficial information and to provide notice of the law's beneficial ownership transparency obligations, as required by the new law.

The Treasury IG should take immediate steps to establish a process to accept, store, and analyze information provided by a federal, state, local or tribal agency, foreign government, financial institution, reporting company, civil society group, the public, or others in the form of comments or complaints related to how FinCEN provides notification of the law's beneficial ownership transparency requirements, how FinCEN collects and stores beneficial ownership information, or regarding the accuracy, completeness, or timeliness of the information in the FinCEN beneficial ownership database.

As part of that process, the Treasury IG should establish procedures that will enable comments or complaints identifying false, out-of-date, or incomplete beneficial ownership information in the database or providing correct, up-to-date, or complete beneficial ownership information in the database promptly to reach the FinCEN personnel charged with ensuring the database's accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. In addition, the Treasury IG should establish a procedure to conduct periodic audits to determine the extent to which such information actually reached the proper FinCEN personnel, was logged, stored, and analyzed, led to changes in the database, and actually improved the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of the beneficial ownership database.

In response to the bill, the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy should take immediate steps to revise the Federal Acquisition Regulation to require covered federal contractors and subcontractors, at an early stage in the federal procurement process, to disclose to the federal government in writing, and to update over time, information on their beneficial owners.

To carry out this provision in the law, the Administrator should work with the General Services Administration to add a beneficial ownership disclosure requirement to the database authorizing entities to bid on federal contracts.

At the same time it is developing regulations to implement the new law, FinCEN should simultaneously revise the existing customer due diligence rule to bring it into harmony with the new law and all proposed regulations. In doing so, FinCEN should carefully evaluate the existing customer due diligence rule and preserve provisions that do not conflict with the new law. Among other changes, the revised customer due diligence rule must use the new definition of beneficial owner established in the law. Treasury and

FinCEN should create a transition period for financial institutions to implement the new beneficial ownership requirements. Lastly, FinCEN should also take steps to establish procedures as needed to administer the revised customer due diligence rule effectively.

Updating and strengthening our AML and beneficial ownership laws will give us a 21st century system to combat these crimes. I guarantee you criminals have long been revising, adjusting and amending their tactics to circumvent our current laws. We must get ahead of them, and stay ahead of them. This bill will enable us to do that.

I urge my colleagues to support the conference report and this important measure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES.

78

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose another massive infusion of arms into the volatile Middle East.

Someone must ask the question: Can a lasting peace be purchased with more weapons? Will selling sophisticated fighter jets and weaponized drones bring more stability to the Middle East? Is it wise to pour fuel on the fire that burns in the Middle East?

The Senate today is debating with these joint resolutions whether to disapprove of the announced sale of 50 F-35s and 18 Reaper Drones to the United Arab Emirates, a country that has recently taken encouraging steps specifically toward Israel, but with an overall record that should give concern.

The primary questions we should be asking ourselves are: To what ends has the UAE deployed its military and its military technology in recent years? Does the UAE have a record that we can trust? What military behavior are we encouraging and rewarding with this sale? Will the U.S. bear responsibility if the UAE misuses these incredibly sophisticated weapons?

The answers to these questions are far from clear. In fact, the UAE's record should give us pause. The UAE is not a democracy. Their human rights record is mixed, and their military activities in the region, as a one-time member of the Saudi coalition, contributed to the bloodshed and devastation in Yemen.

On human rights, let's look at some recent reported examples. In 2017, Ahmed Monsoor, a human rights activist, was given a 10-year prison sentence based on his speech. Specifically, he was charged for posting "false information that harms national unity" on social media. The charges against him were based on a call for the release of another activist who had been put in prison for political speech. Is this the kind of democracy or lack of democracy and lack of speech that should be rewarded with our most sophisticated weaponry?

In 2017, the UAE government also handed down a 10-year sentence to Nasser bin-Ghaith, an economist, for his criticism of the UAE and Egyptian Governments. Is this the kind of country that deserves our most sophisticated weaponry?

In 2018, the UAE arrested Matthew Hedges, a British citizen and doctoral student, and denied him access to legal counsel for 5 months. They sentenced him to life in prison for spying charges based on a confession that was obtained in an undisclosed location. They were ultimately forced to pardon him after international outrage. Is this the kind of country that we can trust with our most sophisticated weaponry?

The fact that the UAE is willing to buy this technology is not in and of itself justification for the sale. This is the time to carefully study the situation in the region and to consider the effects of accelerating the Middle Eastern arms race in the short-term and in the long-term.

This is why our government shouldn't be rushing into approving this sale; yet our government is moving at warp speed to approve this sale. It is as if we intentionally don't want to consider all of these issues.

The most frequently cited argument in favor of this sale is that the UAE has taken encouraging steps in the last few months. They have normalized relations with Israel, facilitated civilian travel, and more. Great. I am all-in for that.

We should be encouraging peaceful relations between countries. I support those efforts. But it is not clear that dropping advanced military technology into the region is, in fact, encouraging peaceful relations, given how these weapons have been used in recent times.

The UAE spent years bombing Yemen as part of a coalition with Saudi Arabia to stop the Houthis. This bombing campaign was undisciplined and sloppy. Civilians, residents, and other non-military targets were often destroyed. The U.N. reports approximately 7,000 civilians killed in Yemen and over 10,000 wounded.

The Saudi-UAE coalition helped create a humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Amid collapsing public services, the largest cholera epidemic on record has affected at least 2 million people—probably more—and killed almost 4,000. A lot of this is to be blamed on the civil war that had been perpetuated by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

At the height of the destruction, a Yemeni child would die of starvation every 10 minutes. More than 50,000 children have been lost to starvation.

I have argued for years that the United States should play no role in worsening the crisis via an arms pipeline to the coalition that perpetuates this war. American technology helped facilitate this crisis and should be a real concern about sending more American bombs and fighter planes into this region.

If they weren't used wisely in the most recent years in the Yemeni war, will they be used differently in the future? Can we trust the people who were part of a bombing campaign of civilians in Yemen to do an act more wisely with weapons in the future?

Let's also not forget that a media investigation found that weapons that we sent to the coalition—U.S. weapons that were sent to the Saudi-UAE coalition—were lost, and, in some cases, handed over to terrorists. That is right. Military equipment from the United States was sent to the UAE, but it wound up in the hands of terrorists. The Saudi-UAE coalition reportedly used U.S. weapons as currency to win the approval of militias inside Yemen.

To be clear, these activities are against the terms of sale. We told them: You can't give away our weapons. You can't use our weapons to purchase the support of Sunni extremists in Yemen. But they did. This should give us cause for concern. This should make us say: Whoa. Let's stop, and let's pause before we send more weapons into this war.

Not only that, but Iranian proxies captured some of these weapons, and, predictably, pointed them back at the Saudi-UAE coalition. Guns, missiles, and vehicles ended up in the hands of terrorists—weapons that we put on the ground in the Middle East.

The same investigation found Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, MRAPs, in the hands of Sunni allies of the UAE and Saudi Arabia. But guess who some of these Sunni allies were. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. We are talking about the remnants of al-Qaida in Yemen were getting weapons that we were giving to the UAE in Saudi Arabia. Does this sound like the kind of behavior we should reward with more weapons?

One of the MRAPs still had the export label on it indicating that it had been sent from Beaumont, TX, to the UAE before ultimately getting illegally transferred to extremists in Yemen. Is this the kind of behavior we should reward with more of our sophisticated technology?

The serial number on another MRAP in the possession of the Iranian-backed Houthis was traced back to the 2014 sale of U.S. MRAPs to the UAE. So the UAE not only was trading our weapons for support among Sunni extremists, including al-Qaida-affiliated extremists in Yemen, but they also were having their equipment taken by the Houthis. So on both sides of the war in Yemen, we had U.S. weapons. Is it a good idea to flood the Middle East with more of our weapons? Is it a good idea to keep sending weapons that wind up in the hands of people who don't have our best interests at heart?

Now, people say: Well, the UAE is doing better. They have stepped back from the coalition. They are not, you know, fighting as vigorously in the UAE. But there still are reports that UAE is still involved in the civil war in Yemen and that they are still engaged.

The UAE has a very conflicted record on human rights. I mentioned a few of those who have been in prison for 10 years to life for speech—for speech against the government or even just speech the government doesn't like. But flogging is also used as a form of punishment. There is no true freedom of speech or press in the UAE. Is this the kind of country we should give our most sophisticated technology to?

Activists have been held in secret detention centers in the UAE. Electric shocks have been used as a form of punishment in the UAE. Social media statements against the government are criminalized. You can be put in prison for text messages, and people have been put in prison and/or deported for text messages.

The government has used mass trials against dissidents. Statements of support for Qatar were made illegal during the region's diplomatic standoff. Criticisms of government officials were made illegal by decree. This is not an open society; this is not a democracy; and this is decidedly not a country that we should be giving our most sophisticated weaponry to.

Do we believe these arms sales will encourage or discourage bad behavior from the UAE? We are clearly communicating to the UAE that human rights take a backseat to arms sales.

Part of the consideration for these arms sales is the recent developments from the UAE—most prominently, the UAE's normalizing relations with Israel through the Abraham accords. It is a positive development, without a doubt. I am all in favor of it. I am all in favor of trading with the UAE. I am all in favor of Israel trading with the UAE. I am all in favor of good diplomatic relations, but you can also have diplomatic relations without flooding the region with our most sophisticated armaments.

Outwardly, we are told by all involved that the F-35s are not a condition for the Abraham accords, but if you ask whether it is a good idea to send some of our most advanced weaponry to the UAE, we are nonetheless told, if we don't, it might jeopardize the accords. Well, which is it? They are either part of the accords or they are not.

I, frankly, think, if the weapons were not to go, that the advantages to Israel-UAE having diplomatic relations in trade are so great that they will continue. The assurance right now is that we will guarantee what is called Israel's qualitative military edge in the region, even after the sale of F-35s and Reaper drones to the UAE. So the message to Israel is: Yes, we are giving the same advanced fighter jets to the UAE, but we will give you even better jets in the future.

All I can say is, that is a big maybe. And people who accept, on the face of that, that, oh, yes, we are going to guarantee something, but we are giving this same equipment to people who have been on the other side of virtually

every other war in the Middle East, I think, is a hopeful promise but not necessarily a guarantee.

The easiest way, if you favor protecting Israel's QME, or military edge, is to stop sending military assets to other countries in the region. We are competing with ourselves right now. We give advanced weaponry to Israel, and then we say we are going to keep your advantage. But then we give the advanced weaponry to the UAE, and so Israel comes back and says we need more. Then we give more to them, and the Saudis want more. And then once we give the weapons to the Saudis, Israel wants more. It is a never-ending arms race between the so-called countries that are actually getting along, not to mention the arms race between those who are opposed to Iran in the region.

The easiest way to protect the qualitative military edge of Israel is to quit sending more advanced weaponry into the region. We have committed to protecting Israel's QME in response to these sales, but we continue to obligate ourselves to increasingly large sales to offset the large sales we have already approved to others, like the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

There is another aspect to the qualitative military edge that is rarely discussed. It is the QME that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms have over Iran. Saudi Arabia is the third biggest purchaser of weapons and the third biggest spender on military of anyone in the world now, but if you add Saudi Arabia's weapons to the Gulf sheikdoms' weaponry, you find that they spend eight times more on their military than Iran. So what kind of response would we imagine?

We may not like what Iran does, but we should at least think about what they will do in response to what we do, and what in response to what the Saudis do and the UAE does and Israel does. Exacerbating the QME inevitably leads to pressure on Iran to further escalate the arms race and becomes a never-ending destructive cycle of more and more weapons.

People say—and this administration has said—we want an agreement with Iran but not just a nuclear agreement. So we got out of the nuclear agreement. We want an agreement on conventional weapons. But how will that work? We asked Iran to limit their weapons, but we keep piling weapons on the other side? Do you think Iran is going to agree to limit their weapons if we keep piling more of our sophisticated weapons into the hands of the Saudis and into the hands of the UAE and others?

There is great concerns with this sale, and rushing it through is a mistake. What happens if the F-35s are shot down? What if Russia or China is able to access our sensitive stealth technology? How will the need for contractors be handled in a secure fashion?

Some supporters of Israel are very worried about this. The Zionist Organi-

zation of America, for example, has opposed the sale because it jeopardizes Israel's qualitative military edge. It makes the technologies on which Israel relies less secure.

This statement from the Zionist Organization of America is quite clear: "The security of both the U.S. and Israel is best served by preventing any other countries from acquiring this advanced aircraft."

They couldn't be clearer. Even many in Israel were initially, and very vocally, opposed to this sale. Their Minister of Defense, Benny Gantz, said absolutely it was a terrible idea. Their Minister of Settlements, same thing.

I would urge my colleagues to consider the possible consequences of this sale. We should not accelerate an arms race in the Middle East; we should not jeopardize the security of our military technologies; and we should not reward a decade-plus of undesirable behavior by the UAE. I urge a vote in support of these resolutions of disapproval.

Madam President, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Foreign Relations Committee from further consideration of S.J. Res. 78, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed military sale to the United Arab Emirates of certain defense articles and services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The motion is pending.

Mr. PAUL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support these two resolutions of disapproval. I appreciate my distinguished colleague from Kentucky and his support and advocacy here in these particular arms sales to the United Arab Emirates.

Simply put, many aspects of this proposed sale remain conceptual—conceptual. We are being asked to support a significant transfer of advanced U.S. technology without clarity on a number of key details regarding the sale or sufficient answers to critical national security questions.

There are simply too many outstanding questions about the protection of critical U.S. military technology and the broader implications of these sales to U.S. national security regarding the UAE's relationships, for example, with Russia and China as they exist today—as they exist today.

I have heard some of my colleagues say: Well, aren't we concerned that they will go to Russia—they have relationships with Russia and China as it exists today in a military purchase context—and about the long-term implications, of course, to the United States and to our ally, the State of Israel, in terms of national security?

Now, it is disappointing that we are forced to discuss these issues in such a public way through a formal congressional expression of disapproval. That is not normally how we do this. However, the administration left us no

choice because of the way that it attempted to rush through these sales by completely subverting congressional oversight, and, it appears, increasingly, the need for greater interagency review.

Now, the U.S. Congress has a unique legislative responsibility to oversee U.S. arms sales abroad. This process allows Congress to engage privately with relevant national security agencies and the intended recipient countries in order to better understand the intricacies and security implications of any proposed sale. But as it has done before, the administration decided to ignore the congressional responsibilities here and rush through with this sale. They blew right through that period of review that the Congress has had normally for about 40 days.

Let me just say, the United Arab Emirates, from my view, has been an important partner in the fight against terrorism and for other U.S. national security priorities, and I will suspect it will continue to be so after this. It is unfortunate, however, that we find ourselves in this situation.

Following the historic Abraham accords, we started hearing that the administration was planning to grant the UAE a longstanding request—the sale of the most advanced U.S. stealth fighter jets. Both the Emiratis—and I have spoken to their Foreign Minister and to their Ambassador—and the U.S. administration continued to insist, however, that there is no connection—none—between the Abraham accords and this sale. So that is a red herring for those who are concerned that somehow we are going to disrupt the Abraham accords.

While I join just about all of my colleagues in applauding the advancement of diplomatic relations that builds upon years already of Israeli and Emirati engagement, there is absolutely no reason to rush through an arms sale of this magnitude, especially when we are being told there is no connection.

Interagency review of such sales usually takes many months of careful deliberation. The Departments of State, Defense, and others must assess what capabilities are safe to sell, what technology security measures are appropriate and necessary, what restrictions on use are imposed, and how the sale will affect the national security of our friends and allies in the region and elsewhere.

Once these deliberations have concluded, a sale of this magnitude usually sits with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for an informal review process that, by the State Department's own requirement—the State Department's own requirement—would last 40 days.

Then, for reasons the administration has concealed, it completely subverted this review process and officially started a statutory 30-day review—all before any briefings were even given to staff, let alone Senators and members of the committees of jurisdiction.

To date, we have yet to get a clear answer as to why the President and the Secretary of State are trying to, again, circumvent the congressional arms sales oversight process by rushing the sale of 50 of the most advanced fighter jets in the world—technology that gives Israel and the United States a critical military advantage over any adversary.

Moreover, the administration wants to push through without any congressional oversight the second largest ever sale of armed Reaper drones to the UAE and over 14,000 additional aircraft munitions on top of the 60,000 already sold to Abu Dhabi as part of the non-emergency last year. I say “non-emergency” because they declared an emergency, but there was no emergency to be justified.

Delivery of the most advanced features could take years. I say that because, therefore, there is no reason that giving us a timeframe to do what we normally do to determine whether this is the right sale in the national security interests of the United States, not starting an arms race in the Middle East, also dealing with Israel—is that too much to answer when you are not even going to get any of this equipment for years? These are major sales by any measure.

Part of this conversation is also, as my colleague has said, about Israel's qualitative military edge that it currently has over its neighbors and was expected to maintain with its own purchase of 50 F-35s that are still in the process of being built and delivered.

Let me make it clear. I take a backseat to no one when it comes to advancing U.S. policies to protect Israel's national security. I have proven that time and again. But this sale is fundamentally about U.S. national security, about the U.S. qualitative military edge, and about our long-term national security. It is also about not wanting to start and thinking about, at least, what does it mean in terms of an advanced arms race in the region.

Unfortunately, particularly for Members who do not serve on national security committees, there is much we cannot discuss in an open setting, but let me assure all of my colleagues that these sales have very real implications for their own technology security.

On October 9 of this year, Armed Services ranking member Senator REED and I sent a letter to former Secretary of Defense Esper and Secretary of State Pompeo with 16 detailed questions about the F-35 sale. To date, we have not received satisfactory answers to any or all of those questions.

I ask unanimous consent to have that letter printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

Hon. MIKE POMPEO,
Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARK ESPER,
Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY POMPEO AND SECRETARY ESPER: We write today to seek clarity on public reporting and mixed messaging from the Administration on a proposed sale of the F-35 aircraft to the United Arab Emirates. As you well know, Congress has statutory authority over foreign arms sales, but it appears that the Administration is trying to rush through a precedent-setting sale of the United States' most advanced fighter aircraft to a country in a volatile region with multiple ongoing conflicts. The Administration appears to be ignoring long-standing, deliberative, internal U.S. processes for considering whether selling such a sophisticated and mission-critical military system abroad could compromise the United States' national security interests—and in this case Israel's—and instead is rushing to meet a political deadline.

There are numerous questions as to how the national security interests of both the U.S. and Israel will be served, or undermined, by such a sale. We fear that the Trump Administration's recklessly accelerated timeline will preclude sufficient and comprehensive consideration of these issues by the national security professionals in the Departments of State and Defense, as well as by the Congress.

Emirati officials have publicly and privately declared that their decision to normalize relations with Israel was not dependent on getting the F-35; however, the Administration's attempt to move at breakneck speed so close to this announcement would give the appearance that it was. Additionally, this sale seems more tied to the American political calendar than to a sober deliberation about regional security.

U.S. national security and the safety of American troops could be seriously compromised by this sale. The F-35 is one of the most advanced aircraft in the world, giving the United States and its allies and partners a tremendous military advantage. This therefore creates an immense counterintelligence threat against this aircraft. Indeed, assessing the risk to our own military advantage is a critical part of the internal deliberations we must make before agreeing to provide this aircraft, including any recipient country's history of use of U.S. origin weapons and its capacity and willingness to protect critical U.S. technology. Indeed, given that the F-35 has been financed, developed, produced, and sold to our security partners as part of an international consortium, the sale has the risk of undermining their security as well.

In light of these concerns, we have listed below a series of vital questions that must be fully answered before this sale is sent to Congress for review, as required by statute.

1) What precisely has the U.S. agreed to in terms of selling the F-35 and other aircraft to the UAE?

How many?

On what timeline for delivery?

Has the U.S. received a formal Letter of Request from the UAE for these aircraft?

2) Would the Emiratis have signed the Abraham Accords if not for the promise of this sale? Were F-35s or any other military sales discussed as part of deliberations related to the Abraham Accords?

3) Has the UAE articulated a military threat necessitating the acquisition of F-35 aircraft?

How would the UAE employ F-35s against that threat?

Are there other military or other means that could also counter this threat or threats?

4) It has been reported that the U.S. and the UAE have agreed to conclude a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) for the aircraft by December 2nd. This is an extremely accelerated schedule for interagency review, consultation with Congress, and preparation of the LOA and negotiation on its terms with the UAE—a process that can take months, if not longer.

Is this deadline correct?

If so, why did the Administration agree to this arbitrary deadline in concluding an LOA?

How would such an accelerated timeline affect the Congressional review and approval process?

5) It has traditionally taken months for a complete and comprehensive interagency review of a proposed sale of this importance and sensitivity.

Has the U.S. interagency reviewed and determined what variant of the aircraft would be best to sell, in terms of protecting the aircraft's technology and in terms of protecting Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME)?

If not, when will that review commence and how long might it take?

6) Has a determination been made that the sale of this aircraft to the UAE will not jeopardize Israel's Qualitative Military Edge?

If so, upon what basis was that determination made?

7) Will any aircraft sold to the UAE be reduced in capabilities compared to comparable U.S. aircraft?

If so, how much less capable will these aircraft be compared to Israeli and U.S. F-35 aircraft and other aircraft?

Exactly which systems, software, and components will be reduced in terms of operational capability in comparison with Israeli and U.S. aircraft, and to what degree and with what effect? Please provide a detailed written and graphic comparison.

8) What anti-tamper measures will be incorporated into the F-35 and other aircraft sold to the UAE to ensure that critical or sensitive military technology and components within such aircraft are not compromised, either in operation or in terms of revealing classified information about such technology and components?

9) Will the UAE be required to enter into binding commitments not to employ such aircraft in situations that might expose them to technological intelligence collection efforts, such as exposure to advanced anti-aircraft radar systems?

10) What secondary security measures will be put in place to protect critical U.S. technology inherent in the F-35?

Will the U.S. require continuous U.S. presence on base to monitor the security of the aircraft?

Will the U.S. be made aware of any proposed third-party nationals to visit the base(s) where the F-35 aircraft are based?

Will the U.S. be able to veto any physical presence of such nationals if, in the opinion of U.S. personnel present in the U.S. Embassy or in Washington, the close physical proximity of such third-party nationals could constitute an intelligence threat to sensitive technology in or of these aircraft?

Will any automatic electronic security measures be employed to protect U.S.-origin aircraft, manuals, and related documents?

Will the maintenance and servicing of these aircraft be performed solely by U.S. personnel, or in concert with Emirati personnel?

11) What measures will be taken to counteract any reduction in Israel's QME?

Will the U.S. shift from a Qualitative Military Edge measurement to a Quantitative one, selling or providing more aircraft and munitions meant to overwhelm the heightened military threat to Israel?

If so, how will these additional arms to Israel be financed? Will the U.S. need to increase Foreign Military Finance levels in order to offset this sale to the UAE?

12) The UAE has taken an active role in supporting Khalifa Haftar, who has continued a brutal military campaign in Libya against the internationally recognized Libyan government. According to recent reports, the UAE may even have violated the U.N. arms embargo on Libya.

What will prevent the UAE from using F-35 aircraft in conflicts where the United States and its allies are pressing for a diplomatic solution?

Will the United States require any commitments from the UAE that it will not employ such aircraft to the detriment of Israel's security interests or the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States, as determined by the Israel and the U.S. respectively?

13) To what extent would this sale stimulate an arms race in the region, both among the Gulf States and with Iran? With the arms embargo against Iran in danger of expiring, would this sale provide greater encouragement to China and Russia to sell Tehran advanced fighter aircraft and advanced air defense systems, in numbers and under more favorable financial terms than would otherwise be the case?

14) In 2017, the UAE and Russia signed an agreement to develop a fifth-generation fighter jet, along with a separate UAE purchase of Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighters. In addition, after being rebuffed in its attempts to purchase armed drones from the United States, the UAE reportedly purchased Chinese surveillance drones and outfitted them with targeting systems. Other reports indicate that expatriates from countries aligned with China operate some of the UAE's weapons systems.

What is the status of the UAE's cooperation with Russia? Would these efforts present security and counterintelligence threats to the F-35?

What assurances and commitments, if any, has the UAE made to the United States to safeguard U.S. technology from Russian and Chinese personnel that may be involved in either of these programs?

Has the UAE agreed to terminate all such cooperation and purchases from Russia and China?

15) What are the Administration's thoughts regarding other sales of the F-35 in the region?

16) Have you, or will you, consult with our partners about these risks and their views of this potential sale to the UAE concluding the sale?

Will you take their concerns into account during the interagency review process to address their concerns?

We look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. Senator.

JACK REED,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. MENENDEZ, I am not opposed to these sales if they make sense and pose no threat to U.S. or Israel security in the short and the long term. But these sales require and deserve careful and deliberate consideration within the interagency process and by this Congress. However, that simply has not happened.

A little while ago, my distinguished colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, asked on the floor: Well, what do you have to do to be a trusted part-

ner? Let me try to answer that question.

Following a classified briefing with the administration—the details of which I will not discuss here—there are a whole host of issues that a trusted partner would ultimately have to agree to.

One, the United Arab Emirates has been building its military relations with Russia and China. Just a few years ago, the Emiratis and Russia signed an agreement to develop a fifth-generation fighter jet and to purchase Russian Sukhoi. Our own Department of Defense inspector general recently indicated that they may be funding the malicious Russian Wagner mercenary forces in Libya. So what is the status of and what specific efforts are we taking to address the UAE's current and future military relationship with China—where they are talking about building an airbase outside the UAE's waters, on artificial land—and Russia? There are no answers to that. Do we not deserve, if we are going to send the most sophisticated equipment in the world to the UAE, to make sure that there is a written commitment that they are going to phase out those military engagements?

What specific steps and assurances are the United States taking to safeguard U.S. military technology against sophisticated espionage, and what specific commitments do we have from the Emiratis? There is no answer to that question. A trusted partner would agree to those safeguards.

Three, the UAE last year transferred U.S.-origin weapons to a terrorist organization in Yemen that has a history of targeting civilians. The Emiratis have been repeatedly accused, along with others, of violating the U.N. arms embargo on Libya. Well, what assurances do we have about how and where these new sophisticated weapons would be used? There is no answer. A trusted partner would agree to those limits.

Four, the long-term threat of a highly lethal arms race and the great power competition implication this could set off across the region and implications for future gulf cooperation—the Qataris have already asked for their own F-35s. Is that what is next? Saudi Arabia—well, they may say: We like the United Arab Emirates, but we can't be inferior for our own national security.

What security threats would be posed when the entire region is armed with the most sophisticated weapon we have to offer? There are no satisfactory answers, if any, to these questions.

What guarantees do we have that these weapons will not be used against the United States or Israel's national security in the future? How will that be determined?

What might Israel need in the future to secure its qualitative military edge? There is no clear answer to that.

What specific military threat have the Emiratis articulated that they need the F-35s to address right now? If

they have specific needs, then we need to know that because if these aren't going to come online for some time, maybe their needs are more consequential and they need to be dealt with in a different way.

How might the Iranians react to the increase of stealth fighter aircraft in their neighborhood? We have no analysis of that.

Finally, the timeline. When will the letters of offer and acceptance be concluded? Why was there an initial artificial deadline? Why the rush to cut short the normal, monthslong inter-agency review process by the Congress and national security professionals? Why? Why? Are they trying to lock in the sale before President-Elect Biden is inaugurated, regardless of the possible cost to U.S. and Israeli national security? We have no answer to that.

As I have said before, the United Arab Emirates has been an important partner for critical U.S. interests, including the fight against terrorism and in our efforts in Afghanistan. But according to the United Nations and to the Department of Defense's own inspector general, at the same time, the UAE also seems to be working against our stated interests in other areas. A trusted partner would be in collaboration and in cooperation with us.

Look, I wish we could have had these discussions in more appropriate settings. That is what we normally would have done.

This is, of course, not the first time the administration has subverted Congress's important oversight role in arms sales. Last May, the administration notified more than \$8 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It cited a bogus "immediate" threat from Iran, despite the fact that most of the sales, like these F-35s, would take years—years—to reach their intended recipients.

So, colleagues, at the end of the day, we must assert our congressional prerogative, not for the sake of prerogative in and of itself but to safeguard the U.S. national security interests that we are all collectively and individually entrusted to do.

We must demand answers to the very serious and very reasonable questions many have of this sale. Perhaps with due diligence, we will find that this sale will indeed bolster U.S. national security, but right now, the truth is, we do not have clarity on that most fundamental question.

Colleagues, do you really want a sale of this magnitude to go through without the appropriate vetting measures?

Voting against these resolutions sends a message to the executive branch—I don't care who is sitting there; the present occupant, a future occupant—whoever is sitting in the White House, that we are willing to give up our congressional responsibilities. It is hard to bring that back once you let it go. It says that we will not stop arms sales in the future that have not gone through the appropriate review process.

For that reason, I urge all of our colleagues to support these resolutions of disapproval so that we may have more time to assess for ourselves the nuances of these sales and the repercussions they may have in the region for decades to come, to ensure technology transfer doesn't take place, and to ensure that the national security interests of the United States are preserved. I urge you to support these resolutions to stand up for those propositions. Both are critical to protecting U.S. national security interests.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 77

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all debate time on S.J. Res. 77 and S.J. Res. 78 be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the question occurs on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 77.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 261 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Paul	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sinema
Cornyn	Kelly	Sullivan
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Enzi	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The motion was rejected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 78

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 78.

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 262 Legislative]

YEAS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Jones	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Paul	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Risch
Barrasso	Fischer	Roberts
Blackburn	Gardner	Romney
Blunt	Graham	Rubio
Boozman	Grassley	Sasse
Braun	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (SC)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Shelby
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sinema
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Portman	

NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, which will be stated by title.

The legislative 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. 6395), to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, 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 3, 2020.)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk for the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, an Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Roger F. Wicker, Marsha Blackburn, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1151

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 189, S. 1151. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment 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. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is a substantial proposal, one that merits full consideration on the floor of the Senate with the opportunity to debate and amend to understand how many government agencies would be affected, to understand whether it merits a sunset date, to understand what the effects would be, not just on the regime of Venezuela but the people of Venezuela, and for that reason I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise to speak again today about the crisis in Venezuela, a defining human rights issue of our time.

Nicolas Maduro is starving his own people, and innocent children are dying. It is a genocide right here in our hemisphere. Every day that passes, the situation in Venezuela grows more dire.

This weekend, the world watched as Maduro orchestrated a sham election. No one was fooled by this pathetic attempt. The appearance of democracy is not democracy. Maduro is a murderous dictator who doesn't respect human rights or the will of his people. He must be stopped.

The Trump administration has taken decisive action to hold Maduro accountable, sanction the Venezuelan regime, and cut off the funds Maduro uses to hold on to power. But the United States and all freedom-loving countries around the world must do more.

As Governor, I strictly prohibited the State of Florida, including all State agencies, from investing in any company that did business with Maduro's repressive regime.

It is simple. Why would we ever use taxpayer money to support a regime that is killing its own people?

My bill, the Venezuelan Contracting Restriction Act, does the same thing on the Federal level by prohibiting Federal agencies from doing business with anyone who supports Maduro. Last year, we included a targeted version of this measure in the NDAA that prohibited the Department of Defense from doing business with anyone supporting Maduro's regime.

Now it is time for us to be clear and united in our support for the Venezuelan people and prohibit every agency in the Federal Government from doing anything that would support Maduro and his genocide.

Mr. President, I ask consent to address the Senate in Spanish.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. (English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

I stand with the people of Venezuela and will always fight for freedom and democracy in Latin America.

Mr. President, what I have proposed is a simple action we can take as Americans to help end Maduro's genocide.

I am completely disappointed with my Democratic colleague's objection to my request today. This bipartisan proposal cleared the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee with unanimous consent.

I am eager to resolve my colleague's concerns quickly, and I hope that he and the other Senator who objected before will work with me to get this done. Unfortunately, they have not been willing to meet with me to fix this and to get this done.

I am not giving up and plan to bring this up again and again. We don't have

time to delay. We cannot lose sight of the fact that Nicolas Maduro is killing his citizens. We need to take every action we can to say to Maduro that the United States will not stand and let this continue.

Even though my bill was blocked today, I will never stop fighting until Venezuela and all of Latin America can begin a new day of freedom.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I mentioned recently in one of these speeches that an identity-laundering group called Donors Trust decided to do a letter to the editor of my home State paper asserting that they were just as innocent as newborn lambs.

The Center for Media and Democracy has recently obtained the IRS form 990 for calendar 2019 for this little lamb, Donors Trust, and it has some fascinating findings.

Donors Trust took in a total of \$312 million in donations in 2019—nearly a third of a billion dollars—up from \$198 million in 2018. Of that, more than two-thirds came from two huge donations—two—one for \$150 million and another for \$69 million.

Out of the \$312 million they received, \$219 million came in two donations, and both of the donations were anonymous. Now, who makes anonymous donations of that size? Most people making a donation that big want their name on the building at the university. What is going on? Who has that kind of money to give away and a desire to hide themselves? One wonders.

Donors Trust gave out \$162 million in anonymized grants in 2019—mostly to rightwing groups. This is up from \$142.3 million in 2018. I should actually probably not say that Donors Trust gave them out but, rather, that they transmitted the funds for the anonymous donors because a donor can tell Donors Trust where the money is to go. Donors Trust then provides the expedient service of hiding the donor's identity.

So where did this anonymous money go? Well, grants of interest include \$7 million to the Federalist Society—1 year, \$7 million—up from last year's \$5.9 million. Yes, this is the same Federalist Society that has selected judges and Justices for the Trump administration.

Is it not obvious that big special interests might buy their way to the Federalist Society judicial selection table with big, anonymous donations? When you farm out to secretive private organizations the power to select Supreme Court Justices and the secretive organizations take big, anonymous donations, what else are you to expect?

It would be interesting to know who paid for a voice in selecting Supreme Court Justices, and it would be interesting to know what business they may have before the Court. But all of that is shrouded in secrecy and anonymity. It would be logical to assume that \$7 million bought a seat or two at that table; we just don't know for whom or what their interests were.

Relatedly, Donors Trust transmitted \$10.5 million to something called the 85 Fund, a Leonard Leo shell group formerly known as Judicial Education Project. Who is Leonard Leo? Leonard Leo ran the Justice-picking, Court-packing scheme for the Federalist Society for years until an expose by the Washington Post made it prudent for the operation to bring in a new face named Carrie Severino. It is a little bit like replacing a burned agent in a covert operation with a new agent.

The logical conclusion is that this \$10 million is also related to packing the courts with special interest-chosen judges and Justices, and if so, that brings the total for that project to over \$17 million, counting the Federalist Society money—\$17 million in 1 year just through Donors Trust.

Of course, once you have packed the Court with agreeable Justices, you need to tee up agreeable cases for them. And guess what. Donors Trust also transmitted \$2.7 million to advocacy groups that bring those cases, including the groups that presented to the Supreme Court Janus, the anti-labor case, and Shelby County, the anti-voting rights case. These are just two of the more infamous of the 80 5-to-4 partisan decisions giving big wins to Republican donor interests—just the kind of interests that have the money to push millions through Donors Trust and the motive to use Donors Trust to cover their tracks.

When this dark-money-funded enterprise is not busy at the task of packing the Court, it is busy propagating climate denial and obstruction. It has been at that particular scheme for years. Climate denial and related political obstruction, packing the courts, and electing Republicans are the three primary purposes of this dark-money enterprise.

To keep climate denial cooking, Donors Trust transmitted nearly \$19 million to rightwing local so-called think tanks, collectively called the State Policy Network—a group that propagates climate denial and obstruction at the State government level—and to ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, which drafts up rightwing and climate denial and obstruction legislation for State legislators. This ALEC group is so reprehensible that even ExxonMobil withdrew its support for it—or maybe they just laundered their support through Donors Trust. We don't know.

Not content with climate denial and obstruction at the State level, Donors Trust also transmitted \$4.5 million in anonymous money to eight different

national climate denial organizations. These include the Heartland Institute, notorious for comparing climate scientists to the Unabomber and sending 200,000 fake, climate-denying textbooks to school teachers around the country.

On this graphic prepared by a researcher into the climate denial enterprise, Donors Trust is front and center, right here, right in the middle of the web, and that Heartland Institute is right here, part of the network.

The other organization that it funded is the Competitive Enterprise Institute, which planted noted climate denier Myron Ebell to lead the Trump transition at EPA and usher in the disgraced Scott Pruitt as Administrator.

On a personal note, I should thank Donors Trust for transmitting \$769,000 from some anonymous donor or donors to a dark-money opposition research group called Capital Research Center, which has as one of its tasks to feed misinformation about me to rightwing media outlets. I think that is my reward for calling out this whole crooked dark-money operation. And wouldn't you know—they send out a dark-money group to defend their dark-money operation. I appreciate the attention and the irony.

Others in the Donors Trust dark-money creep show include \$4 million to Project Veritas, which cooked up deceptive sting videos in Minnesota and other States to feed the false election fraud narrative of Donald Trump and the far right, and also \$1.5 million to a beauty called VDARE Foundation, whose website is a vector for anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and White nationalism. I can see why someone would want to hide giving a million dollars to that.

Donors Trust has a tag-along entity that sends a lot of money into the same places—the Charles Koch Foundation. In fact, it is a little hard to tell where this Koch Foundation ends and where Donors Trust begins.

Donors Trust has provided significant financial support to the Koch political operation's major front group through the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, which is here on the graphic. It is like a reunion going through this research. And Donors Trust, in turn, has received financial support from the Charles G. Koch Foundation. So money out to the Koch political operation and in from the Koch Foundation. I don't know why the Koch Foundation couldn't just have given the money directly.

It has been reported that the Koch network has provided Donors Trust with most of its backbone, even to the point of being described as part of the Koch network, and the Donors Trust employees have extensive histories within the Koch network of political front groups.

The Center for Public Integrity reported this gem: "At a private Koch fundraising meeting in the summer of 2010, Donors Trust hosted cocktails and dessert for . . . a 'target-rich environ-

ment' of wealthy donors." Sweet indeed.

So when we look at this Charles Koch Foundation, we are looking at something interlinked with Donors Trust, and sure enough, there is also overlap in where the money goes.

In 2019, this Koch Foundation gave out \$141 million, up from \$127 million in 2018. For the State-level climate denial State Policy Network we talked about, it gave \$2.5 million across 13 so-called think tanks, and it gave nearly half a million dollars to that same ALEC—American Legislative Exchange Council—we talked about.

Other Koch grants of note include over \$22 million to George Mason University, whose role as a hothouse for developing deregulatory and climate denial theories is well documented in Nancy Maclean's terrific book, "Democracy in Chains." This \$22 million continues a relationship that helped put Koch operative Neomi Rao from George Mason into the Trump White House and then onto the DC Circuit Court of Appeals to do the Koch operation's business from behind robes.

Remember those special interest front groups that tee up legal cases for the judges and Justices who have been ushered onto the courts? The Koch Foundation turns up there too. The Koch Foundation has spread \$6.2 million around 10 separate amici curiae—friends of court, so-called—that showed up in a case called *Americans for Prosperity v. Becerra*. And what do you know? Yes, Americans for Prosperity is that Koch political operation's main front group—such a small world.

Why would Koch political interests want to fund amici in a case where a Koch front group is already the plaintiff? Well, let's look at that case. The "*Becerra*" in *Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Becerra* is the California attorney general, a nominee for HHS Secretary now, I gather. The case is an abstruse technical challenge to how the IRS shares tax information with States.

Why this gathering of the Koch-funded clan of front groups around this little technical case? Because the lifeblood of all this dirty operation is dark money. Indeed, today, our Supreme Court is the Court that dark money built. So the dark money operation sees a chance to enshrine dark money in the American Constitution. The dark money forces that built this Court want the Court to expand the First Amendment to protect anonymous, dark money political spending by secretive billionaires and corporate interests. This is the case where they intend to make their move. It is waiting in the Supreme Court right now. Who knows, maybe it has been waiting for Justice Barrett.

Lined up as amici curiae in this otherwise nondescript case, in the order of their Koch Foundation funding, are: the Cato Institute—I can't read this well enough to point them out, but these are inhabitants of this graph as

well—\$2.4 million from the Koch Foundation; Texas Public Policy Foundation, \$1.5 million; Pacific Legal Foundation, \$1 million; New Civil Liberties Alliance, \$1 million; Buckeye Institute, \$104,200; Independent Women's Forum, \$100,000; Pacific Research Institute, \$100,000; Philanthropy Roundtable, \$30,000; Institute for Justice, \$12,584; and National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, \$8,156. When you look at the kind of money that is being doled out, I think the Institute for Justice and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation have some cause to complain that they got treated so poorly with such small donations from such a big operation.

The gathering of that clan is not the only clue that something is up. Big players in the dark money racket, like the fossil fuel titan Marathon Petroleum and the massive climate obstructor that calls itself the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, are already objecting to requests for information about their dark money operations by asserting that such a right exists. They are already asserting that such a right exists, while the dark money schemers are lining up in this case to make that push to the Supreme Court. Wouldn't it be convenient if they helped build a Court willing to agree with them and establish this new right to dark money influence?

This whole dark money mess smells to high heaven. Why big donors feel they have to hide? Why this complicated network to play Whac-A-Mole with different groups who can show up? Why the orchestration of Supreme Court briefs with groups that purport to be separate? Why the whole scheme? It is a recipe for corruption. It prevents citizens from understanding what is going on in their own democracy. It empowers the worst forces in politics. It is the mechanism through which climate denial has been effectuated, and it is wrapping its tentacles more and more tightly around our U.S. Supreme Court.

And Donors Trust—that sweet little lamb—is at the center of the web dolling out hundreds of millions of dollars—some lamb. Donors Trust is a wolf in lamb's clothing or perhaps better to say Donors Trust provides the lamb's clothing that cloaks the wolves so that they can feed more voraciously and anonymously on America's body politic.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was listening to the previous speaker from Rhode Island, and I figure it is time to clarify a few things that are said about our President.

I know that right now a lot of people are believing that we are going to have a change; that we will have a Democratic President. A lot of decisions are being made, talk is being made. But to show you that there is a big difference

of opinion, I want to say a few things about our President just to remind people. They have forgotten what has happened. Now, I know there are differing opinions on that, partisan opinions and all that.

Right now, my very close friend from the Democratic aisle and I are going to, hopefully, have a vote tomorrow that will take place, the Defense authorization bill—the biggest bill of the year, the most significant bill of the year. Senator REED and I have an agreement on almost every element of it. And we have both come to the conclusion that it is a tremendous bill. It is one you really can't justify opposing.

A lot of things have been said that are not true, but I want to just mention a couple of things because this is a good time to do it.

We have a President who has done things that just have never been done before in terms of accomplishments, positive accomplishments. I remember 2 years ago, I wrote this little card because I was keeping track of all these good things that have happened. I remember showing it to the President at that time. He read that, and he was very excited about the way that we had composed them. Keep in mind, this was 2 years ago.

Look at these 10 things that this President has done: First of all, the big tax cut that he had. By the way, when we look at the fact that he did such great things for the economy—prior to the pandemic, we had the best economy we have had in my lifetime. The pandemic changed all of that. But he did this by looking back at history—and it was not a Republican; it was a Democrat. It was President Kennedy who had the wisdom to say, when he was working on the Great Society programs that were going to cost so much money: Well, we have to raise our revenue, and the best way to increase revenue is to decrease tax rates. So he decreased tax rates. We all remember that. While it worked, unfortunately, the President died before he could really take advantage and enjoy the benefits of the work he had done by his tax cuts. It has been tried since that time, and it has worked.

But what this President did in addition to that, he didn't have just tax cuts; he had regulation cuts. I call it the golden day of regulation relief, the best economy we have had in that period of time. They say that full employment is 4 percent unemployment, when, in fact, we actually got down below 3 percent. That was something that has not been done in my memory, and all these things happened and good benefits came from that.

There is a difference of opinion between Democrats and Republicans, and we understand that. I have always felt the best thing and indicator of success in the economy is to see how many people you get off of food stamps, and a lot of liberal friends say that they measure it by how many people get on food stamps. Nonetheless, we have 5

million people off of food stamps. That is what happened, and that is why we had the economy that we had. I hate to think of where we would be today if we had started with an average economy. We started with the best economy we had in my lifetime, and that was because of the President and the support he had from our party.

The second thing I hold up—now, keep in mind, I am from Oklahoma. We are an oil State. We renewed—during the Obama administration, there was a war on fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are coal, oil, and gas, and it was an effort to try to get it back into renewables. Someday we may have the development of renewables. They are not there now. In spite of what the previous speaker said, they are not there and available now. So what this President did was he stopped the war on fossil fuels.

As a result of that, we had—and this is in the first 2 years—a 277-percent growth in crude exports, 132-percent increase in coal exports, and a 52-percent increase in natural gas exports. A lot of that translated into the economy that we were enjoying.

In terms of illegal immigration—I know this became very controversial—the wall. People didn't like the idea of the wall. I can remember a conversation I had with Netanyahu when I was in Israel once, and he said he didn't understand how a modern State can have borders that are not secured. He said: You can't do that. That doesn't work. Well, he has now gotten that done against a lot of opposition—we all know that—in Israel.

How many Presidents—every President I can think of in my career here in Washington has said we need to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, but they don't do it. So this President just went ahead and did it. He is a little abrupt—we understand that—but he got these things done.

The WRDA bill—the Water Resources Development Act—right now and, actually, the FAA reauthorization were both booming successes. They were his efforts.

And then the judges. I don't know that it is a record, but in the period of time, the 4 years that this President has been in office, we have had about 220 judges who have been confirmed. These are all judges who have one thing in common: They really believe in the Constitution. They are Constitutionalists. In addition to that, he has three of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices.

Then, on the repeal, if you talk to anyone in business in America—this was a couple of years ago—about the biggest problem they had was the Dodd-Frank effort. That was the over-regulation of business and industry. And so he relaxed those rules, and that created a lot of prosperity, a reason for the economy that we have today, and the record employment that he has given us of 157 million jobs.

This is back 2 years ago.

Now, I would say, if you single out one thing—I don't say this critically of the Obama administration. We all have different priorities, and I have considered President Obama to be a friend. However, his top priority was not a strong national defense. He had other priorities. We all know that.

As a result of that, if you will take the last 5 years—that would have been from the year 2010 to 2015—in the last 5 years, he reduced the funding of the military by 25 percent. It has never been done before.

But that is something that this President came in and immediately—and I chair the committee, so I was very much involved in this. But we ended up with all these things that—the lifting of that and putting it back in the position that it should be.

Now, this is interesting because somebody reminded me—John Bonsell reminded me this morning. He said: What you ought to do is get a list of these things that have happened since 2 years ago. So real quickly, just to say, identifying China as the No. 1 adversary in the NDS—that is the National Defense System, which has worked very successfully. That is a program that is put together by six Republicans and six Democrats, all experts in the field.

I talked about national defense, and he stuck with that and has identified China for the problems that they are giving us right now.

He had new investments in the future. Hypersonics is a good example. After the last administration, China and Russia both surged ahead of us in the research on hypersonics. That is one of the most recent developments of modern equipment. That has worked, and we are not quite there yet, but we are catching up in the cyber world. He is advancing it in that area.

Then as far as the terrorist leaders Baghdadi and Soleimani, both of them were considered to be the worst terrorists on the planet, and he has taken both of them out.

He established the Space Force. The Space Force is something that we really needed to do not because so much that we were behind in anything but the fact that our competition—Russia and China—were in their particular space forces, and we wanted to make sure everybody knew and our partners knew that we were right there with them.

Then, of course, he eliminated the widow's tax. We remember that.

And the Abraham accords—this is really interesting. We have Arab countries right now that are working closely with Israel. This hasn't happened before. The UAE is right now working with them. And the Israelis didn't have to give up anything, so that is a major advancement that we are enjoying.

Then, of course, one of the issues we are working on right now is on the arms sales. We feel that we need to be selling arms to our allies, and we want to make sure that the whole world

knows that, as a loyal friend of ours, we want to make sure that we do for them what we should be doing for them.

During that timeframe he rescued 55 hostages in 24 countries. That is a big deal.

So, anyway, all these things have been going on—and getting tough. I know people are upset with his attitude toward NATO. He believes in NATO, but he believes that the partners in NATO need to start carrying their fair share. And it worked. It increased their share by about \$130 billion.

That is something that, when you talk to real people—when you get out of Washington and you talk to the people on the street, they say: Why are we in NATO when they are not carrying their end of it? Well, that is all changing.

Anyway, that is what this President has done. But there is one thing that is happening that I think is maybe the most significant thing that this President has accomplished. He came out with something. I don't know who thought of the words “Warp Speed” because I have had a hard time remembering that. I have to write it down because I forget it.

But he came out with something where—General Perna is a real expert and has been monitoring what is going on and getting the medical equipment necessary to defeat this thing that we have been under now for almost a year. And he said—keep in mind, this is back in June. In June, he said, by year-end—by December, maybe as early as November, but by December we are going to have the decision made and have a way to stop the pandemic that has been plaguing us for so long.

We had a hearing—and the Presiding Officer knows this because he was in attendance at that hearing—and we looked at the things that General Perna was coming up with that showed us conclusively that we were going to have a vaccine that was going to work by year-end and then it would take about 3 months after that to get the distribution going.

So we are talking about having this thing over by April. Now, the interesting thing—that happened in June, yet that is still, today—we are right on schedule for that to happen.

My fellow Senator from Oklahoma, JAMES LANKFORD, gave a speech yesterday. It was fascinating. He took a long time to do it, but he went into all the indicators that were out there, and you come to the conclusion that this plague is going to be over and we are going to be able to get back to normal. And that will be certainly good.

So I just want to mention that those things are happening, and those things are things that were on behalf of our President. There are, out there, a lot of people—I have never seen the media turn against someone like they have our President. So people don't even know these good things, but I am hop-

ing we can get this out so that people will be aware of it.

Now, back to the bill that we are going to have. I know that my partner, who is the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, is going to want to be heard concerning some of the great things that we are going to be doing in that bill. I will be doing the same thing tomorrow morning.

So this is a bill that we can all be proud of. I have never seen it misrepresented as much as this bill has been misrepresented.

With that, I am anxious to hear my partner talking.

I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

H.R. 6395

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I also want to thank the chairman for his extraordinary leadership in getting us to this point.

For 59 years straight we have passed the National Defense Authorization Act, and I think, honestly, without the chairman's leadership we would have failed this year. So he is owed a great debt of gratitude by all of us and appreciation, particularly from the men and women of the military.

Let me speak a bit about this year's bill: the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

We reached a conference committee report which was fair and bipartisan. In fact, I think the best testimony of that was the vote last evening by the House of Representatives—335 to 78, with 1 Member voting present. That is, by definition, bipartisan, substantive, overwhelmingly supported by both sides as a fair—not only fair but extraordinarily beneficial piece of legislation for the country.

You don't get that vote on something that is partisan and narrowly defined and divisive. This bill is bipartisan. Again, Exhibit A: the vote last night in the House of Representatives.

We have passed it for 59 years. There should be no exception this year. This is the 60th. And I hope we complete that and I expect we will complete that tomorrow.

And, indeed, this whole effort, like everything else in this country, has been twisted and exacerbated by the COVID virus. We have to deal with that, but we recognize that, despite all the complications, despite all of the issues that come before us, one of our most important constitutional duties is to provide for the security of this Nation and provide for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. This bill does that.

This important bipartisan legislation enhances our national security, strengthens military readiness and defense capabilities, protects our forces and their families, and it supports the defense industrial base.

This bill authorizes the active and reserve component end strength necessary to meet national defense objectives, provides a 3-percent across-the-

board pay raise for the troops, and authorizes a number of bonus, special, and incentive pay authorities necessary to retain and recruit the highest quality individuals for military service.

The conference report, as I indicated, passed by an overwhelming margin in the House, and I hope and believe we will have that same outcome tomorrow in the Senate.

Despite everything in this bill to support our forces and bolster our national security, there have been threats to veto the bill by the President. That is his prerogative as President of the United States, but our responsibility and our prerogative is to pass legislation which is sound, we hope bipartisan, and serves the needs of the Nation and, particularly in this case, the troops. And I believe we have done that.

There has been some discussion by the President of a repeal of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. Obviously that is not in our jurisdiction. It is a complicated issue. To simply, at the end of this process, stick it in does a great disservice to the committees of jurisdiction, as well as to the complexities involved in taking away a major factor in the operation of social media companies all across this country.

So, once again, I think it was wise to resist trying to insert a repeal of section 230 into the bill. Indeed, our national security and our troops should not be held, in a sense, hostage to a very specific business concern, and our legislation does not do that.

As I mentioned a moment ago, the crisis affecting every citizen is an exponential spread of the COVID-19 virus, and our military is not immune. As of last Wednesday, more than 31,000 military personnel were infected. If you add their families and Defense Department civilians, the number is over 48,000. These infections undermine our readiness, including the ability to train and to deploy safely.

To respond to this health crisis—again, the most serious crisis we have faced in 100 years, with respect to the pandemic—the conference agreement requires the Department to develop a strategy for pandemic preparedness and response, maintain a 30-day supply of personal protective equipment, and to have the capability to resupply such equipment rapidly and review the Military Health System's response to COVID-19.

The conference agreement also requires the creation of a registry of TRICARE beneficiaries diagnosed with COVID-19 and provides transitional health benefits for National Guard members and their families.

I can't think of a more timely and necessary provision than this provision in our legislation, which addresses this pandemic that faces us today.

Now, there has been one very high profile—there are several high profile but one high profile issue that is sur-

rounding the bill this year, and that is the conference agreement inclusion of the Senate provision renaming military installations that are named after Confederate leaders.

This provision establishes a commission to make recommendations for the renaming or removal of names, symbols, displays, monuments, and paraphernalia that honor or commemorate the Confederacy or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederacy. The provision also requires the Secretary of Defense to rename and implement the commission's plan within 3 years of enactment.

Now, I know the President recalls this, but this passed our committee by voice vote with one, I recall, objection by the Senator from Missouri. It came to the floor, and there were some attempts to make changes, but changes were not made. The bill passed overwhelmingly for—I believe over 80 votes—including the precise language that is in this conference report.

So we went from committee to the floor, to the conference with the same language that was not objected to significantly by anyone. I think that should be pointed out.

The senior Department officials at the Department of Defense are all open to changing these names. There is bipartisan support and cooperation on this issue, and I think it will be something that will be implemented and will be appropriately implemented.

The conference agreement also includes a number of provisions aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion within the Department of Defense and military services, including the creation of a Chief Diversity Officer within the Department and the inclusion of programs at the Department to respond to White supremacist, extremist, and criminal gang activity within the Armed Forces.

I say with some sense of remorse and regret that, unfortunately, there are some—I don't think significant numbers but some of these individuals. We have to respond to them, and we are responding to them.

The conference report also includes the Elijah Cummings Anti-Discrimination Act of 2020, which expands and enhances anti-discrimination employee protections for Federal workers.

Also, the conference agreement strengthens the Department's civilian workforce by including technical fixes and improvements to the Paid Parental Leave Program authorized in last year's Defense bill.

As the Presiding Officer recalls, last year was a major breakthrough, giving Federal employees the incentive of paid parental leave. It has been extremely well received. Now we have made sure that no one has been left out.

We are all, I believe, disappointed that, as we look at the record of all the services dealing with sexual assault in the military, they have not made the progress I think we all deem necessary.

To reduce barriers and encourage victims of sexual assault to report that they were assaulted, the conference report requires the Secretary of Defense to establish a safe-to-report policy that would allow victims to report sexual assault without being punished for minor misconduct related to the assault.

We are also concerned about the issue of domestic violence affecting our military families. The conference report requires the Defense Department to contract with a private sector independent entity to assess the Department's domestic violence program and to recommend improvements to enhance the prevention of and response to domestic violence in the military.

Let me turn to the requirements of specific military services. The conference report supports a number of programs necessary for modernization, including robust funding for the Army's Future Vertical Lift Program and long-range precision fires.

For the Navy and Marine Corps, the bill would add roughly \$3 billion to authorize a number of unfunded priorities identified by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant, including funding for the CNO's top unfunded priority, the 10th *Virginia*-class submarine in the current multiyear procurement program. It also mandates changes in the oversight and execution of shipbuilding and unmanned systems development programs—changes that should help instill more rigor and discipline within the Navy's efforts.

With respect to the Air Force, the bill helps improve oversight of the Department by requiring the Secretary of Defense to submit an annual 30-year plan for the procurement of aircraft across the services—all the services—which is similar to the 30-year shipbuilding report that is already in statute. The bill also supports the Department's efforts to achieve reduced operating and support costs of the F-35 program.

Turning to science and technology, I am pleased that the bill increases funding for important research activity such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing. It also includes several provisions that strengthen our domestic manufacturing and industrial base, including in critical sectors such as microelectronics, pharmaceuticals, and rare earth materials.

The conference report adopts a large number of recommendations from the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, which was cochaired by Senator KING. I must applaud him for his extraordinary work. They did remarkable work, Senator KING and his colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The conference report establishes the National Cyber Director position within the Executive Office of the President to provide national leadership for cyber security, which cuts across many different agencies and jurisdictions. This is one of the key recommendations, but

we have many more recommendations included in the report.

As we turn and look at the world outside of the United States, particularly with regard to Russia and Europe, the conference report enhances our ability to deter Russian aggression, maintains strong support for Ukraine, and reaffirms our commitment to the Transatlantic Partnership by calling for a strong U.S. force posture and capabilities in Germany.

The conference report also expands sanctions on entities engaged in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline and a requirement to impose sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, CAASTSA, on Turkey for its purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system.

Turning to China, our other major adversary—and as the chairman pointed out the two major features in the new national defense strategy authored under the guidance and direction of President Trump—turning to China, the bill established the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, a new authority for the Department of Defense modeled after the European Deterrence Initiative, and authorizes an additional \$150 million in funding. And I give great credit to the chairman because it was his idea, and he asked me to participate with him. But it is a great recognition of the world as it is today—China in an adversarial position—and we responded to it.

I believe this is one of our strongest bills yet on countering the threat that China poses to the United States and our partners and allies, including India, Taiwan, and other countries in the region.

With respect to countering the continued threat posed by ISIS, the conference report extends the Iraq and Syria train-and-equip programs at the requested funding level, while ensuring appropriate congressional oversight of the use of such funds.

Specific to Iraq, the conference report continues efforts to normalize security assistance to Iraq by transitioning funding to enduring authorities and not other temporary authorities we have been using over the last several years—many years, frankly.

For Afghanistan, the bill extends the authority to train and equip Afghan security forces and enhances congressional oversight. It requires an assessment of the progress made on such issues as anti-corruption, recruitment and retention of security forces, and commitments made by the Afghan Government in support of intra-Afghan negotiations. It also includes a restriction on funding to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan until the administration submits an assessment of the impact of such actions on U.S. interests.

In addition, the bill includes a provision to enhance congressional oversight of the administration's negotiations with the Taliban to ensure the

Taliban is in compliance with the commitments made on February 29, 2020, and to address current and projected threats to the homeland emanating from Afghanistan.

The key commitment is that we would be able to maintain a counterterrorism presence that would be adequate and sufficient to suppress any threat emanating from Afghanistan, and that has to be confirmed. We are still waiting for that confirmation.

I am also pleased the conference agreement includes several provisions, collectively known as the United States-Israel Security Assistance Act, to extend foreign assistance, cooperative development programs, and other support to Israel. These provisions demonstrate our unwavering commitment to Israel.

Turning to our nuclear triad, the conference report authorized the President's request to continue the modernization of our nuclear deterrent, which is quickly nearing the end of its use life, and the President recognizes that very precisely. The conference report will also ensure the continuation of much needed modernization efforts to continue to rebuild our aging National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure. The conference report does not support additional testing, as the directors of our weapons labs have assured us and certified that it is not necessary at this time.

The bill before the Senate is bipartisan, with strong support in Congress. This bill is critical to our national security, but more importantly, it provides the resources our troops need in order to do their job and return home safely to their loved ones. Any discussion of vetoing this bill undermines the commitment, I believe, that we have made to our servicemembers and should be off the table. Vetoing this bill would send the wrong signal to our forces, our allies, and our adversaries at exactly the wrong time. It is not necessary, and it should be avoided.

Let me close in the way that I began. Let me commend Senator INHOFE. He has worked this bill tirelessly, and I believe he has been fair and transparent throughout the process. As I said before, the reason we have this bill for the 60th year—assuming our vote is strong tomorrow—is because of the chairman and several others, but it is the chairman principally.

I would also like to take a moment to commend MAC THORNBERRY. The bill is named after Mac. He is an extraordinary gentleman. I had the privilege of serving with him for 2 years in the House of Representatives. He is an individual whose wise counsel, whose integrity, whose decency, and whose dedication to the men and women of the armed services is unparalleled. He is an extraordinary gentleman. I can't think of a more fitting tribute and a more apt tribute than naming this bill after MAC THORNBERRY.

I have to conclude by saying that despite the appearance we have done all

this work, our staff is extraordinary. John Bonsell and Liz King—the staff directors—did superb work. Let me recognize my staff, my Democratic staff: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Creighton Greene, Ozge Guzelsu, Gary Leeling, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Kirk McConnell, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Arun Seraphin, Fiona Tomlin, and last but not least, Elizabeth King.

Again, this Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act conference report is the culmination of months of hard work. It is a good bill. I would say, in fact, it is one of the best bills that we have had in many, many years, and it will provide for our national security and our men and women in uniform and their families. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. INHOFE. Let me first of all say that my colleague, ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator REED, is absolutely right. I think about the people that he was praising, the staff people.

You don't very often hear people back in the real world really appreciating the time and effort that comes from the staff. In this case, the two individuals that Senator REED talked about, John Bonsell, Liz King—I don't remember one weekend that they have had off during this whole thing.

They are just workaholics. They know how significant this is. They know we had a defense authorization bill for the last 60 years, and the worst thing we could do to our kids in the field who are risking their lives is not send them the resources necessary that are in this bill to defend America.

MORNING BUSINESS

STOP THE WAIT ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I rise to discuss the dangerous practice we have in this country that forces people with disabilities to wait for benefits and healthcare coverage. I would first, however, like to congratulate my colleague, the senior Senator from Rhode Island, for his diligence and persistence in working to eliminate the 5-month waiting period for those who have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as ALS. His perseverance is admirable, and I congratulate him for eliminating this misguided policy for people with ALS.

My hope is we can expand this victory to eliminate the waiting periods

for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and Medicare coverage to all eligible Americans.

Forcing Americans to wait 5 months to begin cash benefits and then another 24 months for Medicare coverage is a dangerous policy. In many cases, applicants have little or no income while they are waiting for government benefits to begin. We should not be forcing someone with stage-4 breast cancer or Huntington's Disease or any of the disabilities or diseases that qualify a person for Social Security Disability Insurance to wait to receive benefits. Those who have been determined eligible are American workers who have paid into the Social Security system throughout their lives. We have an obligation to assist Americans in their time of need in a timely manner. When a person receives a diagnosis, bills do not wait 5 months to be paid, healthcare costs are not put on hold for 2 years. Their rent, their utilities, their healthcare copayments come due immediately. Therefore, the benefits these American workers have paid for through their Social Security contributions should be made available to them when they are found eligible.

I would again like to congratulate the senior Senator from Rhode Island. His bill is an important step forward for people with ALS and for all people eligible for SSDI benefits. Let's use this moment to move forward and make comprehensive change to the way we administer SSDI benefits to all eligible Americans with disabilities. Every eligible applicant continues to have essential expenses and needs the cash benefits and healthcare coverage provided by Medicare.

My bill, S. 2496, the Stop the Wait Act, would eliminate the waiting periods for those eligible for SSDI benefits, regardless of diagnosis. It would eliminate the 5-month waiting period for SSDI benefits, and it would eliminate the 24-month waiting period for Medicare coverage. It would help keep people from slipping in to poverty and would ensure they have healthcare coverage.

Today, let's celebrate the policy victory and the great work Senator WHITEHOUSE has accomplished to improve the lives of Americans with ALS. Tomorrow and for the days to come, let's work to secure that victory for all Americans who are eligible for SSDI. They cannot wait.

PAID ACT

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, yesterday, the Provide Accurate Information Directly, PAID Act took a pivotal step closer to becoming law. Once enacted, this vital legislation, which I had the privilege of co-authoring with Senator Cardin, will save tens of millions of taxpayer dollars through targeted and common-sense updates to the Medicare secondary payer, MSP, statute, which Congress first codified four decades

ago. The PAID Act aims to ensure that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS, in coordinating claims related to Medicare Advantage MA, or Medicare Part D plans, can provide the information needed for settling parties to resolve claims fairly and efficiently.

In short, this bill is a boon for seniors, Main Street job creators, and the American taxpayer.

As this bill approaches the legislative finish line, I would like to thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his invaluable support in working with my office, as well as with our Democratic counterparts and with CMS, to bolster, refine, and identify legislative avenues for our proposal. I would also like to thank Senator CARDIN for his partnership in co-leading this legislation, along with Representatives KIND and BILIRAKIS, who introduced a companion bill in the House, which passed by voice vote yesterday. Together, I feel confident that we can see the PAID Act signed into law by the end of the year.

Congress amended the MSP statute in 2007 to require parties to a dispute—known as primary plans—to report settlements, judgments, and awards to Medicare through so-called section 111 reports. This amendment allowed Medicare to seek recovery from settling parties when Medicare paid for healthcare because other payment was not available or reasonably expected to be available. While this system has functioned well for the Medicare Fee-for-Service program, where CMS has the claims data needed for recovery, it has not worked successfully for the MA Part C and Part D programs, where CMS does not have the requisite Part C and Part D claims data and cannot recover for payments that have been made. To compound the problem, settling parties are often unable to identify the correct Part C or Part D plan to be able to coordinate benefits, should they choose to do so. This legislation closes that critical information by having CMS communicate the Part C and Part D plan identification to settling parties in response to a section 111 report. CMS has that data and can provide it.

Congress recognizes that for the last 8 years, CMS has provided section 111 reports to the Part C and Part D Plans, and Congress expects that CMS will continue to do so after this legislation is enacted. Further, the existing MSP statute and regulations impose specific requirements on CMS, and on Part C and Part D plans, to pay for claims in some situations, to not pay for claims in other situations, and to pursue recovery of claims when appropriate. Nothing in this legislation is intended to change any of those obligations or requirements, and Congress expects Part C and Part D plans to continue to seek recovery of claims by timely notifying settling parties when a payment has been made that should be reimbursed, consistent with the CMS notice procedures. This legislation is only intended to provide more information to

the settling parties so that they have the ability to coordinate with Part C and Part D plans earlier, if they so choose.

Congress has afforded CMS 12 months to implement this law, and we urge the agency to move with all deliberate speed to both implement its own system changes and coordinate with primary plans throughout the implementation process. Regular communication and coordination will prove critical in ensuring that Primary Plans are aware of the data exchange requirements that CMS plans to implement and are prepared as quickly as possible to utilize the data CMS will be providing under this law. By involving all stakeholders throughout the implementation process, CMS can implement our intent that the needed plan identity information be available for parties to coordinate benefits as efficiently as possible.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BAYSHORE FIT

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize a small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit at the heart of our country. It is my privilege to recognize a family-owned small business that promotes American health and wellness by operating a gym and fitness business. This week, it is my pleasure to recognize Bayshore Fit of Tampa, FL, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 2012, partners Jeff Fink and Beth Scanlan founded Bayshore Fit in Tampa, FL. Both Jeff and Beth had years of experience training for marathons, bodybuilding, and fitness competitions. Together, they created a gym that met the demand for a personalized alternative to large national gym chains. Jeff and Beth focused on helping every customer meet their health goals, developing a family-friendly, relationship-driven business. As their client base grew, they quickly moved their gym into a larger facility.

Today, Bayshore Fit continues to serve the Tampa area, with members ranging from first-time gym attendees to senior citizens and even professional athletes. The gym has been featured in local media, recognizing their significant membership growth and continued emphasis on personalized programs.

Bayshore Fit's emphasis on healthy living extends to their philanthropic endeavors. They are involved with the South Tampa Chamber of Commerce and the Westshore Alliance in Tampa's Westshore business district. For more than 8 years, Bayshore Fit has sponsored local youth sports teams. They regularly support local nonprofit organizations, including Frameworks of Tampa Bay, Inc., which fosters youth social and emotional development.

Like many of Florida's small businesses, Bayshore Fit temporarily

closed its doors due to the coronavirus pandemic. In April 2020, the U.S. Small Business Administration launched the Paycheck Protection Program, a small business relief program that I was proud to author. The PPP provides forgivable loans to impacted small businesses and nonprofits who maintain their payroll during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jeff and Beth used their PPP loan to keep their business operating until Florida allowed gyms to reopen. Bayshore Fit pivoted to provide virtual classes and video training sessions. When they reopened, Bayshore Fit developed an outdoor workout facility. They also introduced a Bayshore Fit app to manage workout class schedules and the number of people allowed to enter the gym.

Bayshore Fit exemplifies the unique role of relationship-driven small businesses in building communities. I commend their support to youth athletics programs and promoting public health.

Congratulations to Jeff, Beth, and the entire team at Bayshore Fit. I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.●

TRIBUTE TO BRENDA TORPY

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Brenda Torpy, who is retiring this month after decades of service at Champlain Housing Trust. Brenda is not only a leader and ally in the fight for affordable housing, she is a longtime friend.

When I was elected mayor of Burlington, VT, in 1981, I knew I had a unique opportunity to change the way things were done, and to serve working families and others who had been left behind by past administrations. My vision was for a municipal government that worked for every one and increased fairness and equity so that all Burlington residents could get ahead. At the time, far too many residents were struggling to keep up with rising housing costs due to gentrification and development, and owning their own home—a hallmark of the American dream—felt like an impossible goal. I wanted to change that.

My vision for housing in Burlington could never have become a reality without Brenda and her work to establish a community land trust in Vermont. Brenda served as the city's first housing director in the newly created Community and Economic Development Office—CEDO—a role in which she demonstrated remarkable talent and dedication. It was Brenda and her colleagues who proposed the idea of a community land trust, which was a novel idea at the time. Thanks to their work with the Institute for Community Economics and their successful engagement with the community, this innovative model for affordable housing came to the city of Burlington and was established as the Burlington Community Land Trust, now the Champlain Housing Trust. The trust did some-

thing truly transformative: Through shared equity, it gave low-income people access to homeownership that was never possible before. Because the land trust remains affordable in perpetuity, the homes are still affordable today and will remain so long into the future.

From her role at CEDO, Brenda went on to play a pivotal role in the Champlain Housing Trust's growth and success. She served as the first board president and, in 1991, became the executive director. Nearly 30 years later, the Champlain Housing Trust is the world's largest community land trust, with 2,600 affordable homes, including 566 designated for shared equity ownership; more than 6,000 members; and nearly \$300 million in assets. The Champlain Housing Trust has not only benefited Burlington area residents and Vermonters. Brenda has used her talent and dedication to assist countless communities around the country interested in starting their own programs, making the work of the trust a national and international model, now established in it at least 23 States and 8 countries. Additionally, as an active member of the Neighborworks Alliance of Vermont, Brenda partnered with other housing organizations to assist Vermonters all across our State.

I am extremely pleased to see community land trusts serving people worldwide, and remain incredibly proud that the model was spearheaded in my hometown of Burlington, VT. While much work remains to achieve our shared goal of making affordable housing a human right, I am enormously grateful to Brenda for her career-long dedication to achieving this vision. With Brenda's retirement at the end of this year, we will lose an exceptional leader in the housing community, but I am confident that her contributions will not be forgotten. The Champlain Housing Trust and its portfolio represent an impressive legacy, but perhaps even more impressive is the enduring positive impact her work has had on the countless lives changed thanks to affordable housing. Because of Brenda, older Vermonters on fixed incomes are able to stay in their homes; New Americans and refugees can provide stability for their families as they adapted to a new culture and community; single parents can rely on a safe, consistent home in which to raise their children; and young homeowners can break the cycle of poverty by purchasing an asset that will grow in value over time. Quite simply, Vermont and Vermonters are better off today because of Brenda.

Becoming executive director of the Trust the same year I arrived in Washington, it is no exaggeration to say Brenda lent her expertise to me generously throughout my time in Congress. There was never an instance when my staff and I could not rely on Brenda to provide expert insights on the housing challenges we still face, and to put a human face on what can seem like abstract and intractable problems. She

also brought great energy and innovation to this work, and her bold thinking—one of the qualities that made her indispensable in my municipal administration—will also be sorely missed. I count Brenda among my closest allies in affordable housing, and I have greatly appreciated working alongside her for nearly four decades. She has been a tremendous colleague and friend. I wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 134. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, with regard to stalking.

S. 578. An act to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five-month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

S. 1014. An act to establish the Route 66 Centennial Commission, and for other purposes.

S. 2258. An act to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers.

S. 2904. An act to direct the Director of the National Science Foundation to support research on the outputs that may be generated by generative adversarial networks, otherwise known as deepfakes, and other comparable techniques that may be developed in the future, and for other purposes.

S. 3703. An act to amend the Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act to improve the prevention of elder abuse and exploitation of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

S. 4902. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 351 South West Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, as the "Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse".

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 631. An act for the relief of Arpita Kurdekar, Girish Kurdekar, and Vandana Kurdekar.

H.R. 683. An act to impose requirements on the payment of compensation to professional persons employed in voluntary cases commenced under title III of the Puerto Rico Oversight Management and Economic Stability Act (commonly known as "PROMESA").

H.R. 1375. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for transparency of Medicare secondary payer reporting information, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2477. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a system to notify individuals approaching Medicare eligibility, to simplify and modernize the eligibility enrollment process, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4225. An act for the relief of Maria Isabel Bueso Barrera, Alberto Bueso Mendoza, Karla Maria Barrera De Bueso, and Ana Lucia Bueso Barrera.

H.R. 7146. An act for the relief of Victoria Galindo Lopez.

H.R. 7572. An act for the relief of Median El-Moustrah.

H.R. 8161. An act to authorize implementation grants to community-based nonprofits to operate one-stop reentry centers.

H.R. 8235. An act to provide for the modernization of electronic case management systems, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8354. An act to establish the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative within the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, with amendments, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1811. An act to make technical corrections to the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, and for other purposes.

At 4:54 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 8900. An act making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2021, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 631. An act for the relief of Arpita Kurdekar, Girish Kurdekar, and Vandana Kurdekar; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 683. An act to impose requirements on the payment of compensation to professional persons employed in voluntary cases commenced under title III of the Puerto Rico Oversight Management and Economic Stability Act (commonly known as "PROMESA"); to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1375. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for transparency of Medicare secondary payer reporting information, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2477. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a system to notify individuals approaching Medicare eligibility, to simplify and modernize the eligibility enrollment process, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 4225. An act for the relief of Maria Isabel Bueso Barrera, Alberto Bueso Mendoza, Karla Maria Barrera De Bueso, and Ana Lucia Bueso Barrera; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 7146. An act for the relief of Victoria Galindo Lopez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 7572. An act for the relief of Median El-Moustrah; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 8161. An act to authorize implementation grants to community-based nonprofits to operate one-stop reentry centers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 8235. An act to provide for the modernization of electronic case management systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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-6069. A communication from the Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, Division of Market Oversight, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Posi-

tion Limits for Derivatives" (RIN3038-AD99) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2020; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-6070. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Swap Clearing Requirement Exemptions" (RIN3038-AE33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2020; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-6071. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Assessing Contractor Implementation of Cybersecurity Requirements" (RIN0750-AJ81) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2020; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6072. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance Under Section 529A: Qualified ABLE Programs" ((RIN1545-BP10) (TD 9923)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2020; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-6073. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Transparency in Coverage" ((RIN1545-BP32) (TD 9916)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2020; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-6074. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6075. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on Council Resolution 23-350, "Sense of the Council Opposing Implementation of Public Charge Rule Resolution of 2020"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

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

POM-263. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress and the Louisiana congressional delegation to take such actions as are necessary to fully fund the Livestock Indemnity Program in response to the negative impact created by losses to the Louisiana livestock industry as a result of Hurricane Laura and Hurricane Delta; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 24

Whereas, Hurricane Laura made landfall along the coast of Louisiana on August 27, 2020, as a category four storm, becoming the strongest storm in Louisiana history and causing an estimated ten billion dollars in damage from the southwestern to the northern part of the state; and

Whereas, Hurricane Laura created an estimated one billion six hundred million dollar

loss to the Louisiana agriculture industry, including a loss of one million eight hundred thousand dollars to the livestock sector alone; and

Whereas, an estimated one hundred one thousand poultry, one hundred thirty cattle, and a dozen horses died as a direct result of the storm and the extreme health and insect conditions that followed; and

Whereas, Louisiana was hit directly by Hurricane Delta on October 9, 2020, causing more catastrophic damage to many of the same areas of the state as Hurricane Laura; and

Whereas, Hurricane Delta likely created numerous additional losses to the Louisiana agriculture industry, including livestock, the extent of which will only be known after surveys and research of the industry can be conducted; and

Whereas, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Livestock Indemnity Program, within the United States Department of Agriculture, to provide benefits to eligible livestock owners or contract growers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions, including adverse weather, disease, and attacks; and

Whereas, the United States Congress neglected to fund the Livestock Indemnity Program properly, creating a situation where Louisiana livestock producers are unable to utilize the program at a time when it is needed most to offset losses created by Hurricane Laura and Hurricane Delta. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress and the Louisiana congressional delegation to take such actions as are necessary to fully fund the Livestock Indemnity Program in response to the negative impact created by losses to the Louisiana livestock industry as a result of Hurricane Laura and Hurricane Delta. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-264. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass a stimulus plan that includes funds for unemployment, housing, local government, struggling businesses, education, and health care; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 30

Whereas, since surging around the globe into a worldwide pandemic earlier this year, the COVID-19 virus has taken an enormous economic and human toll across countries and continents, crippling heretofore healthy citizens and industries; and

Whereas, to help states with costs for COVID-19 mitigation and response measures, the United States Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; and

Whereas, measures designed to protect the health and safety of Louisiana's populace from the COVID-19 virus have also had a negative impact on the economic fortunes of many of those same citizens through lost or reduced income from closures, capacity restrictions, and other public health measures; and

Whereas, the cost of this highly infectious pandemic to Louisiana businesses, citizens, and local and state government continues to rise; and

Whereas, the unprecedented number of unemployment insurance claims due to COVID-19 has drained the state's previously robust unemployment insurance trust fund; and

Whereas, local revenue collections have plummeted as economic activity has slowed, and as a result, local governments are struggling to provide crucial services; and

Whereas, already made vulnerable by lost jobs or decreased income from the COVID-19 pandemic, many Louisiana citizens face the prospect of housing insecurity as they struggle to provide a safe and secure place for themselves and their families to live while also maintaining basic services such as water, electricity, and food; and

Whereas, the federal government provided unemployment and housing assistance in its last COVID stimulus package, but there is a great need for further economic relief. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass a stimulus plan that includes funds for unemployment, housing, local government, struggling businesses, education, and health care; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 2891. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish Tribal Wildlife Corridors, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-305).

S. 4556. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Indian Health Service, to acquire private land to facilitate access to the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center in Hemet, California, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-306).

By Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 790. A bill to clarify certain provisions of Public Law 103-116, the Catawba Indian Tribe of South Carolina Land Claims Settlement Act of 1993, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-307).

S. 2165. A bill to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-308).

S. 3044. A bill to amend the American's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 to expand the Indian reservation drinking water program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-309).

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. HAWLEY:

S. 4983. A bill to amend chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, to combat human trafficking and to strengthen civil remedies for survivors; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 4984. A bill to report data on COVID-19 immigration detention facilities and local correctional facilities that contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. KING):

S. 4985. A bill to establish forestry policies that facilitate reforestation, conservation, international cooperation, and other ecologically sound management practices that reduce atmospheric carbon, to support United States efforts in partnership with the One Trillion Trees Initiative, to encourage the sustainable management, restoration, and conservation of global forests, grasslands, wetlands, and coastal habitats, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. HIRONO:

S. 4986. A bill to prevent an unintended drop in Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 and the application of the National Average Wage Index, and improve Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits on an emergency basis; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 4987. A bill to provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 4988. A bill to provide for the modernization of electronic case management systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 4989. A bill to facilitate nationwide accessibility and coordination of 211 services for information and referral for mental health emergencies, homelessness needs, other human services needs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 4990. A bill to require the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a study and issue a report on the de-identification of data pursuant to privacy regulations; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 4991. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to add a bankruptcy chapter relating to the debt of individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 4992. A bill to protect journalists and other members of the press from gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BOOKER:

S. 4993. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to promote healthy eating and physical activity among children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. HAWLEY, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 4994. A bill to provide civil relief for victims of the disclosure of certain intimate images, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. ERNST, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 4995. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to modify the Commodity Futures Trading Commission Customer Protection Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. CARPER):

S. 4996. A bill to ensure funding of the United States trustees, extend temporary bankruptcy judgeships, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 798. A resolution calling on the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to cease all hostilities, protect the human rights of all Ethiopians, and pursue a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 633

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 633, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Women's Army Corps who were assigned to the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, known as the "Six Triple Eight".

S. 1902

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1902, a bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a consumer product safety rule for free-standing clothing storage units to protect children from tip-over related death or injury, and for other purposes.

S. 3353

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3353, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for extended months of Medicare coverage of immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplant patients, and for other purposes.

S. 3722

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3722, a bill to authorize funding for a bilateral cooperative program with Israel for the development of health technologies with a focus on combating COVID-19.

S. 4012

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S.

4012, a bill to establish a \$120,000,000,000 Restaurant Revitalization Fund to provide structured relief to food service or drinking establishments through December 31, 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 4110

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4110, a bill to designate residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as Priority 2 refugees of special humanitarian concern, and for other purposes.

S. 4326

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 4326, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to honor the 100th anniversary of completion of coinage of the "Morgan Dollar" and the 100th anniversary of commencement of coinage of the "Peace Dollar", and for other purposes.

S. 4349

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 4349, a bill to address behavioral health and well-being among health care professionals.

S. 4494

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 4494, a bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to extend the period with respect to which amounts under the Coronavirus Relief Fund may be expended.

S. 4497

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4497, a bill to temporarily suspend duties on imports of articles needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

S. 4888

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4888, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from transmitting certain information to the Department of Justice for use by the national instant criminal background check system.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Ms. HIRONO:

S. 4986. A bill to prevent an unintended drop in Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 and the application of the National Average Wage Index, and improve Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits on an emergency basis; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, during the last year Americans everywhere

have experienced the health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19.

Millions of workers and families have experienced unemployment or underemployment, and millions more have struggled to cover rent, utilities, groceries, and other everyday living expenses.

People in Hawaii have fully experienced these challenges. We went from having one of the lowest to one of the highest unemployment rates in the United States. At the height of the pandemic in May, Hawaii's unemployment rate reached 23.5 percent—an unprecedented number for our state.

Family-owned businesses have closed, in many cases permanently, putting pressure on those families, their employees, and the communities they serve. Larger and medium-sized businesses have also closed, meaning furloughs, fewer hours, and reduced wages for their employees.

Because of this, many families have had to make difficult decisions regarding their household finances.

Some families have had to use whatever limited resources they have saved over the years, including retirement savings, to keep their heads above water. Others have had to find different ways to make ends meet and pay their bills—despite fewer hours and reduced wages.

Simply put, the economic downturn has been widespread, deeply-felt, and shared. 2020 has been a difficult year, and businesses, workers, and families will continue to feel its effects for many years to come.

Congress needs to continue its work to provide relief for workers and families, so today I am introducing the Social Security COVID Correction and Equity Act.

Specifically, this bill would provide temporary emergency relief for individuals who rely on Social Security, including retirees, disabled workers, dependent children and grandchildren, and others.

Separately, the bill would also make a technical correction (or "fix") to the Social Security "notch" to make sure individuals who turn 60 this year (those in the "1960 cohort") are not unnecessarily penalized for the recent economic downturn.

Social Security benefits are calculated based on an individual's lifetime earnings, but are indexed to account for wage increases over time. As a result, lower wages this year will mean permanently lower benefits for certain beneficiaries unless Congress acts. This bill addresses how wages are indexed to calculate earnings when determining benefits.

By some estimates, the downturn could reduce benefits by around \$960 per year for the average worker.

Preventing these reductions is a bipartisan issue, and I hope we can work together to address the issue for the millions of individuals who would be affected nationwide—including the 17,800 seniors in Hawaii who turn 60 this year.

While most of these individuals will not receive their benefits for another two years, future retirees and other beneficiaries are concerned about the issue now, and we have an opportunity to provide them with some certainty during these difficult times.

Workers and families are hurting now, and we need to do what we can to prevent them from being harmed in the future too.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important bill.

I yield the floor.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. CARPER):

S. 4996. A bill to ensure funding of the United States trustees, extend temporary bankruptcy judgeships, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

S. 4996

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 "Bankruptcy Administration Improvement Act of 2020".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Because of the importance of the goal that the bankruptcy system is self-funded, at no cost to the taxpayer, Congress has closely monitored the funding needs of the bankruptcy system, including by requiring periodic reporting by the Attorney General regarding the United States Trustee System Fund.

(2) Congress has amended the various bankruptcy fees as necessary to ensure that the bankruptcy system remains self-supporting, while also fairly allocating the costs of the system among those who use the system.

(3) Because the bankruptcy system is interconnected, the result has been a system of fees, including filing fees, quarterly fees in chapter 11 cases, and other fees, that together fund the courts, judges, United States trustees, and chapter 7 case trustees necessary for the bankruptcy system to function.

(4) This Act and the amendments made by this Act—

(A) ensure adequate funding of the United States trustees, supports the preservation of existing bankruptcy judgeships that are urgently needed to handle existing and anticipated increases in business and consumer caseloads, and provides long-overdue additional compensation for chapter 7 case trustees whose caseloads include chapter 11 reorganization cases that were converted to chapter 7 liquidation cases; and

(B) confirm the longstanding intention of Congress that quarterly fee requirements remain consistent across all Federal judicial districts.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act and the amendments made by this Act is to further the long-standing goal of Congress of ensuring that the bankruptcy system is self-funded, at no cost to the taxpayer.

SEC. 3. UNITED STATES TRUSTEE SYSTEM FUND; BANKRUPTCY FEES.

(a) DEPOSITS OF CERTAIN FEES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021 THROUGH 2026.—Notwithstanding section 589a(b) of title 28, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2026—

(1) the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title, less the amount specified in subparagraph (2), shall be deposited as specified in subsection (b); and

(2) \$5,400,000 of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

(b) UNITED STATES TRUSTEE SYSTEM FUND.—Section 589a of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f)(1) During each of fiscal years 2021 through 2026 and notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c), the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6), less the amount specified in paragraph (2), shall be deposited as follows, in the following order:

“(A) First, the amounts specified in the Department of Justice appropriations for that fiscal year, shall be deposited as discretionary offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, pursuant to subsection (a), to remain available until expended.

“(B) Second, the amounts determined annually by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts that are necessary to reimburse the judiciary for the costs of administering payments under section 330(e) of title 11, shall be deposited as mandatory offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, and transferred and deposited into the special fund established under section 1931(a), and notwithstanding subsection (a), shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation.

“(C) Third, the amounts determined annually by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts that are necessary to pay trustee compensation authorized by section 330(e)(2) of title 11, shall be deposited as mandatory offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, and transferred and deposited into the Chapter 7 Trustee Fund established under section 330(e) of title 11 for payment to trustees serving in cases under chapter 7 of title 11 (in addition to the amounts paid under section 330(b) of title 11), in accordance with that section, and notwithstanding subsection (a), shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation.

“(D) Fourth, any remaining amounts shall be deposited as discretionary offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, to remain available until expended.

“(2) Notwithstanding subsection (b), for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2026, \$5,400,000 of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.”.

(c) COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS.—Section 330 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e)(1) There is established a fund in the Treasury of the United States, to be known as the ‘Chapter 7 Trustee Fund’, which shall be administered by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

“(2) Deposits into the Chapter 7 Trustee Fund under section 589a(f)(1)(C) of title 28 shall be available until expended for the purposes described in paragraph (3).

“(3) For fiscal years 2021 through 2026, the Chapter 7 Trustee Fund shall be available to pay the trustee serving in a case that is filed under chapter 7 or a case that is converted to a chapter 7 case in the most recent fiscal year (referred to in this subsection as a ‘chapter 7 case’) the amount described in paragraph (4) for the chapter 7 case in which the trustee has rendered services in that fiscal year.

“(4) The amount described in this paragraph shall be the lesser of—

“(A) \$60; or

“(B) a pro rata share, for each chapter 7 case, of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28 and deposited to the United States Trustee System Fund under section 589a(f)(1) of title 28, less the amounts specified in section 589a(f)(1)(A) and (B) of title 28.

“(5) The payment received by a trustee under paragraph (3) shall be paid in addition to the amount paid under subsection (b).

“(6) Not later than September 30, 2021, the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts shall promulgate regulations for the administration of this subsection.”.

(d) BANKRUPTCY FEES.—Section 1930(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (6)(B) and inserting the following:

“(B)(i) During the 5-year period beginning on January 1, 2021, in addition to the filing fee paid to the clerk, a quarterly fee shall be paid to the United States trustee, for deposit in the Treasury, in each open and reopened case under chapter 11 of title 11, other than under subchapter V, for each quarter (including any fraction thereof) until the case is closed, converted, or dismissed, whichever occurs first.

“(ii) The fee shall be the greater of—

“(I) 0.4 percent of disbursements or \$250 for each quarter in which disbursements total less than \$1,000,000; and

“(II) 0.8 percent of disbursements but not more than \$250,000 for each quarter in which disbursements total at least \$1,000,000.

“(iii) The fee shall be payable on the last day of the calendar month following the calendar quarter for which the fee is owed.”; and

(2) in paragraph (7), in the first sentence, by striking “may” and inserting “shall”.

(e) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) EXCEPTIONS.—

(A) COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS.—The amendments made by subsection (c) shall apply to any case filed on or after the date of enactment of this Act—

(i) under chapter 7 of title 11, United States Code; or

(ii)(I) under chapter 11, 12, or 13 of that title; and

(II) converted to a chapter 7 case under that title.

(B) BANKRUPTCY FEES.—The amendments made by subsection (d) shall apply to—

(i) any case pending under chapter 11 of title 11, United States Code, on or after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(ii) quarterly fees payable under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by subsection (d), for disbursements made in any calendar quarter that begins on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES IN CERTAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS.

(a) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized by section 1003(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the district of Delaware and the eastern district of Michigan are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—The 1st and 2d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1003(b)(1) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(B) EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1003(b)(3) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 1003 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(b) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005 AND EXTENDED BY THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012 AND THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the following districts by section 1223(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 2(a) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 1002(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs:

(A) The district of Delaware.

(B) The southern district of Florida.

(C) The district of Maryland.

(D) The eastern district of Michigan.

(E) The district of Nevada.

(F) The eastern district of North Carolina.

(G) The district of Puerto Rico.

(H) The eastern district of Virginia.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) SINGLE VACANCIES.—Except as provided in subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), (E), and (F), the 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for each district specified in paragraph (1)—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(B) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—The 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(C) SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.—The 1st and 2d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the southern district of Florida—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(D) DISTRICT OF MARYLAND.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(E) EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN.—The 2d vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(F) DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 1002 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(c) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005 AND EXTENDED BY THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the following districts by section 1223(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and extended by section 2(a) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs:

(A) The southern district of Georgia.

(B) The district of Maryland.

(C) The district of New Jersey.

(D) The northern district of New York.

(E) The district of South Carolina.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) SINGLE VACANCIES.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for each district specified in paragraph (1)—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(B) DISTRICT OF MARYLAND.—The 2d and 3d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(d) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005, THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, AND THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 1223(c) of Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 2(b) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 1002(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the district of Delaware and the district of Puerto Rico are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—The 7th vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(b)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(B) DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO.—The 2d vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(b)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 1223 of Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 1002 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(e) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005 AND THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 1223(c) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 2(b) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the eastern district of Tennessee is extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district occurs.

(2) VACANCY.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Tennessee—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judge referred to in paragraph (1).

(f) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and extended by section 2(c) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the middle district of North Carolina is extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district occurs.

(2) VACANCY.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the middle district of North Carolina—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge,

shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judge referred to in paragraph (1).

SEC. 5. REGULATIONS.

Section 375(h) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking “may” and inserting “shall”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 798—CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA AND THE TIGRAY PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT TO CEASE ALL HOSTILITIES, PROTECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL ETHIOPIANS, AND PURSUE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE TIGRAY REGION OF ETHIOPIA

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

S. RES. 798

Whereas the United States and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia share a strong relationship built over a century of diplomatic relations;

Whereas Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and plays a key role in advancing security and stability across sub-Saharan Africa, including as a top contributor of uniformed personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions;

Whereas Ethiopia has been beset in recent years by multiple human rights and humanitarian challenges, including targeted ethnic violence, natural disasters, and political unrest, leading to the internal displacement of more than 1,800,000 Ethiopians in 2020 alone;

Whereas tensions between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which was part of the ruling coalition in Ethiopia until late 2019, escalated when the Tigray People's Liberation Front held elections in the region of Tigray on September 9, 2020, despite the decision by the Federal Government of Ethiopia to postpone general elections due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas the Tigray People's Liberation Front rejected the postponement of elections and considered the extension of the term of the Federal Government to be unconstitutional, and the Federal Government subsequently deemed the Tigray elections illegitimate;

Whereas, in the early hours of November 4, 2020, the Tigray People's Liberation Front carried out an attack on the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces;

Whereas Prime Minister Abiy then ordered a military offensive and 6-month state of emergency in the Tigray region, which has evolved into an armed conflict in the region and surrounding areas between the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, with reports of thousands of deaths;

Whereas the Tigray People's Liberation Front claims it acted in self-defense and has accused the Ethiopian National Defense Forces of striking some civilian targets;

Whereas the Tigray People's Liberation Front admits to having fired missiles at 2 airports and having launched rockets across the border into Eritrea in what they say was retaliation for air strikes in the Tigray region;

Whereas Amnesty International confirmed that, on November 9, 2020, "likely hundreds" of ethnic Amhara people were stabbed or hacked to death in the town of Mai-Kadra in the Tigray region, and some witnesses attributed the killings to retreating Tigray People's Liberation Front forces;

Whereas the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has expressed concern over the arrests of journalists in connection to the conflict in the Tigray region and called on the Government of Ethiopia to respect due process rights;

Whereas the closures of roads and airports servicing the Tigray region have contributed to shortages of fuel and other necessary goods and impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance to more than 2,000,000 people already in need of aid, including approximately 100,000 Eritrean refugees and hundreds of United States citizens living in the region;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has shut down electricity, banking, internet, and telephone services in the Tigray region, creating additional challenges for the delivery of humanitarian services and the protection of civilians;

Whereas the conflict has already forced approximately 50,000 Ethiopians to flee to Sudan, and aid agencies warn that more than 200,000 refugees could enter Sudan, Djibouti, and Eritrea in the next 6 months;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights warned that "there is a risk this situation will spiral totally out of control, leading to heavy casualties and destruction, as well as mass displacement within Ethiopia itself and across borders";

Whereas, according to international human rights organizations, Tigrayans have been suspended from their jobs and pre-

vented from leaving the country, and there are reports of surveillance and mass arrests of citizens of Ethiopia based on their ethnicity;

Whereas the United Nations Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect and the Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide have expressed deep concern over "reports of incidents of ethnically and religiously motivated hate speech, incitement to violence and serious human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, killings, displacement of populations and destruction of property in various parts of the country," stressing that the ethnically motivated attacks and reported ethnic profiling of citizens constitute "a dangerous trajectory" that heightens the risk of atrocity crimes;

Whereas the conflict in the Tigray region occurs within the context of democratic transition in Ethiopia, an uptick in targeted ethnic violence in Ethiopia, ongoing talks, mediated by the African Union, between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the filling and use of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Ethiopia's rapprochement with Eritrea, and the fragile democratic transition and peace process in Sudan;

Whereas the conflict in the Tigray region jeopardizes the security and stability not only of Ethiopia, but of the broader East Africa region, particularly as Ethiopia withdraws its troops from Somalia to support domestic needs, including the operation in the Tigray region;

Whereas African Union Chairman Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa, has appointed Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of Liberia, and Kgalema Motlanthe, former President of South Africa, as envoys to mediate a resolution to the conflict in the Tigray region, but the Government of Ethiopia has dismissed calls for mediation as of December 2020;

Whereas, on November 28, 2020, the Government of Ethiopia claimed victory in the conflict after a series of artillery strikes on Mekelle, the capital city of the Tigray region, with Prime Minister Abiy announcing that his forces had "completed and ceased" military operations and would shift focus to rebuilding the region and providing humanitarian assistance while Federal police attempt to apprehend leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front;

Whereas, although Prime Minister Abiy stated that no civilians were harmed by the operation in Mekelle, the communications blackout in the Tigray region impedes verification of that claim and the International Committee of the Red Cross reported on November 29, 2020, that 80 percent of patients at Ayder Referral Hospital in Mekelle were suffering from trauma injuries;

Whereas, on November 29, 2020, Debretsion Gebremichael, leader of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, disputed Prime Minister Abiy's claims of victory and told reporters that Tigray People's Liberation Front forces were withdrawing from Mekelle but would continue fighting the Federal Government; and

Whereas United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi noted that although the Government of Ethiopia announced the completion of military operations in the Tigray region, it "does not mean the conflict is finished": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly disapproves of the escalation of political tensions between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front into armed conflict and condemns in the strongest terms any and all

violence against civilians, such as the reported mass killings in Mai-Kadra, Ethiopia;

(2) appreciates the readiness of Sudan and Djibouti to welcome refugees fleeing the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and supports the de-escalation efforts led by the African Union;

(3) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to immediately and fully restore electricity, banking, telephone, and internet service in the Tigray region;

(4) urges all parties to the conflict to—

(A) cease all violence and refrain from actions that could spread or escalate the conflict, including attacks on international or civilian targets;

(B) engage in good faith in regional and international mediation efforts to end the conflict and commit to a credible, inclusive dialogue towards a sustainable resolution of political grievances;

(C) comply with international humanitarian law, guarantee unfettered humanitarian access to areas affected by the conflict, and take all possible steps to protect the safety of civilians, including refugees, displaced persons, and humanitarian aid workers;

(D) respect and promote the rights of all people in Ethiopia to free expression, political participation, and due process without discrimination based on ethnicity or religion; and

(E) allow for, and cooperate with, independent and transparent investigations of any alleged human rights abuses committed in the course of the conflict and hold perpetrators to account; and

(5) urges the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, to—

(A) engage at the highest levels with leaders of the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to encourage dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict, achieve sustainable peace, and mitigate the humanitarian crisis;

(B) end the pause of all non-life-sustaining assistance to Ethiopia and support programming to meet immediate humanitarian needs, including of refugees and internally displaced persons, advance nonviolent conflict resolution and reconciliation, and aid democratic transition in Ethiopia;

(C) consider imposing targeted sanctions on any political or military officials found responsible for violations of human rights carried out in the course of the conflict;

(D) take all possible diplomatic steps to prevent further mass atrocities in Ethiopia; and

(E) maintain close coordination with international allies and multilateral organizations regarding efforts to address the conflict in Ethiopia and bring attention to the conflict in international fora, including the United Nations Security Council.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2695. Mr. THUNE (for Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. MURPHY)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3451, to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and for other purposes.

SA 2696. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. TESTER)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7105, to provide

flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes.

SA 2697. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. PETERS) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3418, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to allow the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide capitalization grants to States to establish revolving funds to provide hazard mitigation assistance to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards, and other related environmental harm.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2695. Mr. THUNE (for Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. MURPHY)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3451, to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and for other purposes; as follows:

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 “Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Determination of budgetary effects.

TITLE I—EDUCATION

Subtitle A—Education Generally

- Sec. 1001. Improvements to Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 1002. Expansion of eligibility for Fry Scholarship to children and spouses of certain deceased members of the Armed Forces.
- Sec. 1003. Period for election to receive benefits under All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 1004. Phase out of All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program.
- Sec. 1005. Requirements for in-State tuition.
- Sec. 1006. Expansion of authority for certain qualifying work-study activities for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include outreach services provided through congressional offices.
- Sec. 1007. Restoration of entitlement to rehabilitation programs for veterans affected by school closure or disapproval.
- Sec. 1008. Technical correction to clarify eligibility for participation in Yellow Ribbon Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 1009. Clarification of educational assistance for individuals who pursue an approved program of education leading to a degree while on active duty.
- Sec. 1010. Verification of enrollment for purposes of receipt of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits.

Sec. 1011. Clarification regarding the dependents to whom entitlement to educational assistance may be transferred under the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 1012. Expansion of reasons for which a course of education may be disapproved.

Sec. 1013. Oversight of educational institutions with approved programs: risk-based surveys.

Sec. 1014. Oversight of educational institutions subject to Government action for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1015. Additional requirement for approval of educational institutions for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1016. Clarification of accreditation for law schools for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1017. Clarification of grounds for disapproval of a course for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1018. Requirements for educational institutions participating in the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1019. Overpayments to eligible persons or veterans.

Sec. 1020. Improvements to limitation on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices.

Sec. 1021. Charge to entitlement to educational assistance for individuals who do not transfer credits from certain closed or disapproved programs of education.

Sec. 1022. Department of Veterans Affairs treatment of for-profit educational institutions converted to nonprofit educational institutions.

Sec. 1023. Authority of State approving agencies to conduct outreach activities.

Sec. 1024. Limitation on colocation and administration of State approving agencies.

Sec. 1025. Elimination of period of eligibility for training and rehabilitation for certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Subtitle B—Pandemic Assistance

Sec. 1101. Definitions.

Sec. 1102. Continuation of Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance benefits during COVID-19 emergency.

Sec. 1103. Effects of closure of educational institution and modification of courses by reason of COVID-19 emergency.

Sec. 1104. Payment of educational assistance in cases of withdrawal.

Sec. 1105. Modification of time limitations on use of entitlement.

Sec. 1106. Apprenticeship or on-job training requirements.

Sec. 1107. Inclusion of training establishments in certain provisions related to COVID-19 emergency.

Sec. 1108. Treatment of payment of allowances under Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act.

TITLE II—BENEFITS

Subtitle A—Benefits Generally

- Sec. 2001. Revision of definition of Vietnam era for purposes of the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 2002. Matters relating to Department of Veterans Affairs medical disability examinations.
- Sec. 2003. Medal of Honor special pension for surviving spouses.
- Sec. 2004. Modernization of service-disabled veterans insurance.
- Sec. 2005. Denial of claims for traumatic injury protection under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.
- Sec. 2006. Publication and acceptance of disability benefit questionnaire forms of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 2007. Threshold for reporting debts to consumer reporting agencies.
- Sec. 2008. Removal of dependents from award of compensation or pension.
- Sec. 2009. Eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses who remarry after age 55.
- Sec. 2010. Study on exposure by members of the Armed Forces to toxicants at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan.
- Sec. 2011. Comptroller General briefing and report on repealing manifestation period for presumptions of service connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents.
- Sec. 2012. Extension of authority of Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use income information from other agencies.
- Sec. 2013. Extension on certain limits on payments of pension.

Subtitle B—Housing

- Sec. 2101. Eligibility of certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 2102. Reducing loan fees for certain veterans affected by major disasters.
- Sec. 2103. Extension of certain housing loan fees.
- Sec. 2104. Collection of overpayments of specially adapted housing assistance.

Subtitle C—Burial Matters

- Sec. 2201. Transportation of deceased veterans to veterans' cemeteries.
- Sec. 2202. Increase in certain funeral benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 2203. Outer burial receptacles for each new grave in cemeteries that are the subjects of certain grants made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 2204. Provision of inscriptions for spouses and children on certain headstones and markers furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 2205. Aid to counties for establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans' cemeteries.
- Sec. 2206. Increase in maximum amount of grants to States, counties, and tribal organizations for operating and maintaining veterans' cemeteries.

Sec. 2207. Provision of urns and commemorative plaques for remains of certain veterans whose cremated remains are not interred in certain cemeteries.

Sec. 2208. Training of State and tribal veterans' cemetery personnel by National Cemetery Administration.

TITLE III—HEALTH CARE

Subtitle A—Health Care Generally

Sec. 3001. Expansion of modifications to Veteran Directed Care program.

Sec. 3002. Prohibition on collection of a health care copayment by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from a veteran who is a member of an Indian tribe.

Sec. 3003. Oversight for State homes regarding COVID-19 infections, response capacity, and staffing levels.

Sec. 3004. Grants for State homes located on tribal lands.

Sec. 3005. Continuation of Women's Health Transition Training program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 3006. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish medically necessary transportation for newborn children of certain women veterans.

Sec. 3007. Waiver of requirements of Department of Veterans Affairs for receipt of per diem payments for domiciliary care at State homes and modification of eligibility for such payments.

Sec. 3008. Expansion of quarterly update of information on staffing and vacancies at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include information on duration of hiring process.

Sec. 3009. Requirement for certain Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities to have physical location for the disposal of controlled substances medications.

Sec. 3010. Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program for clinical observation by undergraduate students.

Subtitle B—Scheduling and Consult Management

Sec. 3101. Process and requirements for scheduling appointments for health care from Department of Veterans Affairs and non-Department health care.

Sec. 3102. Audits regarding scheduling of appointments and management of consultations for health care from Department of Veterans Affairs and non-Department health care.

Sec. 3103. Administration of non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care.

Sec. 3104. Examination of health care consultation and scheduling positions of Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE IV—NAVY SEAL BILL MULDER

Sec. 4001. Short title.

Subtitle A—Service-connection and COVID-19

Sec. 4101. Presumptions of service-connection for members of Armed Forces who contract Coronavirus Disease 2019 under certain circumstances.

Subtitle B—Assistance for Homeless Veterans

Sec. 4201. Flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency.

Sec. 4202. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

Sec. 4203. Gap analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs programs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless.

Sec. 4204. Improvements to grants awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to entities that provide services to homeless veterans.

Sec. 4205. Repeal of sunset on authority to carry out program of referral and counseling services for veterans at risk for homelessness who are transitioning from certain institutions.

Sec. 4206. Coordination of case management services for veterans receiving housing vouchers under Tribal Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program.

Sec. 4207. Contracts relating to case managers for homeless veterans in supported housing program.

Sec. 4208. Report on staffing of Department of Housing and Urban Development-Department of Veterans Affairs supported housing program.

Subtitle C—Retraining Assistance for Veterans

Sec. 4301. Access for the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs to the Federal directory of new hires.

Sec. 4302. Expansion of eligible class of providers of high technology programs of education for veterans.

Sec. 4303. Pilot program for off-base transition training for veterans and spouses.

Sec. 4304. Grants for provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, or discharge.

Sec. 4305. One-year independent assessment of the effectiveness of Transition Assistance Program.

Sec. 4306. Longitudinal study on changes to Transition Assistance Program.

TITLE V—DEBORAH SAMPSON

Sec. 5001. Short title.

Subtitle A—Improving Access for Women Veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs

Sec. 5101. Office of Women's Health in Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 5102. Women veterans retrofit initiative.

Sec. 5103. Establishment of environment of care standards and inspections at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

Sec. 5104. Provision of reintegration and readjustment services to veterans and family members in group retreat settings.

Sec. 5105. Provision of legal services for women veterans.

Sec. 5106. Comptroller General surveys and report on supportive services provided for very low-income women veterans.

Sec. 5107. Programs on assistance for child care for certain veterans.

Sec. 5108. Availability of prosthetics for women veterans from Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 5109. Requirement to improve Department of Veterans Affairs women veterans call center.

Sec. 5110. Study on infertility services furnished at Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 5111. Sense of Congress on access to facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs by reservists for counseling and treatment relating to military sexual trauma.

Subtitle B—Increasing Staff Cultural Competency

Sec. 5201. Staffing of women's health primary care providers at medical facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 5202. Additional funding for primary care and emergency care clinicians in Women Veterans Health Care Mini-Residency Program.

Sec. 5203. Establishment of women veteran training module for non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers.

Sec. 5204. Study on staffing of women veteran program manager program at medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs and training of staff.

Sec. 5205. Study on Women Veteran Coordinator program.

Sec. 5206. Staffing improvement plan for peer specialists of Department of Veterans Affairs who are women.

Subtitle C—Eliminating Harassment and Assault

Sec. 5301. Expansion of coverage by Department of Veterans Affairs of counseling and treatment for sexual trauma.

Sec. 5302. Assessment of effects of intimate partner violence on women veterans by Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

Sec. 5303. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 5304. Pilot program on assisting veterans who experience intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

Sec. 5305. Study and task force on veterans experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

Subtitle D—Data Collection and Reporting

Sec. 5401. Requirement for collection and analysis of data on Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and services and disaggregation of such data by gender, race, and ethnicity.

Sec. 5402. Study on barriers for women veterans to receipt of health care from Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 5403. Study on feasibility and advisability of offering Parenting STAIR program at all medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subtitle E—Benefits Matters

Sec. 5501. Evaluation of service-connection of mental health conditions relating to military sexual trauma.

Sec. 5502. Choice of sex of Department of Veterans Affairs medical examiner for assessment of claims for compensation relating to disability resulting from physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment.

Sec. 5503. Secretary of Veterans Affairs report on implementing recommendations of Inspector General of Department of Veterans Affairs in certain report on denied posttraumatic stress disorder claims related to military sexual trauma.

TITLE VI—REPRESENTATION AND FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION MATTERS

- Sec. 6001. Short title.
 Sec. 6002. Plan to address the financial exploitation of veterans receiving pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 Sec. 6003. Overpayments of pension to veterans receiving pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 Sec. 6004. Evaluation of additional actions for verifying direct deposit information provided by veterans on applications for veterans pension.
 Sec. 6005. Annual report on efforts of Department of Veterans Affairs to address the financial exploitation of veterans receiving pension.
 Sec. 6006. Notice regarding fees charged in connection with filing an application for veterans pension.
 Sec. 6007. Outreach plan for educating vulnerable veterans about potential financial exploitation relating to the receipt of pension.

TITLE VII—OTHER MATTERS

Subtitle A—Administrative and Other Matters

- Sec. 7001. Medical examination protocol for volunteer drivers participating in program of transportation services for veterans.
 Sec. 7002. Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs.
 Sec. 7003. Preference for offerors employing veterans.
 Sec. 7004. Extension of certain employment and reemployment rights to members of the National Guard who perform State active duty.
 Sec. 7005. Repayment of misused benefits.
 Sec. 7006. Exemption of certain transfers.
 Sec. 7007. Report and planned actions of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to address certain high-risk areas of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 Sec. 7008. Annual report by Secretary of Veterans Affairs on implementation of priority recommendations of Comptroller General of the United States pertaining to Department of Veterans Affairs.
 Sec. 7009. Clarification of methods used to monitor compliance with certain limitations on subcontracting.
 Sec. 7010. Department of Veterans Affairs requirement to provide certain notice to persons filing claims for damage, injury, or death on Standard Form 95.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to the Chief Financial Officer of Department of Veterans Affairs

- Sec. 7101. Definitions.
 Sec. 7102. Plans for addressing material weaknesses and providing sufficient authority to Chief Financial Officer of Department of Veterans Affairs.
 Sec. 7103. Chief Financial Officer attestation.

Sec. 7104. Chief Financial Officer responsibility for subordinate chief financial officers.

Subtitle C—Servicemembers Civil Relief

- Sec. 7201. Clarification of delivery of notice of termination of leases of premises and motor vehicles for purposes of relief under Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.
 Sec. 7202. Technical correction regarding extension of lease protections for servicemembers under stop movement orders in response to local, national, or global emergency.

SEC. 2. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

TITLE I—EDUCATION

Subtitle A—Education Generally

SEC. 1001. IMPROVEMENTS TO EDITH NOURSE ROGERS STEM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) CLARIFICATION AND EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Subsection (b)(4) of section 3320 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

- (1) in subparagraph (A)(i)—
 - (A) in the matter preceding subclause (I), by inserting “, or a dual degree program that includes such an undergraduate college degree,” after “undergraduate college degree”;
 - (B) by striking subclause (IX); and
 - (C) by redesignating subclauses (X) and (XI) as subclauses (IX) and (X), respectively;
- (2) in subparagraph (B)—
 - (A) by inserting “covered clinical training program for health care professionals or a” before “program of education”; and
 - (B) by striking the period at the end and inserting “; or”;
- (3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) is an individual who has earned a graduate degree in a field referred to in subparagraph (A)(i) and is enrolled in a covered clinical training program for health care professionals.”

(b) PRIORITY.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended to read as follows:

“(c) PRIORITY.—(1) If the Secretary determines that there are insufficient funds available in a fiscal year to provide additional benefits under this section to all eligible individuals, the Secretary may give priority to the following eligible individuals:

“(A) Individuals who require the most credit hours described in subsection (b)(4).

“(B) Individuals who are entitled to educational assistance under this chapter by reason of paragraph (1), (2), (8), or (9) of section 3311(b) of this title.

“(2) The Secretary shall give priority to individuals under paragraph (1) in the following order:

“(A) Individuals who are enrolled in a program of education leading to an undergraduate degree in a field referred to in subsection (b)(4)(A)(i).

“(B) Individuals who are enrolled in a program of education leading to a teaching certificate.

“(C) Individuals who are enrolled in a dual-degree program leading to both an undergraduate and graduate degree in a field referred to in subsection (b)(4)(A)(i).

“(D) Individuals who have earned an undergraduate degree and are enrolled in a covered

clinical training program for health care professionals.

“(E) Individuals who have earned a graduate degree and are enrolled in a covered clinical training program for health care professionals.”

(c) AMOUNTS NOT SUBJECT TO CERTAIN LIMITATION.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter or chapter 36 of this title, any additional benefits under this section may not be counted toward the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title limits an individual’s receipt of allowance or assistance.”

(d) COVERED CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM DEFINED.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) COVERED CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘covered clinical training program’ means any clinical training required by a health care professional to be licensed to practice in a State or locality.”

SEC. 1002. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FRY SCHOLARSHIP TO CHILDREN AND SPOUSES OF CERTAIN DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b) of section 3311 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 105 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48), is further amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (9) as paragraph (11); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following new paragraphs (9) and (10):

“(9) An individual who is the child or spouse of a person who, on or after September 11, 2001, dies in line of duty while serving on duty other than active duty as a member of the Armed Forces.

“(10) An individual who is the child or spouse of a member of the Selected Reserve who dies on or after September 11, 2001, while a member of the Selected Reserve from a service-connected disability.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) In section 3311(f), by striking “paragraph (8)” each place it appears and inserting “paragraphs (8), (9), and (10)”.

(2) In section 3313(c)(1), by striking “(8), or (9)” and inserting “(8), (9), (10), or (11)”.

(3) In section 3317(a), in the second sentence, by striking “paragraphs (1), (2), (8), and (9)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), (8), (9), (10), and (11)”.

(4) In section 3320, as amended by section 1001 of this title, in subsection (c)(1)(B), by striking “(8), or (9)” and inserting “(8), (9), (10), or (11)”.

(5) In section 3322—

(A) in subsection (e), by striking both “sections 3311(b)(8) and 3319” and inserting “section 3319 and paragraph (8), (9), or (10) of section 3311 of this title”;

(B) in subsection (f), by striking “section 3311(b)(8)” and inserting “paragraph (8), (9), or (10) of section 3311 of this title”; and

(C) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “either section 3311(b)(8) or chapter 35” and inserting “either chapter 35 or paragraph (8), (9), or (10) of section 3311”.

(c) APPLICABILITY DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect immediately after the amendments made by section 105 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48) take effect and shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1003. PERIOD FOR ELECTION TO RECEIVE BENEFITS UNDER ALL-VOLUNTEER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3011 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “Any such election shall be made at the time the individual initially enters on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces” and inserting “Any such election shall be made during the 90-day period beginning on the day that is 180 days after the date on which the individual initially enters initial training”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “that such individual is entitled to such pay” and inserting “that begin after the date that is 270 days after the date on which the individual initially enters initial training”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 1004. PHASE OUT OF ALL-VOLUNTEER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 3011 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “after June 30, 1985” and inserting “during the period beginning July 1, 1985, and ending September 30, 2030”.

SEC. 1005. REQUIREMENTS FOR IN-STATE TUITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “less than three years before the date of enrollment in the course concerned”; and

(2) in paragraph (4)—

(A) by striking “It shall” and inserting “(A) It shall”; and

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

“(B) To the extent feasible, the Secretary shall make publicly available on the internet website of the Department a database explaining any requirements described in subparagraph (A) that are established by a public institution of higher learning for an individual to be charged tuition and fees at a rate that is equal to or less than the rate the institution charges for tuition and fees for residents of the State in which the institution is located. The Secretary shall disapprove a course of education provided by such an institution that does not provide the Secretary—

“(i) an initial explanation of such requirements; and

“(ii) not later than 90 days after the date on which any such requirements change, the updated requirements.”.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1006. EXPANSION OF AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN QUALIFYING WORK-STUDY ACTIVITIES FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INCLUDE OUTREACH SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3485(a)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(K) The following activities carried out at the offices of Members of Congress for such Members:

“(i) The distribution of information to members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their dependents about the benefits and services under laws administered by the Secretary and other appropriate governmental and nongovernmental programs.

“(ii) The preparation and processing of papers and other documents, including docu-

ments to assist in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1007. RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.

(a) ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “chapter 30,” each time it appears and inserting “chapter 30, 31,”.

(b) PAYMENT OF SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES.—Section 3680(a)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “or a subsistence allowance described in section 3108” before “,” during”; and

(2) by inserting “or allowance” after “such a stipend”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 7 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (134 Stat. 634; Public Law 116-140) is hereby repealed.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply as if included in the enactment of section 109 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48; 131 Stat. 978).

SEC. 1008. TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO CLARIFY ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 3317(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “the full cost of established charges (as specified in section 3313)” and inserting “the full cost of tuition and fees for a program of education”; and

(2) by striking “those established charges” and inserting “such tuition and fees”.

SEC. 1009. CLARIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO PURSUE AN APPROVED PROGRAM OF EDUCATION LEADING TO A DEGREE WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the heading, by inserting “FOR A PERIOD OF MORE THAN 30 DAYS” after “ACTIVE DUTY”; and

(2) in paragraph (1), by inserting “for a period of more than 30 days” after “active duty”; and

(3) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “for a period of more than 30 days” after “active duty”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2022.

SEC. 1010. VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT FOR PURPOSES OF RECEIPT OF POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(1) VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall require—

“(A) each educational institution to submit to the Secretary verification of each individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education at the educational institution and is receiving educational assistance under this chapter—

“(i) not later than such time as the Secretary determines reasonable after the date on which the individual is enrolled; and

“(ii) not later than such time as the Secretary determines reasonable after the last date on which a student is able to withdraw from the course or program of education without penalty; and

“(B) each individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education and is receiv-

ing educational assistance under this chapter to submit to the Secretary verification of such enrollment for each month during which the individual is so enrolled and receiving such educational assistance.

“(2) Verification under this subsection shall be in an electronic form prescribed by the Secretary.

“(3) If an individual fails to submit the verification required under paragraph (1)(B) for two consecutive months, the Secretary may not make a monthly stipend payment to the individual under this section until the individual submits such verification.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1011. CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE DEPENDENTS TO WHOM ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE TRANSFERRED UNDER THE POST 9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3319(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(c) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS.—

“(1) TRANSFER.—An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual’s entitlement to an eligible dependent or a combination of eligible dependents.

“(2) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘eligible dependent’ has the meaning given the term ‘dependent’ under subparagraphs (A), (I), and (D) of section 1072(2) of title 10.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to educational assistance payable under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, before, on, or after the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 1012. EXPANSION OF REASONS FOR WHICH A COURSE OF EDUCATION MAY BE DISAPPROVED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3672(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(i), by inserting or “or (D)” after “subparagraph (C)”; and

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

“(D) A program that is described in subparagraph (A)(i) of this paragraph and offered by an educational institution that is at risk of losing accreditation shall not be deemed to be approved for purposes of this chapter. For purposes of this subparagraph, an educational institution is at risk of losing accreditation if that educational institution has received from the relevant accrediting agency or association a notice described in section 3673(e)(2)(D) of this title.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1013. OVERSIGHT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WITH APPROVED PROGRAMS: RISK-BASED SURVEYS.

(a) RISK-BASED SURVEYS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 36, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3673 the following new section:

“§ 3673A. Risk-based surveys

“(a) DEVELOPMENT REQUIRED.—The Secretary, in partnership with State approving agencies, shall develop a searchable risk-based survey for oversight of educational institutions with courses and programs of education approved under this chapter.

“(b) SCOPE.—(1) The scope of the risk-based survey developed under subsection (a) shall be determined by the Secretary, in partnership with the State approving agency.

“(2) At a minimum the scope determined under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) Rapid increase in veteran enrollment.

“(B) Rapid increase in tuition and fees.

“(C) Complaints tracked and published with the mechanism required by section 3698(b)(2) from students pursuing programs of education with educational assistance furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, based on severity or volume of the complaints.

“(D) Compliance with section 3680A(d)(1) of this title.

“(E) Veteran completion rates.

“(F) Indicators of financial stability.

“(G) Review of the advertising and recruiting practices of the educational institution, including those by third-party contractors of the educational institution.

“(H) Matters for which the Federal Government or a State Government brings an action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an educational institution, including matters in cases in which the Federal Government or the State comes to a settled agreement on such matters outside of the court.

“(c) DATABASE.—The Secretary, in partnership with the State approving agencies under this chapter, shall establish a database or use an existing system, as the Secretary considers appropriate, to serve as a central repository for information required for or collected during site visits for the risk-based survey developed under subsection (a), so as to improve future oversight of educational institutions with programs of education approved under this chapter.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 36 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3673 the following new item:

“3673A. Risk-based surveys.”.

(b) USE OF STATE APPROVING AGENCIES FOR OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3673(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “may” and inserting “shall”; and

(B) by striking “compliance and risk-based surveys” and inserting “a risk-based survey developed under section 3673A of this title”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on October 1, 2022.

SEC. 1014. OVERSIGHT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT ACTION FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3673 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) NOTICE OF GOVERNMENT ACTION.—(1)(A) If the Secretary receives notice described in paragraph (2), or otherwise becomes aware of an action or event described in paragraph (3), with respect to an educational institution, the Secretary shall transmit such notice or provide notice of such action or event to the State approving agency for the State where the educational institution is located by not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives such notice or becomes aware of such action or event.

“(B) If a State approving agency receives notice as described in paragraph (2), or otherwise becomes aware of an action or event described in paragraph (3), with respect to an educational institution, other than from the Secretary pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the State approving agency shall immediately notify the Secretary.

“(C) Not later than 60 days after the date on which a State approving agency receives notice under subparagraph (A), receives notice as described in subparagraph (B), or becomes aware as described in such subpara-

graph, as the case may be, regarding an educational institution, such State approving agency shall—

“(i) complete a risk-based survey of such educational institution; and

“(ii) provide the Secretary with—

“(I) a complete report on the findings of the State approving agency with respect to the risk-based survey completed under clause (i) and any actions taken as a result of such findings; and

“(II) any supporting documentation and pertinent records.

“(2) Notice described in this paragraph is any of the following:

“(A) Notice from the Secretary of Education of an event under paragraph (3)(A).

“(B) Notice of an event under paragraph (3)(B).

“(C) Notice from a State of an action taken by that State under paragraph (3)(C).

“(D) Notice provided by an accrediting agency or association of an action described in paragraph (3)(D) taken by that agency or association.

“(E) Notice that the Secretary of Education has placed the educational institution on provisional certification status.

“(3) An action or event under this paragraph is any of the following:

“(A) The receipt by an educational institution of payments under the heightened cash monitoring level 2 payment method pursuant to section 487(c)(1)(B) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094).

“(B) Punitive action taken by the Attorney General, the Federal Trade Commission, or any other Federal department or agency for misconduct or misleading marketing practices that would violate the standards defined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(C) Punitive action taken by a State against an educational institution.

“(D) The loss, or risk of loss, by an educational institution of an accreditation from an accrediting agency or association, including notice of probation, suspension, an order to show cause relating to the educational institution's academic policies and practices or to its financial stability, or revocation of accreditation.

“(E) The placement of an educational institution on provisional certification status by the Secretary of Education.

“(4) If a State approving agency disapproves or suspends an educational institution, the State approving agency shall provide notice of such disapproval or suspension to the Secretary and to all other State approving agencies.

“(5) This subsection shall be carried out using amounts made available pursuant to section 3674(a)(4) of this title as long as such amounts remain available.

“(6) For each notice transmitted or provided to a State approving agency under paragraph (1) with respect to an educational institution, the Secretary shall ensure the careful review of—

“(A) to the extent possible, the action that gave rise to such notice; and

“(B) any other action against the educational institution by any Federal or State government entity or by the educational institution's accreditor.

“(7) In this subsection, the term ‘risk-based survey’ means the risk-based survey developed under section 3673A of this title.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1015. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3675 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) The educational institution is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) or the Secretary has waived the requirement under this paragraph with respect to an educational institution and submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives notice of such waiver.”.

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d)(1) The Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual report on any waivers issued pursuant to subsection (b)(4) or section 3672(b)(2)(A)(i) of this title.

“(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include, for the year covered by the report, the following:

“(A) The name of each educational institution for which a waiver was issued.

“(B) The justification for each such waiver.

“(C) The total number of waivers issued.”.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL OF STANDARD COLLEGE DEGREE PROGRAMS.—Clause (i) of section 3672(b)(2)(A) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(i) Except as provided in subparagraph (C) or (D), an accredited standard college degree program offered at a public or not-for-profit proprietary educational institution that—

“(I) is accredited by an agency or association recognized for that purpose by the Secretary of Education; and

“(II) is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), unless the Secretary has waived the requirement to participate in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1016. CLARIFICATION OF ACCREDITATION FOR LAW SCHOOLS FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraphs (14)(B) and (15)(B) of section 3676(c) of title 38, United States Code, are each amended—

(1) by striking “an accrediting agency” both places it appears and inserting “a specialized accrediting agency for programs of legal education”; and

(2) by inserting before the period the following: “, from which recipients of law degrees from such accredited programs are eligible to sit for a bar examination in any State”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1017. CLARIFICATION OF GROUNDS FOR DISAPPROVAL OF A COURSE FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “(including failure to comply with a risk-based survey under this chapter or secure an affirmation of approval by the appropriate State approving agency following the survey)” after “requirements of this chapter”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) In this section, the term ‘risk-based survey’ means a risk-based survey developed under section 3673A(a) of this title.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1018. REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 1017 of this title, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f)(1) Except as provided by paragraph (5), a State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, shall take an action described in paragraph (4)(A) if the State approving agency or the Secretary, when acting in the role of the State approving agency, determines that an educational institution does not perform any of the following:

“(A) Prior to the enrollment of a covered individual in a course of education at the educational institution, provide the individual with a form that contains information personalized to the individual that describes—

“(i) the estimated total cost of the course, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, and any other additional costs;

“(ii) an estimate of the cost for living expenses for students enrolled in the course;

“(iii) the amount of the costs under clauses (i) and (ii) that are covered by the educational assistance provided to the individual under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, as the case may be;

“(iv) the type and amount of Federal financial aid not administered by the Secretary and financial aid offered by the institution that the individual may qualify to receive;

“(v) an estimate of the amount of student loan debt the individual would have upon graduation;

“(vi) information regarding graduation rates;

“(vii) job-placement rates for graduates of the course, if available;

“(viii) information regarding the acceptance by the institution of transfer of credits, including military credits;

“(ix) any conditions or additional requirements, including training, experience, or examinations, required to obtain the license, certification, or approval for which the course of education is designed to provide preparation; and

“(x) other information to facilitate comparison by the individual of aid packages offered by different educational institutions.

“(B) Not later than 15 days after the date on which the institution (or the governing body of the institution) determines tuition rates and fees for an academic year that is different than the amount being charged by the institution, provide a covered individual enrolled in a course of education at the educational institution with the form under subparagraph (A) that contains updated information.

“(C) Maintain policies to—

“(i) inform each covered individual enrolled in a course of education at the educational institution of the availability of Federal financial aid not administered by the Secretary and financial aid offered by the institution; and

“(ii) alert such individual of the potential eligibility of the individual for such financial aid before packaging or arranging student loans or alternative financing programs for the individual.

“(D) Maintain policies to—

“(i) prohibit the automatic renewal of a covered individual in courses and programs of education; and

“(ii) ensure that each covered individual approves of the enrollment of the individual in a course.

“(E) Provide to a covered individual enrolled in a course of education at the edu-

cational institution with information regarding the requirements to graduate from such course, including information regarding when required classes will be offered and a timeline to graduate.

“(F) With respect to an accredited educational institution, obtain the approval of the accrediting agency for each new course or program of the institution before enrolling covered individuals in such courses or programs if the accrediting agency determines that such approval is appropriate under the substantive change requirements of the accrediting agency regarding the quality, objectives, scope, or control of the institution.

“(G) Maintain a policy that—

“(i) ensures that members of the Armed Forces, including the reserve components and the National Guard, who enroll in a course of education at the educational institution may be readmitted at such institution if such members are temporarily unavailable or have to suspend such enrollment by reason of serving in the Armed Forces; and

“(ii) otherwise accommodates such members during short absences by reason of such service.

“(H) Designate an employee of the educational institution to serve as a point of contact for covered individuals and the family of such individuals needing assistance with respect to academic counseling, financial counseling, disability counseling, and other information regarding completing a course of education at such institution, including by referring such individuals and family to the appropriate persons for such counseling and information.

“(2) Except as provided by paragraph (5), a State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, shall take an action described in paragraph (4)(A) if the State approving agency, the Secretary, or any Federal agency, determines that an educational institution does any of the following:

“(A) Carries out deceptive or persistent recruiting techniques, including on military installations, that may include—

“(i) misrepresentation (as defined in section 3696(e)(2)(B) of this title) or payment of incentive compensation;

“(ii) during any 1-month period making three or more unsolicited contacts to a covered individual, including contacts by phone, email, or in-person; or

“(iii) engaging in same-day recruitment and registration.

“(B) Pays inducements, including any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, transportation, lodging, meals, or other item having a monetary value of more than a de minimis amount, to any individual or entity, or its agents including third party lead generators or marketing firms other than salaries paid to employees or fees paid to contractors in conformity with all applicable laws for the purpose of securing enrollments of covered individuals or obtaining access to educational assistance under this title, with the exception of scholarships, grants, and tuition reductions provided by the educational institution.

“(3) A State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, shall take an action described in paragraph (4)(A) if the State approving agency or the Secretary, when acting in the role of the State approving agency, determines that an educational institution is the subject of a negative action made by the accrediting agency that accredits the institution, including any of the following:

“(A) Accreditor sanctions.

“(B) Accreditation probation.

“(C) The loss of accreditation or candidacy for accreditation.

“(4)(A) An action described in this subparagraph is any of the following:

“(i) Submitting to the Secretary a recommendation that the Secretary publish a warning on the internet website of the Department described in section 3698(c)(2) of this title, or such other similar internet website of the Department, that describes how an educational institution is failing to meet a requirement under paragraph (1), (2), or (3).

“(ii) Disapproving a course for purposes of this chapter.

“(B)(i) The Secretary shall establish guidelines to ensure that the actions described in subparagraph (A) are applied in a proportional and uniform manner by State approving agencies, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency.

“(ii) Each State approving agency and the Secretary, when acting in the role of the State approving agency, shall adhere to the guidelines established under clause (i).

“(C) The State approving agency, in consultation with the Secretary, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, may limit an action described in subparagraph (A)(ii) to individuals not enrolled at the educational institution before the period described in such subparagraph.

“(5)(A) The Secretary may waive the requirements of paragraph (1) or waive the requirements of paragraph (2) with respect to an educational institution for a 1-academic-year period beginning in August of the year in which the waiver is made. A single educational institution may not receive waivers under this paragraph for more than 2 consecutive academic years.

“(B) To be considered for a waiver under this paragraph, an educational institution shall submit to the Secretary an application prior to the first day of the academic year for which the waiver is sought.

“(6) Not later than October 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives the following reports:

“(A) A report, which shall be made publicly available, that includes the following:

“(i) A summary of each action described in paragraph (4)(A) made during the year covered by the report, including—

“(I) the name of the educational institution;

“(II) the type of action taken;

“(III) the rationale for the action, including how the educational institution was not in compliance with this subsection;

“(IV) the length of time that the educational institution was not in such compliance; and

“(V) whether the educational institution was also not in compliance with this subsection during any of the 2 years prior to the year covered by the report.

“(ii) A summary and justifications for the waivers made under paragraph (5) during the year covered by the report, including the total number of waivers each educational institution has received.

“(B) A report containing the recommendations of the Secretary with respect to any legislative actions the Secretary determines appropriate to ensure that this subsection is carried out in a manner that is consistent with the requirements that educational institutions must meet for purposes of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government.

“(7) In this subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means an individual who is pursuing a course of education at an educational institution under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10.”

(b) APPLICATION DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on June 15, 2021, and shall apply to an educational institution beginning on August 1, 2021, except that an educational institution may submit an application for a waiver under subsection (f)(5) of section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), beginning on June 15, 2021.

SEC. 1019. OVERPAYMENTS TO ELIGIBLE PERSONS OR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b) of section 3685 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(b) Any overpayment to a veteran or eligible person with respect to pursuit by the veteran or eligible person of a program of education at an educational institution shall constitute a liability of the educational institution to the United States if—

“(1) the Secretary finds that the overpayment has been made as the result of—

“(A) the willful or negligent failure of an educational institution to report, as required under this chapter or chapter 34 or 35 of this title, to the Department of Veterans Affairs excessive absences from a course, or discontinuance or interruption of a course by the veteran or eligible person; or

“(B) the willful or negligent false certification by an educational institution; or

“(2) the benefit payment sent to an educational institution on behalf of an eligible veteran or person is made pursuant to—

“(A) section 3313(h) of this title;

“(B) section 3317 of this title; or

“(C) section 3680(d) of this title; or

“(D) section 3320(d) of this title.”.

(b) CLARIFYING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (a) of such section is further amended by inserting “relating to educational assistance under a law administered by the Secretary” after “made to a veteran or eligible person”.

SEC. 1020. IMPROVEMENTS TO LIMITATION ON CERTAIN ADVERTISING, SALES, AND ENROLLMENT PRACTICES.

(a) PROHIBITION ON SUBSTANTIAL MISREPRESENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3696 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 3696. Prohibition on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices

“(a) PROHIBITION ON ENGAGING IN SUBSTANTIAL MISREPRESENTATION.—An educational institution with a course or program of education approved under this chapter, and an entity that owns such an educational institution, shall not engage in substantial misrepresentation described in subsection (b).

“(b) SUBSTANTIAL MISREPRESENTATION DESCRIBED.—(1) Substantial misrepresentation described in this paragraph is substantial misrepresentation by an educational institution, a representative of the institution, or any person with whom the institution has an agreement to provide educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting or admissions services, concerning any of the following:

“(A) The nature of the educational program of the institution, including misrepresentation regarding—

“(i) the particular type, specific source, or nature and extent, of the accreditation of the institution or a course of education at the institution;

“(ii) whether a student may transfer course credits to another institution;

“(iii) conditions under which the institution will accept transfer credits earned at another institution;

“(iv) whether successful completion of a course of instruction qualifies a student—

“(I) for acceptance to a labor union or similar organization; or

“(II) to receive, to apply to take, or to take an examination required to receive a

local, State, or Federal license, or a non-governmental certification required as a precondition for employment, or to perform certain functions in the States in which the educational program is offered, or to meet additional conditions that the institution knows or reasonably should know are generally needed to secure employment in a recognized occupation for which the program is represented to prepare students;

“(v) the requirements for successfully completing the course of study or program and the circumstances that would constitute grounds for terminating the student's enrollment;

“(vi) whether the courses of education at the institution are recommended or have been the subject of unsolicited testimonials or endorsements by—

“(I) vocational counselors, high schools, colleges, educational organizations, employment agencies, members of a particular industry, students, former students, or others; or

“(II) officials of a local or State government or the Federal Government;

“(vii) the size, location, facilities, or equipment of the institution;

“(viii) the availability, frequency, and appropriateness of the courses of education and programs to the employment objectives that the institution states the courses and programs are designed to meet;

“(ix) the nature, age, and availability of the training devices or equipment of the institution and the appropriateness to the employment objectives that the institution states the courses and programs are designed to meet;

“(x) the number, availability, and qualifications, including the training and experience, of the faculty and other personnel of the institution;

“(xi) the availability of part-time employment or other forms of financial assistance;

“(xii) the nature and availability of any tutorial or specialized instruction, guidance and counseling, or other supplementary assistance the institution will provide students before, during, or after the completion of a course of education;

“(xiii) the nature or extent of any prerequisites established for enrollment in any course of education;

“(xiv) the subject matter, content of the course of education, or any other fact related to the degree, diploma, certificate of completion, or any similar document that the student is to be, or is, awarded upon completion of the course of education; and

“(xv) whether the degree that the institution will confer upon completion of the course of education has been authorized by the appropriate State educational agency, including with respect to cases where the institution fails to disclose facts regarding the lack of such authorization in any advertising or promotional materials that reference such degree.

“(B) The financial charges of the institution, including misrepresentation regarding—

“(i) offers of scholarships to pay all or part of a course charge;

“(ii) whether a particular charge is the customary charge at the institution for a course;

“(iii) the cost of the program and the refund policy of the institution if the student does not complete the program;

“(iv) the availability or nature of any financial assistance offered to students, including a student's responsibility to repay any loans, regardless of whether the student is successful in completing the program and obtaining employment; and

“(v) the student's right to reject any particular type of financial aid or other assist-

ance, or whether the student must apply for a particular type of financial aid, such as financing offered by the institution.

“(C) The employability of the graduates of the institution, including misrepresentation regarding—

“(i) the relationship of the institution with any organization, employment agency, or other agency providing authorized training leading directly to employment;

“(ii) the plans of the institution to maintain a placement service for graduates or otherwise assist graduates to obtain employment;

“(iii) the knowledge of the institution about the current or likely future conditions, compensation, or employment opportunities in the industry or occupation for which the students are being prepared;

“(iv) job market statistics maintained by the Federal Government in relation to the potential placement of the graduates of the institution; and

“(v) other requirements that are generally needed to be employed in the fields for which the training is provided, such as requirements related to commercial driving licenses or permits to carry firearms, and failing to disclose factors that would prevent an applicant from qualifying for such requirements, such as prior criminal records or preexisting medical conditions.

“(2) In this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘misleading statement’ includes any communication, action, omission, or intimation made in writing, visually, orally, or through other means, that has the likelihood or tendency to mislead the intended recipient of the communication under the circumstances in which the communication is made. Such term includes the use of student endorsements or testimonials for an educational institution that a student gives to the institution either under duress or because the institution required the student to make such an endorsement or testimonial to participate in a program of education.

“(B) The term ‘misrepresentation’ means any false, erroneous, or misleading statement, action, omission, or intimation made directly or indirectly to a student, a prospective student, the public, an accrediting agency, a State agency, or to the Secretary by an eligible institution, one of its representatives, or any person with whom the institution has an agreement to provide educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting or admissions services.

“(C) The term ‘substantial misrepresentation’ means misrepresentation in which the person to whom it was made could reasonably be expected to rely, or has reasonably relied, to that person's detriment.

“(c) LIMITATION ON CERTAIN COMMISSIONS, BONUSES, AND OTHER INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—An educational institution with a course or program of education approved under this chapter, and an entity that owns such an educational institution, shall not provide any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based directly or indirectly on success in securing enrollments or financial aid to any persons or entities engaged in any student recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions regarding the award of student financial assistance.

“(d) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN RECORDS.—(1) To ensure compliance with this section, any educational institution offering courses approved for the enrollment of eligible persons or veterans shall maintain a complete record of all advertising, sales, or enrollment materials (and copies thereof) utilized by or on behalf of the institution during the preceding two-year period. Such record shall be available for inspection by the State approving agency or the Secretary.

“(2) Such materials shall include but are not limited to any direct mail pieces, brochures, printed literature used by sales persons, films, video tapes, and audio tapes disseminated through broadcast media, material disseminated through print, digital, or electronic media, tear sheets, leaflets, handbills, fliers, and any sales or recruitment manuals used to instruct sales personnel, agents, or representatives of such institution.

“(e) AGREEMENT WITH FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—(1) The Secretary shall, pursuant to section 3694 of this title, enter into an agreement with the Federal Trade Commission to utilize, where appropriate, its services and facilities, consistent with its available resources, in carrying out investigations and making the Under Secretary of Benefit's preliminary findings under subsection (g)(1).

“(2) Such agreement shall provide that cases arising under subsection (a) of this section or any similar matters with respect to any of the requirements of this chapter or chapters 34 and 35 of this title may be referred to the Federal Trade Commission which in its discretion will conduct an investigation and make preliminary findings.

“(3) The findings and results of any investigation under paragraph (2) shall be referred to the Under Secretary for Benefits, who shall take appropriate action under subsection (g) in such cases not later than 60 days after the date of such referral.

“(f) FINAL JUDGMENTS FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Whenever the Secretary becomes aware of a final judgment by a Federal agency against an educational institution or owner of an educational institution pertaining to substantial misrepresentation described in subsection (b) or of other credible evidence relating to a violation of subsection (a), the Secretary, in partnership with the applicable State approving agency, shall—

“(1) within 30 days, alert the educational institution or owner that it is at risk of losing approval under this chapter of its courses or programs of education;

“(2) provide the educational institution or owner 60 days to provide any information it wishes to the Secretary;

“(3) require the educational institution or owner to submit to the Secretary a report prepared by an approved third-party auditor of the advertising and enrollment practices of the educational institution or owner; and

“(4) refer the matter to the Under Secretary of Benefits, who may thereafter make a preliminary finding under subsection (g).

“(g) PRELIMINARY FINDINGS, FINAL DETERMINATIONS, AND PROCESSES.—(1) The Under Secretary for Benefits shall make preliminary findings and final determinations on violations of subsections (a), (c), and (d).

“(2)(A) The Under Secretary shall establish a process for making preliminary findings and final determinations under paragraph (1).

“(B) The process established under subparagraph (A) shall—

“(i) clearly define what triggers an oversight visit by the Under Secretary for purposes of enforcing subsections (a), (c), and (d);

“(ii) set forth factors an educational institution, or the owner of the educational institution, must meet in order to retain approval status under this section, including with respect to the factors set forth under subsection (h)(2);

“(iii) include a process for the provision of notice to an educational institution, or the owner of the educational institution, that the Under Secretary has made a preliminary finding under paragraph (1) that the educational institution or owner has violated sub-

section (a), (c), or (d), which the Under Secretary shall provide to the educational institution or owner within such period after making the preliminary finding as the Under Secretary shall establish for purposes of this clause, except that, in every case, such period shall end before the date on which the Under Secretary makes a final determination under such paragraph; and

“(iv) include—

“(I) a process for receipt of findings from a third-party pertinent to this section; and

“(II) a process for an educational institution or an owner to provide such information as the educational institution or owner determines appropriate to the Secretary, including information about corrective actions the educational institution or owner may have taken in response to preliminary findings under paragraph (1).

“(C) The process established under subparagraph (A) shall not prohibit a State approving agency from—

“(i) independently investigating a potential violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d); or

“(ii) taking action if the State approving agency finds a violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d).

“(3) Upon a preliminary finding under this subsection of a violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d) by an educational institution, or the owner of an educational institution, the Under Secretary shall require the educational institution or owner to submit to the Under Secretary a report prepared by an approved third-party auditor of the advertising and enrollment practices of the educational institution or owner.

“(4)(A) Before making a final determination under this subsection regarding a violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d) by an educational institution or owner of an educational institution, the Under Secretary shall—

“(i) review the practices of the educational institution or owner that pertain to activities and practices covered by subsections (a), (c), and (d);

“(ii) consider the results of a risk-based survey conducted by a State approving agency, if available; and

“(iii) review—

“(I) the findings and information received pursuant to the processes established under paragraph (2)(B)(iii);

“(II) in a case in which a report was submitted under subsection (f)(3), such report;

“(III) the report submitted under paragraph (3)(B) of this subsection;

“(IV) any findings and results submitted under subsection (e)(3);

“(V) the marketing and outreach material of the educational institution and the contractors of the educational institution.

“(B) The Under Secretary may not make a final determination under this subsection solely based on preliminary findings.

“(5) The Under Secretary may not delegate authority to make a final determination under this subsection, including to any employee of the Department or to the Federal Trade Commission.

“(h) ENFORCEMENT.—(1)(A) Upon a final determination by the Under Secretary for Benefits under subsection (g) that an educational institution or the owner of an educational institution violated subsection (a), (c), or (d), the Under Secretary shall, but subject to subparagraphs (B), (C), and (D) of this paragraph, take one of the following actions independent of any actions taken under section 3690 of this title:

“(i) Publish a caution flag on the GI Bill Comparison Tool, or successor tool, about that educational institution and alert its currently enrolled eligible veterans and eligible persons.

“(ii) Suspend the approval of the courses and programs of education offered by the

educational institution by disapproving new enrollments of eligible veterans and eligible persons in each course or program of education offered by that educational institution.

“(iii) Revoke the approval of the courses and programs of education offered by the educational institution by disapproving all enrollments of eligible veterans and eligible persons in each course or program of education offered by that educational institution.

“(B) In deciding upon a course of action under subparagraph (A), for the first violation of this section, the Secretary shall consider the factors set forth in paragraph (2).

“(C) Subject to subsection (i), any repeat violation and final finding within five years of the first violation of this section shall result in—

“(i) a suspension of approval of new enrollments as described in subparagraph (A)(ii) of this paragraph until reinstatement under subsection (j); or

“(ii) a revocation of approval under this chapter as described in subparagraph (A)(iii) of this paragraph until reinstatement under subsection (j).

“(D) Subject to subsection (i), any third violation within three years of the second violation of this section shall result in revocation of approval under this chapter as described in subparagraph (A)(iii) of this paragraph until reinstatement under subsection (j).

“(E) Any action taken under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph regarding a violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d) by an educational institution or the owner of an educational institution shall be taken on or before the date that is 180 days after the date on which the Under Secretary provided notice to the educational institution or owner regarding the violation in accordance with the process established under subsection (g)(2)(B)(iii).

“(2) The factors set forth in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) That the Secretary's action brings sufficient deterrence for future fraud against students and the programs of education carried out under this title. Fraud against veterans must be met with a repercussion strong enough to send a deterrent message to this and other educational institutions and owners.

“(B) That the educational institution has secured an approved third-party auditor to verify the educational institution's, or owner's, advertising and enrollment practices for at least three years going forward.

“(C) That the educational institution or owner has repudiated the deceptive practices and has communicated to all employees that deceptive practices will not be tolerated, and has instituted strong governance procedures to prevent recurrence.

“(D) That the educational institution has taken steps to remove any pressure on its enrollment recruiters, including by removing enrollment quotas and incentives for enrollment.

“(E) That the State approving agency or the Secretary acting in the role of the State approving agency, has completed a risk-based survey and determined the educational institution is worthy of serving eligible veterans and eligible persons.

“(3) Enforcement action under this section shall not preclude enforcement action under section 3690 of this title.

“(4) No action may be carried out under this subsection with respect to a final determination by the Under Secretary under subsection (g) while such final determination is pending review under subsection (i).

“(i) APPEALS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish a process by which an educational institution or the owner of an educational institution that is the subject of more than

one final determination by the Under Secretary under subsection (g)(1) that the educational institution or owner violated subsection (a), may request a review of the most recent final determination.

“(2)(A) The Secretary shall—

“(i) review each final determination for which a review is requested under paragraph (1); and

“(ii) pursuant to such review, issue a final decision sustaining, modifying, or overturning the final determination.

“(B) The Secretary may not delegate any decision under subparagraph (A).

“(C)(i) Review under subparagraph (A)(i) of this paragraph shall be the exclusive avenue for review of a final determination under subsection (g)(1).

“(ii) A decision issued pursuant to a review under subparagraph (A)(i) may not be appealed to the Secretary for review under section 7104(a) of this title.

“(3)(A) Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary issues a final decision under paragraph (2)(A)(ii), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on such final decision.

“(B) A report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

“(i) An outline of the decisionmaking process of the Secretary that led to the final decision described in subparagraph (A).

“(ii) Any relevant material used to make the final decision under paragraph (2)(A)(ii), including risk-based surveys and documentation from the educational institution or the owners of the educational institution.

“(iii) Materials that were submitted to the Secretary after the date of the final determination under subsection (g) that was the subject of the final decision under paragraph (2)(A)(ii) of this subsection and before the date on which the Secretary issued such final decision.

“(j) REINSTATEMENT OF APPROVAL.—(1) If an educational institution or the owner of an educational institution has had the approval of the courses or programs of education of the educational institution suspended as described in clause (ii) of subsection (h)(1)(A) or revoked as described in clause (iii) of such subsection for a violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d) pursuant to subparagraph (C) or (D) of subsection (h)(1), the educational institution or owner may submit to the applicable State approving agency or the Secretary when acting as a State approving agency an application for reinstatement of approval under this subsection.

“(2) Approval under this chapter may not be reinstated under this subsection until—

“(A) the educational institution or owner submits to the applicable State approving agency or the Secretary when acting as a State approving agency an application for reinstatement of approval under paragraph (1);

“(B) the date that is 540 days after the date of the most recent suspension or revocation described in paragraph (1) of the educational institution or owner;

“(C) the educational institution submits a report by an approved third-party auditor on the advertising and enrollment practices of the educational institution, including those of its third-party contractors;

“(D) procedures are in place to prevent any future violation of subsection (a), (c), or (d);

“(E) that the educational institution has met all factors set forth in subsection (h)(2); and

“(F) the Secretary agrees to such reinstatement.

“(k) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING STATE APPROVING AGENCIES AND RISK-BASED SURVEYS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a State approving agency from conducting any risk-based sur-

vey the State approving agency considers appropriate at any educational institution that it considers appropriate for oversight purposes.

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘approved third-party auditor’ means an independent third-party auditor that is approved by the Secretary for purposes of third-party audits under this section.

“(2) The term ‘risk-based survey’ means the risk-based survey developed under section 3673A of this title.”

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 36 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 3696 and inserting the following new item:

“3696. Prohibition on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices.”

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR NONACCREDITED COURSES.—Paragraph (10) of section 3676(c) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(10) The institution, and any entity that owns the institution, does not engage in substantial misrepresentation described in section 3696(e) of this title. The institution shall not be deemed to have met this requirement until the State approving agency—

“(A) has ascertained that no Federal department or agency has taken a punitive action, not including a settlement agreement, against the school for misleading or deceptive practices;

“(B) has, if such an order has been issued, given due weight to that fact; and

“(C) has reviewed the complete record of advertising, sales, or enrollment materials (and copies thereof) used by or on behalf of the institution during the preceding 12-month period.”

(c) APPLICATION DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1021. CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT TRANSFER CREDITS FROM CERTAIN CLOSED OR DISAPPROVED PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(c) PERIOD NOT CHARGED.—(1) The period for which, by reason of this subsection, educational assistance is not charged against entitlement or counted toward the applicable aggregate period under section 3695 of this title shall not exceed the aggregate of—

“(A) the portion of the period of enrollment in the course from which the individual did not receive credit or with respect to which the individual lost training time, as determined under subsection (b)(2); and

“(B) the period by which a monthly stipend is extended under section 3680(a)(2)(B) of this title.

“(2)(A) An individual described in subparagraph (B) who transfers fewer than 12 credits from a program of education that is closed or disapproved as described in subsection (b)(1) shall be deemed to be an individual who did not receive such credits, as described in subsection (b)(2), except that the period for which such individual's entitlement is not charged shall be the entire period of the individual's enrollment in the program of education. In carrying out this subparagraph, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall establish procedures to determine whether the individual transferred credits to a comparable course or program of education.

“(B) An individual described in this subparagraph is an individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education closed or discontinued as described in subsection (b)(1)

during the period beginning on the date that is 120 days before the date of such closure or discontinuance and ending on the date of such closure or discontinuance, as the case may be.

“(C) This paragraph shall apply with respect to a course or program of education closed or discontinued before September 30, 2023.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021.

SEC. 1022. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TREATMENT OF FOR-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS CONVERTED TO NONPROFIT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3699B. Treatment of certain for-profit educational institutions

“(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any for-profit educational institution that is converted to a nonprofit educational institution, the State approving agency or the Secretary when acting as a State approving agency shall conduct annual risk-based surveys of the institution during the three-year period beginning on the date on which the educational institution is so converted.

“(b) RISK-BASED SURVEY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘risk-based survey’ means the risk-based survey developed under section 3673A of this title.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699A the following new item:

“3699B. Treatment of certain for-profit educational institutions.”

(c) APPLICABILITY.—Section 3699B of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to the conversion of a for-profit educational institution to a nonprofit educational institution that occurs on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 1023. AUTHORITY OF STATE APPROVING AGENCIES TO CONDUCT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.

Section 3673 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 1014 of this title, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.—(1) A State approving agency may conduct outreach activities if—

“(A) the State approving agency has properly conducted its enforcement and approval of courses and programs of education under this chapter; and

“(B) funds are still available to do so.

“(2) For purposes of paragraph (1)(A), a State approving agency shall be considered to have properly conducted its enforcement and approval of courses and programs of education under this chapter if the State approving agency has—

“(A) met fulfilled its requirements pursuant to the applicable cooperative agreements between the State approving agency and the Department relating to the oversight and approval of courses and programs of education under this chapter; and

“(B) completed a risk-based survey of any course or program of education determined to be of questionable quality or at risk by any Federal or State agency or any accrediting agency.

“(3) Outreach activities conducted under paragraph (1) shall be carried out using amounts derived from amounts not specifically appropriated to carry out this subsection.”

SEC. 1024. LIMITATION ON COLOCATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF STATE APPROVING AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3671 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) A State department or agency may not be recognized as a State approving agency designated under this section if such State department or agency is administered at or colocated with a university or university system whose courses or programs of education would be subject to approval under this chapter by the State approving agency in that State.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 1025. ELIMINATION OF PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR TRAINING AND REHABILITATION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3103 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “or (e)” and inserting “(e), or (g)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a veteran who was discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service on or after January 1, 2013.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 6(c) of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (134 Stat. 633; Public Law 116-140) is amended by striking paragraph (1).

Subtitle B—Pandemic Assistance

SEC. 1101. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) COVERED PROGRAM OF EDUCATION.—The term “covered program of education” means a program of education (as defined in section 3002 of title 38, United States Code) approved by a State approving agency, or the Secretary of Veterans Affairs when acting in the role of a State approving agency.

(2) COVID-19 EMERGENCY.—The term “COVID-19 emergency” means the public health emergency declared pursuant to section 319 of the Public Health Service Act on January 31, 2020, entitled “Determination that a Public Health Emergency Exists Nationwide as the Result of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus”.

(3) EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—The term “educational institution” has the meaning given that term in section 3452(c) of title 38, United States Code, and includes an institution of higher learning (as defined in such section).

(4) STATE APPROVING AGENCY.—The term “State approving agency” has the meaning given that term in section 3671 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT.—The term “training establishment” has the meaning given that term in section 3452(e) of title 38, United States Code.

(6) TRAINING.—The term “training” includes on-job training and apprenticeship programs and vocational rehabilitation programs.

SEC. 1102. CONTINUATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS DURING COVID-19 EMERGENCY.

(a) AUTHORITY.—If the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines under subsection (c) that an individual is negatively affected by the COVID-19 emergency, the Secretary may provide educational assistance to that individual under the laws administered by the Secretary as if such negative effects did not occur. The authority under this section is in addition to the authority provided under section 1 of Public Law 116-128 (38 U.S.C. 3001

note prec.), but in no case may the Secretary provide more than a total of four weeks of additional educational assistance by reason of section 4 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140; 38 U.S.C. 3680 note) and this section.

(b) HOUSING AND ALLOWANCES.—In providing educational assistance to an individual pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary may—

(1) continue to pay a monthly housing stipend under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, during a month the individual would have been enrolled in a program of education or training but for the COVID-19 emergency at the same rate such stipend would have been payable if the individual had not been negatively affected by the COVID-19 emergency, except that the total number of weeks for which stipends may continue to be so payable may not exceed four weeks; and

(2) continue to pay payments or subsistence allowances under chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, and 35 of such title and chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code, during a month for a period of time that the individual would have been enrolled in a program of education or training but for the COVID-19 emergency, except that the total number of weeks for which payments or allowances may continue to be so payable may not exceed four weeks.

(c) DETERMINATION OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS.—The Secretary shall determine that an individual was negatively affected by the COVID-19 emergency if—

(1) the individual is enrolled in a covered program of education of an educational institution or enrolled in training at a training establishment and is pursuing such program or training using educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary;

(2) the educational institution or training establishment certifies to the Secretary that such program or training is truncated, delayed, relocated, canceled, partially canceled, converted from being on-site to being offered by distance learning, or otherwise modified or made unavailable by reason of the COVID-19 emergency; and

(3) the Secretary determines that the modification to such program or training specified under paragraph (2) would reduce the amount of educational assistance (including with respect to monthly housing stipends, payments, or subsistence allowances) that would be payable to the individual but for the COVID-19 emergency.

(d) EFFECT ON ENTITLEMENT PERIOD.—If the Secretary determines that an individual who received assistance under this section did not make progress toward the completion of the program of education in which the individual is enrolled during the period for which the individual received such assistance, any assistance provided pursuant to this section shall not be counted for purposes of determining the total amount of an individual's entitlement to educational assistance, housing stipends, or payments or subsistence allowances under chapters 30, 31, 32, and 35 of such title and chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code.

(e) APPLICABILITY PERIOD.—This section shall apply during the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on December 31, 2021.

SEC. 1103. EFFECTS OF CLOSURE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AND MODIFICATION OF COURSES BY REASON OF COVID-19 EMERGENCY.

(a) CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—Any payment of educational assistance described in subsection (b) shall not—

(1) be charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the individual concerned; or

(2) be counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of title 38, United States Code, limits the receipt of educational assistance by such individual.

(b) EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE DESCRIBED.—Subject to subsection (d), the payment of educational assistance described in this subsection is the payment of such assistance to an individual for pursuit of a course or program of education at an educational institution under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code, if the Secretary determines that the individual—

(1) was unable to complete such course or program as a result of—

(A) the closure of the educational institution, or the full or partial cancellation of a course or program of education, by reason of the COVID-19 emergency; or

(B) the disapproval of the course or a course that is a necessary part of that program under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, because the course was modified by reason of such emergency; and

(2) did not receive credit or lost training time, toward completion of the program of education being so pursued.

(c) HOUSING ASSISTANCE.—In this section, educational assistance includes, as applicable—

(1) monthly housing stipends payable under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, for any month the individual would have been enrolled in a course or program of education; and

(2) payments or subsistence allowances under chapters 30, 31, 32, and 35 of such title and chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code, during a month the individual would have been enrolled in a course or program of education.

(d) PERIOD NOT CHARGED.—The period for which, by reason of this subsection, educational assistance is not charged against entitlement or counted toward the applicable aggregate period under section 3695 of title 38, United States Code, shall not exceed the aggregate of—

(1) the portion of the period of enrollment in the course from which the individual did not receive credit or with respect to which the individual lost training time, as determined under subsection (b)(2); and

(2) the period by which a monthly stipend is extended under section 3680(a)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code.

(e) CONTINUING PURSUIT OF DISAPPROVED COURSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may treat a course of education that is disapproved under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, as being approved under such chapter with respect to an individual described in paragraph (2) if the Secretary determines, on a programmatic basis, that—

(A) such disapproval is the result of an action described in subsection (b)(1)(B); and

(B) continuing pursuing such course is in the best interest of the individual.

(2) INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.—An individual described in this paragraph is an individual who is pursuing a course of education at an educational institution under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code, as of the date on which the course is disapproved as described in subsection (b)(1)(B).

(f) STATUS AS FULL-TIME STUDENT FOR PURPOSES OF HOUSING STIPEND CALCULATION.—In the case of an individual who, as of the first day of the COVID-19 emergency was enrolled on a full-time basis in a program of education and was receiving educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, or subsistence allowance under chapter 31 of such title, and for whom the Secretary makes a determination under subsection (b), the individual shall be treated as

an individual enrolled in a program of education on a full-time basis for the purpose of calculating monthly housing stipends payable under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, or subsistence allowance payable under chapter 31 of such title, for any month the individual is enrolled in the program of education on a part-time basis to complete any course of education that was partially or fully canceled by reason of the COVID-19 emergency.

(g) **NOTICE OF CLOSURES.**—Not later than 5 business days after the date on which the Secretary receives notice that an educational institution will close or is closed by reason of the COVID-19 emergency, the Secretary shall provide to each individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education at such educational institution using entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code, notice of—

(1) such closure and the date of such closure; and

(2) the effect of such closure on the individual's entitlement to educational assistance pursuant to this section.

(h) **APPLICABILITY.**—This section shall apply with respect to the closure of an educational institution, or the cancellation or modification of a course or program of education, that occurs during the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on December 21, 2021.

SEC. 1104. PAYMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN CASES OF WITHDRAWAL.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In the case of any individual who withdraws from a program of education or training, other than a program by correspondence, in an educational institution under chapter 31, 34, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, for a covered reason during the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on December 21, 2021, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall find mitigating circumstances for purposes of section 3680(a)(1)(C)(ii) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) **COVERED REASON.**—In this section, the term “covered reason” means any reason related to the COVID-19 emergency, including—

(1) illness, quarantine, or social distancing requirements;

(2) issues associated with COVID-19 testing accessibility;

(3) access or availability of childcare;

(4) providing care for a family member or cohabitants;

(5) change of location or residence due to COVID-19 or associated school closures;

(6) employment changes or financial hardship; and

(7) issues associated with changes in format or medium of instruction.

SEC. 1105. MODIFICATION OF TIME LIMITATIONS ON USE OF ENTITLEMENT.

(a) **MONTGOMERY GI BILL.**—The subsection (i) temporarily added to section 3031 of title 38, United States Code, by subsection (a) of section 6 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “the period the individual is so prevented from pursuing such program” and inserting “the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on December 21, 2021”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “the first day after the individual is able to resume pursuit of a program of education with educational assistance under this chapter” and inserting “December 22, 2021”.

(b) **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND TRAINING.**—The subsection (g) temporarily added to section 3103 of title 38, United States

Code, by subsection (c) of such section 6 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “the period the individual is so prevented from participating such program” and inserting “the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on December 21, 2021”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “the first day after the individual is able to resume participation in such program” and inserting “December 22, 2021”.

SEC. 1106. APPRENTICESHIP OR ON-JOB TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—During the period described in subsection (b), subsection (e) of section 3687 of title 38, United States Code, shall be applied by substituting the following for paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), for any month in which an individual fails to complete 120 hours of training, the entitlement otherwise chargeable under paragraph (1) shall be reduced in the same proportion as the monthly training assistance allowance payable is reduced under subsection (b)(3).

“(B) In the case of an individual who is unemployed during any month, the 120-hour requirement under subparagraph (A) for that month shall be reduced proportionately to reflect the individual's period of unemployment, except that the amount of monthly training assistance otherwise payable to the individual under subsection (b)(3) shall not be reduced.

“(C) Any period during which an individual is unemployed shall not—

“(i) be charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the individual; or

“(ii) be counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title limits the receipt of educational assistance by such individual.

“(D) Any amount by which the entitlement of an individual is reduced under subparagraph (A) shall not—

“(i) be charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the individual; or

“(ii) be counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title limits the receipt of educational assistance by such individual.

“(E) In the case of an individual who fails to complete 120 hours of training during a month, but who completed more than 120 hours of training during the preceding month, the individual may apply the number of hours in excess of 120 that the individual completed for that month to the month for which the individual failed to complete 120 hours. If the addition of such excess hours results in a total of 120 hours or more, the individual shall be treated as an individual who has completed 120 hours of training for that month. Any excess hours applied to a different month under this subparagraph may only be applied to one such month.

“(F) This paragraph applies to amounts described in section 3313(g)(3)(B)(iv) and section 3032(c)(2) of this title and section 16131(d)(2) of title 10.

“(G) In this paragraph:

“(i) The term ‘unemployed’ includes being furloughed or being scheduled to work zero hours.

“(ii) The term ‘fails to complete 120 hours of training’ means, with respect to an individual, that during any month, the individual completes at least one hour, but fewer than 120 hours, of training, including in a case in which the individual is unemployed for part of, but not the whole, month.”.

(b) **APPLICABILITY PERIOD.**—The period described in this section is the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on December 21, 2021.

SEC. 1107. INCLUSION OF TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS IN CERTAIN PROVISIONS RELATED TO COVID-19 EMERGENCY.

(a) **CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS.**—Section 1 of Public Law 116-128 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “or a training establishment” after “an educational institution”; and

(2) in subsection (c), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) **TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT.**—The term ‘training establishment’ has the meaning given such term in section 3452(e) of title 38, United States Code.”.

(b) **PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES.**—Section 4(a)(1) of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140; 38 U.S.C. 3680 note) is amended by inserting “or a training establishment” after “educational institution”.

(c) **PROHIBITION OF CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT.**—The subparagraph (C) temporarily added to section 3699(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, by section 5 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140; 38 U.S.C. 3699 note) is amended by inserting “or training establishment” after “educational institution”.

(d) **EXTENSION OF TIME LIMITATIONS.**—

(1) **MGIB.**—The subsection (i) temporarily added to section 3031 of title 38, United States Code, by subsection (a) of section 6 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140), as amended by section 1105 of this title, is further amended by inserting “or training establishment” after “educational institution”.

(2) **TRANSFER PERIOD.**—The subparagraph (C) temporarily added to section 3319(h)(5) of such title by section 6 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140) is amended by inserting “or training establishment” after “educational institution”.

SEC. 1108. TREATMENT OF PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES UNDER STUDENT VETERAN CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT.

Section 4 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “may not exceed four weeks.” and inserting “may not exceed the shorter of the following:”; and

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

“(1) The period of time that the eligible veteran or eligible person would have been enrolled in a program of education or training but for the emergency situation.

“(2) Four weeks.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) **ENTITLEMENT NOT CHARGED.**—Any payment of allowances under this section shall not—

“(1) be charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the eligible veteran or eligible person concerned; or

“(2) be counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title 38, United States Code, limits the receipt of educational assistance by such eligible veteran or eligible person.”.

TITLE II—BENEFITS

Subtitle A—Benefits Generally

SEC. 2001. REVISION OF DEFINITION OF VIETNAM ERA FOR PURPOSES OF THE LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 101(29)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “February 28, 1961” and inserting “November 1, 1955”.

SEC. 2002. MATTERS RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS.

(a) **TEMPORARY CLARIFICATION OF LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS TO PERFORM MEDICAL**

DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS UNDER PILOT PROGRAM FOR USE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS FOR DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended to read as follows:

“(c) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of health care professionals, a health care professional described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

“(2) HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL DESCRIBED.—A health care professional described in this paragraph is a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, audiologist, or psychologist, who—

“(A) has a current unrestricted license to practice the health care profession of the physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, audiologist, or psychologist, as the case may be;

“(B) is not barred from practicing such health care profession in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States; and

“(C) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a).”.

(2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the amendment made by paragraph (1) is to expand the license portability for physicians assistants, nurse practitioners, audiologists, and psychologists to supplement the capacity of employees of the Department to provide medical examinations described in subsection (b).

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall not be construed to affect the license portability for physicians in effect under section 504(c) of such Act as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(4) SUNSET.—On the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, subsection (c) of such section shall read as it read on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) TEMPORARY HALT ON ELIMINATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINER POSITIONS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall temporarily suspend the efforts of the Secretary in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act to eliminate medical examiner positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs until the number of individuals awaiting a medical examination with respect to medical disability of the individuals for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary that are carried out through the Under Secretary for Benefits is equal to or less than the number of such individuals who were awaiting such a medical examination with respect to such purposes on March 1, 2020.

(c) REPORT ON PROVISION OF MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the provision of medical examinations described in subsection (b) by the Department.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall cover the following:

(A) How the Secretary will increase the capacity, efficiency, and timeliness of physician assistants, nurse practitioners, audiologists,

and psychologists of the Veterans Health Administration with respect to completing medical examinations described in subsection (b).

(B) The total number of full-time equivalent employees among all physician assistants, nurse practitioners, audiologists, and psychologists needed for the increases described in subparagraph (A).

(C) An assessment regarding the importance of retaining a critical knowledge base within the Department for performing medical examinations for veterans filing claims for compensation under chapters 11 and 13 of title 38, United States Code, including with respect to military sexual trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and toxic exposure.

(3) COLLABORATION.—The Secretary shall collaborate with the veterans community and stakeholders in the preparation of the report required by paragraph (1).

(4) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES REVIEW.—

(1) REVIEW REQUIRED.—Not later than 360 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of the implementation of the pilot program authorized under subsection (a) of section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The review conducted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the use of subsection (c) of section 504 of such Act, as amended by subsection (a)(1) of this section.

(B) Efforts to retain and recruit medical examiners as employees of the Department.

(C) Use of telehealth for medical examinations described in subsection (b) that are administered by the Department.

(e) BRIEFING ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a briefing on how the Secretary will implement the recommendations of the Comptroller General of the United States regarding—

(1) the monitoring of the training of providers of examinations pursuant to contracts under section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note); and

(2) ensuring such providers receive such training.

(f) HOLDING UNDERPERFORMING CONTRACT MEDICAL EXAMINERS ACCOUNTABLE.—The Secretary shall take such actions as may be necessary to hold accountable the providers of medical examinations pursuant to contracts under section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) who are underperforming in the meeting of the needs of veterans through the performance of medical examinations pursuant to such contracts.

SEC. 2003. MEDAL OF HONOR SPECIAL PENSION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES.

(a) CODIFICATION OF CURRENT RATE OF SPECIAL PENSION.—Subsection (a) of section 1562 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$1,000” and inserting “\$1,388.68”.

(b) SPECIAL PENSION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES.—

(1) SURVIVING SPOUSE BENEFIT.—Such subsection is further amended—

(A) by inserting “(1)” after “(a)”; and

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

“(2)(A) Except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C), the Secretary shall pay special pension under this section to the surviving spouse of a person whose name has been entered on the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard Medal of Honor Roll and a copy of whose certificate has been delivered to the Secretary under section 1134a(d) of title 10.

“(B) No special pension shall be paid to a surviving spouse of a person under this section unless such surviving spouse was married to such person—

“(i) for one year or more prior to the veteran's death; or

“(ii) for any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

“(C) No special pension shall be paid to a surviving spouse of a person under this section if such surviving spouse is receiving benefits under section 1311 or 1318 of this title.”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Such section is amended—

(i) in subsection (d), by inserting “or married to more than one person who has been awarded a medal of honor,” after “honor,”; and

(ii) in subsection (f)(1), by striking “this section” and inserting “paragraph (1) of subsection (a), or under paragraph (2) of such subsection in the case of a posthumous entry on the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard Medal of Honor Roll.”.

(B) SPECIAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO MARRIAGES.—Section 103(d)(5) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(E) Section 1562(a)(2), relating to Medal of Honor special pension.”.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply with respect to payment of pension under section 1562 of title 38, United States Code, for months beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2004. MODERNIZATION OF SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MODERNIZED PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1922A the following new section:

“§ 1922B. Service-disabled veterans insurance

“(a) INSURANCE.—(1) Beginning January 1, 2023, the Secretary shall carry out a service-disabled veterans insurance program under which a veteran is granted insurance by the United States against the death of such individual occurring while such insurance is in force.

“(2) The Secretary may only issue whole-life policies under the insurance program under paragraph (1).

“(3) The Secretary may not grant insurance to a veteran under paragraph (1) unless—

“(A) the veteran submits the application for such insurance before the veteran attains 81 years of age; or

“(B) with respect to a veteran who has attained 81 years of age—

“(i) the veteran filed a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of this title before attaining such age;

“(ii) based on such claim, and after the veteran attained such age, the Secretary

first determines that the veteran has a service-connected disability; and

“(iii) the veteran submits the application for such insurance during the two-year period following the date of such determination.

“(4)(A) A veteran enrolled in the insurance program under paragraph (1) may elect to be insured in any of the following amounts:

“(i) \$10,000.

“(ii) \$20,000.

“(iii) \$30,000.

“(iv) \$40,000.

“(v) In accordance with subparagraph (B), a maximum amount greater than \$40,000.

“(B) The Secretary may establish a maximum amount to be insured under paragraph (1) that is greater than \$40,000 if the Secretary—

“(i) determines that such maximum amount and the premiums for such amount—

“(I) are administratively and actuarially sound for the insurance program under paragraph (1); and

“(II) will not result in such program operating at a loss; and

“(ii) publishes in the Federal Register, and submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, such maximum amount and determination.

“(5)(A)(i) Insurance granted under this section shall be on a nonparticipating basis and all premiums and other collections therefor shall be credited directly to a revolving fund in the Treasury of the United States.

“(ii) Any payments on such insurance shall be made directly from such fund.

“(B)(i) The Secretary of the Treasury may invest in and sell and retire special interest-bearing obligations of the United States for the account of the revolving fund under subparagraph (A).

“(ii) Such obligations issued for that purpose shall—

“(I) have maturities fixed with due regard for the needs of the fund; and

“(II) bear interest at a rate equal to the average market yield (computed by the Secretary of the Treasury on the basis of market quotations as of the end of the calendar month preceding the date of issue) on all marketable interest-bearing obligations of the United States then forming a part of the public debt which are not due or callable until after the expiration of four years from the end of such calendar month; except that where such average market yield is not a multiple of one-eighth of one per centum, the rate of interest of such obligation shall be the multiple of one-eighth of one per centum nearest such market yield.

“(6)(A) Administrative support financed by the appropriations for ‘General Operating Expenses, Department of Veterans Affairs’ and ‘Information Technology Systems, Department of Veterans Affairs’ for the insurance program under paragraph (1) shall be paid from premiums credited to the fund under paragraph (5).

“(B) Such payment for administrative support shall be reimbursed for that fiscal year from funds that are available on such insurance after claims have been paid.

“(b) ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran is eligible to enroll in the insurance program under subsection (a)(1) if the veteran has a service-connected disability, without regard to—

“(1) whether such disability is compensable under chapter 11 of this title; or

“(2) whether the veteran meets standards of good health required for other life insurance policies.

“(c) ENROLLMENT AND WAITING PERIOD.—(1) An eligible veteran may enroll in the insurance program under subsection (a)(1) at any time.

“(2) The life insurance policy of a veteran who enrolls in the insurance program under subsection (a)(1) does not go into force unless—

“(A) a period of two years elapses following the date of such enrollment; and

“(B) the veteran pays the premiums required during such two-year period.

“(3)(A) If a veteran dies during the two-year period described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall pay to the beneficiary of the veteran the amount of premiums paid by the veteran under this section, plus interest.

“(B) The Secretary—

“(i) for the initial year of the insurance program under subsection (a)(1)—

“(I) shall set such interest at a rate of one percent; and

“(II) may adjust such rate during such year based on program experience, except that the interest rate may not be less than zero percent;

“(ii) for the second and each subsequent year of the program, shall calculate such interest at an annual rate equal to the rate of return on the revolving fund under subsection (a)(5) for the calendar year preceding the year of the veteran's death, except that the interest rate may not be less than zero percent; and

“(iii) on an annual basis, shall publish on the internet website of the Department the average interest rate calculated under clause (i) for the preceding calendar year.

“(d) PREMIUMS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish a schedule of basic premium rates by age per \$10,000 of insurance under subsection (a)(1) consistent with basic premium rates generally charged for guaranteed acceptance life insurance policies by private life insurance companies.

“(2) The Secretary may adjust such schedule after the first policy year in a manner consistent with the general practice of guaranteed acceptance life insurance policies issued by private life insurance companies.

“(3) Section 1912 of this title shall not apply to life insurance policies under subsection (a)(1), and the Secretary may not otherwise waive premiums for such insurance policies.

“(e) BENEFICIARIES.—(1) A veteran who enrolls in the insurance program under subsection (a)(1) may designate a beneficiary of the life insurance policy.

“(2) If a veteran enrolled in the insurance program under subsection (a)(1) does not designate a beneficiary under paragraph (1) before the veteran dies, or if a designated beneficiary predeceases the veteran, the Secretary shall determine the beneficiary in the following order:

“(A) The surviving spouse of the veteran.

“(B) The children of the veteran and descendants of deceased children by representation.

“(C) The parents of the veteran or the survivors of the parents.

“(D) The duly appointed executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran.

“(E) Other next of kin of the veteran entitled under the laws of domicile of the veteran at the time of the death of the veteran.

“(f) CLAIMS.—(1) If the deceased veteran designated a beneficiary under subsection (e)(1)—

“(A) the designated beneficiary is the only person who may file a claim for payment under subsection (g) during the one-year period beginning on the date of the death of the veteran; and

“(B) if the designated beneficiary does not file a claim for the payment during the period described in paragraph (1), or if payment to the designated beneficiary within that period is prohibited by Federal statute or regulation, a beneficiary described in subsection (e)(2) may file a claim for such payment dur-

ing the one-year period following the period described in subparagraph (A) as if the designated beneficiary had predeceased the veteran.

“(2) If the deceased veteran did not designate a beneficiary under subsection (e)(1), or if the designated beneficiary predeceased the veteran, a beneficiary described in subsection (e)(2) may file a claim for payment under subsection (g) during the two-year period beginning on the date of the death of the veteran.

“(3) If, on the date that is two years after the date of the death of the veteran, no claim for payment has been filed by any beneficiary pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2), and the Secretary has not received notice that any such claim will be so filed during the subsequent one-year period, the Secretary may make the payment to a claimant whom the Secretary determines to be equitably entitled to such payment.

“(g) PAYMENTS.—(1) In a case described in subsection (f)—

“(A) in paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall pay the designated beneficiary not later than 90 days after the designated beneficiary files a complete and valid claim for payment;

“(B) in paragraph (1)(B) or (2), the Secretary shall make any payment not later than one year after the end of the period described in the applicable such paragraph, if the Secretary receives a complete and valid claim for payment in accordance with the applicable such paragraph; or

“(C) in paragraph (3), the Secretary shall make any payment not later than one year after the end of the period described in such paragraph, if the Secretary receives a complete and valid claim for payment.

“(2) In a case where the Secretary has not made an insurance payment under this section during the applicable period specified in paragraph (1) by reason of a beneficiary not yet having filed a claim, or the Secretary not yet making a determination under subsection (f)(3), the Secretary may make the payment after such applicable period.

“(3) Notwithstanding section 1917 of this title, the Secretary shall make an insurance payment under this section in a lump sum.

“(4) The Secretary may not make an insurance payment under this section if such payment will escheat to a State.

“(5) Any payment under this subsection shall be a bar to recovery by any other person.”

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1922A the following new item:

“1922B. Service-disabled veterans insurance.”

(b) SUNSET OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM AND TRANSITION.—

(1) S-DVI.—Section 1922 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d)(1) The Secretary may not accept any application by a veteran to be insured under this section after December 31, 2022.

“(2)(A) During the period beginning January 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2025, a veteran who is insured under this section may elect to instead be insured under section 1922B of this title based on the age of the veteran at the time of such election.

“(B)(i) A veteran who elects under subparagraph (A) to be insured under section 1922B of this title shall be subject to the two-year waiting period specified in subsection (c) of such section.

“(ii) If the veteran dies during such period, the Secretary shall pay the beneficiary under this section, and, if applicable, under section 1922A, plus the amount of premiums

paid by the veteran under such section 1922B, plus interest.

“(3) Except as provided by paragraph (2)(B), a veteran may not be insured under this section and section 1922B simultaneously.”.

(2) SUPPLEMENTAL S-DVI.—Section 1922A(b) of such title is amended by adding after the period at the end the following: “The Secretary may not accept any such application after December 31, 2022. Except as provided by section 1922(d)(2)(B), a veteran may not have supplemental insurance under this section and be insured under section 1922B simultaneously.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 19 of such title is amended—

(1) in the section heading of section 1922, by striking “**Service**” and inserting “**Legacy service**”;

(2) in the section heading of section 1922A, by striking “**Supplemental**” and inserting “**Legacy supplemental**”; and

(3) in the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter by striking the items relating to sections 1922 and 1922A and inserting the following new items:

“1922. Legacy service disabled veterans’ insurance.

“1922A. Legacy supplemental service disabled veterans’ insurance for totally disabled veterans.”.

SEC. 2005. DENIAL OF CLAIMS FOR TRAUMATIC INJURY PROTECTION UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS’ GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.

Section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(1)(1) If a claim for benefits under this section is denied, the Secretary concerned shall provide to the member at the same time as the member is informed of such denial a description of the following:

“(A) Each reason for that denial, including a description of all the information upon which the denial is based and a description of the applicable laws, regulations, or policies, with appropriate citations, and an explanation of how such laws, regulations, or policies affected the denial.

“(B) Each finding that is favorable to the member.

“(2) Any finding favorable to the member as described in paragraph (1)(B) shall be binding on all subsequent reviews or appeals of the denial of the claim, unless clear and convincing evidence is shown to the contrary to rebut such favorable finding.”.

SEC. 2006. PUBLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF DISABILITY BENEFIT QUESTIONNAIRE FORMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5101 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection (d):

“(d)(1) The Secretary shall publish in a central location on the internet website of the Department—

“(A) the disability benefit questionnaire forms of the Department for the submittal of evidence from non-Department medical providers regarding a disability of a claimant, including any form or process that replaces any such disability benefit questionnaire form; and

“(B) details about the process used by the Department for submittal of evidence described in subparagraph (A).

“(2) Subject to section 6103 of this title, if the Secretary updates a form described in paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall—

“(A) accept the previous version of the form filed by a claimant if—

“(i) the claimant provided to the non-Department medical provider the previous

version of the form before the date on which the updated version of the form was made available; and

“(ii) the claimant files the previous version of the form during the one-year period following the date the form was completed by the non-Department medical provider;

“(B) request from the claimant (or from a non-Department medical provider if the claimant has authorized the provider to share health information with the Secretary) any other information that the updated version of the form requires; and

“(C) apply the laws and regulations required to adjudicate the claim as if the claimant filed the updated version of the form.

“(3) The Secretary may waive any inter-agency approval process required to approve a modification to a disability benefit questionnaire form if such requirement only applies by reason of the forms being made public.”.

(b) REPORTS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not less frequently than once each year through 2023, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Inspector General with respect to the use of the forms published under section 5101(d)(1) of such title, as added by subsection (a).

(c) INITIAL FORM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall begin carrying out section 5101(d)(1) of such title, as added by subsection (a), by publishing, as described in such section, the form described in such section that was in effect on January 1, 2020.

(d) ALTERNATE PROCESS.—

(1) ASSESSMENT AND REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this act, the Secretary shall—

(i) assess the feasibility and advisability of replacing disability benefit questionnaire forms that are used by non-Department medical providers to submit to the Secretary evidence regarding a disability of a claimant for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, with another consistent process that considers evidence equally, whether provided by a Department or a non-Department medical provider; and

(ii) submit to Congress—

(I) a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the assessment conducted under clause (i); and

(II) if the report submitted under subclause (I) of this clause includes a finding that replacing the disability benefit questionnaire forms described in clause (i) as described in such clause is feasible and advisable, a plan to replace such forms as described in such clause.

(B) COLLABORATION REQUIRED.—If, in carrying out the assessment required by clause (i) of subparagraph (A), the Secretary determines that replacing the disability benefit questionnaire forms described in such clause as described in such clause is feasible and advisable, the Secretary shall collaborate with, partner with, and consider the advice of veterans service organizations, and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate, on the replacement forms and process for submitting such forms.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may only determine under paragraph (1)(A) that replacing the forms described in such paragraph is feasible and advisable if the Secretary certifies that—

(A) it is in the best interest of veterans to do so;

(B) the replacement process would include all the medical information needed to adjudicate a claim for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary; and

(C) the new process will ensure that all medical information provided will be considered equally, whether it is provided by a Department medical provider or a non-Department medical provider.

(3) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), if the Secretary determines under paragraph (1)(A) that replacing the forms as described in such paragraph is feasible and advisable, the Secretary shall, not later than two years after the date on which the Secretary submits the report under paragraph (1)(B)(i)—

(i) replace the forms as described in paragraph (1)(A);

(ii) publish such replacement pursuant to subparagraph (A) of section 5101(d)(1), as added by subsection (a)(2); and

(iii) update the details under subparagraph (B) of such section.

(B) REPORTS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—If the Secretary replaces the forms under subparagraph (A), the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall, not later than one year after the date that the Secretary replaces such forms and not less frequently than once each year thereafter until the date that is three years after the date on which the Secretary replaces such forms, submit to Congress a report on the process that replaced such forms that ascertains whether the process properly protects veterans.

(4) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not discontinue the use of the disability benefit questionnaire forms described in paragraph (1)(A) until a replacement form or process is implemented.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or section 5101(d) of such title, as added by subsection (a), may be construed to require the Secretary to develop any new information technology system or otherwise require the Secretary to make any significant changes to the internet website of the Department.

SEC. 2007. THRESHOLD FOR REPORTING DEBTS TO CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 53 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 5319 the following new section:

“§ 5320. Threshold for reporting debts to consumer reporting agencies

“The Secretary shall prescribe regulations that establish the minimum amount of a claim or debt, arising from a benefit administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits or Under Secretary for Health, that the Secretary will report to a consumer reporting agency under section 3711 of title 31.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 5319 the following new item:

“5320. Threshold for reporting debts to consumer reporting agencies.”.

(c) DEADLINE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prescribe regulations under section 5320 of such title, as added by subsection (a), not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2008. REMOVAL OF DEPENDENTS FROM AWARD OF COMPENSATION OR PENSION.

Beginning not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that—

(1) the recipient of an award of compensation or pension may remove any dependent from an award of compensation or pension to the individual using the eBenefits system of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or a successor system; and

(2) such removal takes effect not later than 60 days after the date on which the recipient elects such removal.

SEC. 2009. ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WHO REMARRY AFTER AGE 55.

Section 103(d)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, is amended in the second sentence by inserting “chapter 13 or” after “benefits under”.

SEC. 2010. STUDY ON EXPOSURE BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO TOXICANTS AT KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE IN UZBEKISTAN.

(a) **AGREEMENT AND STUDY.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the Administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry for the Administrator to complete, not later than 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, a study to identify—

(1) incidents of cancer and other diseases or illnesses experienced by individuals who served in the active military, naval, or air service (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) in the covered location set forth under subsection (b) during the corresponding period set forth under such subsection; and

(2) a list of toxic substances, chemicals, ionizing radiation, and airborne hazards such individuals may have been exposed to during such service.

(b) **COVERED LOCATION AND CORRESPONDING PERIOD.**—The covered location and corresponding period set forth under this subsection are Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Air Base in Uzbekistan and the period beginning on October 1, 2001, and ending on September 30, 2005.

(c) **ELEMENTS.**—The study conducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment regarding the conditions of the covered location set forth under subsection (b), including an identification of toxic substances, chemicals, ionizing radiation, and airborne hazards contaminating such covered location during such corresponding period.

(2) An epidemiological study of the health consequences of the service described in subsection (a) to the individuals described in such subsection.

(d) **SUPPORT FOR STUDY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide the Administrator with assistance in carrying out the study required by subsection (a), including by gathering such information as the Administrator may consider useful in carrying out the study.

(2) **OBTAINING INFORMATION CONCERNING EXPOSURE.**—Assistance under paragraph (1) provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall include compiling information on exposure described in subsection (a)(2) and the Secretary of Defense shall provide to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs such information concerning such exposure as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers appropriate for purposes of the study required by subsection (a), including environmental sampling data relative to any location covered by the study.

(e) **BIENNIAL UPDATES.**—No later than the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter until the date on which the study required by subsection (a) is completed, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress updates on the status of the matters covered by such study, including any preliminary findings of the Administrator.

(f) **FINAL REPORT.**—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the study required by

subsection (a) is completed, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the findings of the Administrator with respect to such study.

(g) **INCLUSION OF UZBEKISTAN IN CERTAIN REGISTRIES AND PROGRAMS.**—Section 201(c)(2) of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note) is amended, in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “Afghanistan or Iraq” and inserting “Afghanistan, Iraq, or Uzbekistan”.

(h) **DEPLETED URANIUM FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that any individual who deployed as a member of the Armed Forces to the covered location set forth in subsection (b) during the corresponding period set forth in such subsection is covered by the Depleted Uranium Follow-up Programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(i) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 2011. COMPTROLLER GENERAL BRIEFING AND REPORT ON REPEALING MANIFESTATION PERIOD FOR PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR CERTAIN DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CERTAIN HERBICIDE AGENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall provide to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a briefing on preliminary observations of the Comptroller General, and not later than 240 days after the date of such briefing, provide such committees a briefing and submit to such committees a final report, on the efforts of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide benefits, including compensation and health care, to veterans—

(1) who during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975; and

(2) in whom chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, or acute or subacute peripheral neuropathy have manifested.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of how the Secretary establishes a service connection for a disease described in paragraph (2) of subsection (a) manifesting in veterans, including the number of veterans described in paragraph (1) of such subsection who have filed a claim for a benefit associated with a disease described in paragraph (2) of such subsection.

(2) A description of how claims adjudicators of the Department of Veterans Affairs determine service connection for a disease described in subparagraph (C) or (E) of section 1116(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, when documentation proving the presence of the disease during the manifestation period set forth in such subparagraphs for the disease is not available.

(3) A description of the expected effect of repealing the manifestation period from such subparagraphs, including the expected effect on the number of claims for benefits the Department will receive, an estimate of the cost to the Department of such repeal, and a review of the scientific evidence regarding such repeal.

(4) A review of all claims submitted to the Secretary for compensation under chapter 11

of such title that are associated with a disease described in subsection (a)(2), including the type of proof presented to establish a service connection for the manifestation of the disease based on exposure to a herbicide agent.

(5) Recommendations on how the Department can better adjudicate claims for benefits, including compensation, submitted to the Department that are associated with a disease described in paragraph (2) of subsection (a) for veterans described in paragraph (1) of such subsection.

(6) An assessment of such other areas as the Comptroller General considers appropriate to study.

(c) **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.**—Not later than 120 days after the date on which the Comptroller General of the United States submits the report required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall commence carrying out the recommendations submitted under subsection (b)(5) to the degree that the Secretary is authorized to carry out the recommendations by a statute that was in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) **HERBICIDE AGENT DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “herbicide agent” has the meaning given such term in section 1116(a)(3) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 2012. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO USE INCOME INFORMATION FROM OTHER AGENCIES.

Section 5317(g) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2027” and inserting “September 30, 2030”.

SEC. 2013. EXTENSION ON CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF PENSION.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2028” and inserting “October 30, 2028”.

Subtitle B—Housing

SEC. 2101. ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR HOME LOANS FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF VETERAN FOR PURPOSES OF HOME LOANS.**—Section 3701(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(7) The term ‘veteran’ also includes, for purposes of home loans, an individual who performed full-time National Guard duty (as that term is defined in section 101 of title 10) for a period—

“(A) of not less than 90 cumulative days; and

“(B) that includes 30 consecutive days.”.

(b) **EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.**—Section 3702(a)(2) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(G) Each individual described in section 3701(b)(7) of this title.”.

(c) **RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY.**—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to full-time National Guard duty (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code) performed before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2102. REDUCING LOAN FEES FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AFFECTED BY MAJOR DISASTERS.

Section 3729(b)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by amending subparagraph (D) to read as follows:

“(D)(i) The term ‘initial loan’ means a loan to a veteran guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title if the veteran has never obtained a loan guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title.

“(ii) If a veteran has obtained a loan guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title and the dwelling securing such loan was substantially damaged or destroyed by a major disaster declared by the President under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), the Secretary shall treat as an initial loan, as defined in clause (i), the next loan the Secretary guarantees or makes to such veteran under section 3710 or 3711, respectively, if—

“(I) such loan is guaranteed or made before the date that is three years after the date on which the dwelling was substantially damaged or destroyed; and

“(II) such loan is only for repairs or construction of the dwelling, as determined by the Secretary.”; and

(2) in subparagraph (E), by striking “if the veteran has previously obtained a loan guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title” and inserting “that is not an initial loan”.

SEC. 2103. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.

Section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “October 1, 2029” each place it appears and inserting “October 1, 2030”.

SEC. 2104. COLLECTION OF OVERPAYMENTS OF SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTANCE.

Section 2102 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g)(1) Whenever the Secretary finds that an overpayment has been made to, or on behalf of, a person described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall determine—

“(A) the amounts to recover, if any; and

“(B) who is liable to the United States for such overpayment.

“(2) A person described in this paragraph is any of the following:

“(A) An individual who applied for assistance—

“(i) under this chapter; or

“(ii) under chapter 31 of this title who is pursuing a rehabilitation program under such chapter in acquiring adaptations to a residence.

“(B) An owner or seller of real estate used, or intended to be used, in connection with assistance under this chapter.

“(C) A builder, contractor, supplier, tradesperson, corporation, trust, partnership, or other person, who provided services or goods relating to assistance under this chapter.

“(D) An attorney, escrow agent, or financial institution, that receives, or holds in escrow, funds relating to assistance under this chapter.

“(E) A surviving spouse, heir, assignee, or successor in interest of or to, any person described in this paragraph.

“(3)(A) Any overpayment referred to in this subsection may be recovered in the same manner as any other debt due the United States.

“(B) In recovering the overpayment, the Secretary may charge administrative costs, fees, and interest, as appropriate, in a manner similar to the authority under section 5315 of this title.

“(4)(A) The recovery of any overpayment referred to in this subsection may be waived by the Secretary.

“(B) Waiver of any such overpayment as to a person described in paragraph (2) shall in no way release any other person described in such paragraph from liability.

“(5) The Secretary shall waive recovery under this subsection of any overpayment to a person described in paragraph (2)(A), or a dependent or survivor of such person, that arises from administrative error described in paragraph (7)(A).

“(6) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as precluding the imposition of any civil or criminal liability under this title or any other law.

“(7) The Secretary shall prescribe in regulations what constitutes an overpayment for the purposes of this subsection, which, at a minimum, shall include—

“(A) administrative error that results in an individual receiving assistance to which that individual is not entitled;

“(B) the failure of any person described in paragraph (2) to—

“(i) perform or allow to be performed any act relating to assistance under this chapter; or

“(ii) compensate any party performing services or supplying goods relating to assistance under this chapter; and

“(C) any disbursement of funds relating to assistance under this chapter, that, in the sole discretion of the Secretary, constitutes a misuse of such assistance.

“(8) Prior to collecting an overpayment under this subsection, the Secretary shall provide to the person whom the Secretary has determined liable for such overpayment—

“(A) notice of the finding by the Secretary of such overpayment;

“(B) a reasonable opportunity for such person to remedy the circumstances that effectuated the overpayment; and

“(C) a reasonable opportunity for such person to present evidence to the Secretary that an overpayment was not made.

“(9) For the purposes of section 511 of this title, a decision to collect an overpayment from a person other than a person described in paragraph (2)(A), or a dependent or survivor of such person, may not be treated as a decision that affects the provision of benefits.”.

Subtitle C—Burial Matters

SEC. 2201. TRANSPORTATION OF DECEASED VETERANS TO VETERANS' CEMETERIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 2308 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “in a national cemetery” and inserting “in a national cemetery or a covered veterans' cemetery”.

(b) COVERED VETERANS' CEMETERY DEFINED.—Section 2308 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) COVERED VETERANS' CEMETERY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘covered veterans' cemetery’ means a veterans' cemetery—

“(1) in which a deceased veteran described in subsection (b) is eligible to be buried;

“(2) that—

“(A) is owned by a State; or

“(B) is on trust land owned by, or held in trust for, a tribal organization; and

“(3) for which the Secretary has made a grant under section 2408 of this title.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2308 of such title is amended in the section heading by adding at the end the following: “**or a covered veterans' cemetery**”.

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 23 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 2308 and inserting the following new item:

“2308. Transportation of deceased veteran to a national cemetery or a covered veterans' cemetery.”.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2202. INCREASE IN CERTAIN FUNERAL BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FUNERAL EXPENSES FOR NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.—Chapter 23 of title

38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) By transferring subsection (b) of section 2302 to the end of section 2303 and redesignating such subsection as subsection (d).

(2) By striking section 2302.

(3) In section 2303—

(A) in the section heading, by striking “**Death in Department facility**” and inserting “**Death from non-service-connected disability**”; and

(B) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking “a veteran dies in a facility described in paragraph (2)” and inserting “a veteran described in paragraph (2) dies”; and

(ii) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) A veteran described in this paragraph is a deceased veteran who is not covered by section 2307 of this title and who meets any of the following criteria:

“(A) The deceased veteran dies in—

“(i) a facility of the Department (as defined in section 1701(3) of this title) to which the deceased veteran was properly admitted for hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care under section 1710 or 1711(a) of this title; or

“(ii) an institution at which the deceased veteran was, at the time of death, receiving—

“(I) hospital care in accordance with sections 1703A, 8111, and 8153 of this title;

“(II) nursing home care under section 1720 of this title; or

“(III) nursing home care for which payments are made under section 1741 of this title.

“(B) At the time of death, the deceased veteran (including a person who died during a period deemed to be active military, naval, or air service under section 106(c) of this title) is in receipt of compensation under chapter 11 of this title (or but for the receipt of retirement pay would have been entitled to such compensation) or was in receipt of pension under chapter 15 of this title.

“(C) The Secretary determines—

“(i) the deceased veteran (including a person who died during a period deemed to be active military, naval, or air service under section 106(c) of this title) has no next of kin or other person claiming the body of the deceased veteran; and

“(ii) that there are not available sufficient resources to cover burial and funeral expenses.”;

(iii) in subsection (b)—

(I) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “section 2302 of this title and”; and

(II) in paragraph (2), by striking “under section 2302 of this title or”; and

(iv) in subsection (d), as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by striking “Except as” and inserting “With respect to a deceased veteran described in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subsection (a)(2), except as”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) TITLE 38.—Such title is amended as follows:

(A) In section 2304, by striking “Applications for payments under section 2302 of this title” and inserting “Applications for payments under section 2303 of this title regarding veterans described in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subsection (a)(2) of such section”.

(B) In section 2307, by striking “sections 2302 and 2303(a)(1) and (b)(2) of this title” and inserting “subsections (a)(1) and (b)(2) of section 2303 of this title”.

(C) In section 2308—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking “pursuant to section 2302 or 2307 of this title,” and inserting “pursuant to section 2303 of this title regarding veterans described in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subsection (a)(2) of such

section, or pursuant to section 2307 of this title,"; and

(i) in subsection (b)(3)—

(I) by striking "section 2302" and inserting "section 2303"; and

(II) by striking "subsection (a)(2)(A)" and inserting "subsection (a)(2)(C)".

(D) In section 113(c)(1), by striking "2302,".

(E) In section 5101(a)(1)(B)(i), by striking "2302" and inserting "2303".

(2) **EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE.**—Section 11 of the Military Selective Service Act (50 U.S.C. 3810) is amended by striking "section 2302(a) of title 38" and inserting "section 2303 of title 38, United States Code, regarding veterans described in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subsection (a)(2) of such section".

(c) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 23 of such title is amended by striking the items relating to sections 2302 and 2303 and inserting the following new item:

"2303. Death from non-service-connected disability; plot allowance."

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall apply to deaths that occur on or after the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2203. OUTER BURIAL RECEPTACLES FOR EACH NEW GRAVE IN CEMETERIES THAT ARE THE SUBJECTS OF CERTAIN GRANTS MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2306(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking "shall" and inserting "may"; and

(ii) by inserting "or in a cemetery that is the subject of a grant to a State or a tribal organization under section 2408 of this title," after "National Cemetery Administration"; and

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking "shall" and inserting "may"; and

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraph (2):

"(2)(A) The use of outer burial receptacles in a cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery Administration or in a cemetery that is the subject of a grant to a State or a tribal organization under section 2408 of this title shall be in accordance with regulations or procedures approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"(B) The use of outer burial receptacles in Arlington National Cemetery shall be in accordance with regulations or procedures approved by the Secretary of the Army.

"(C) The use of outer burial receptacles in a national cemetery administered by the National Park Service shall be in accordance with regulations or procedures approved by the Secretary of the Interior."

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2204. PROVISION OF INSCRIPTIONS FOR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN ON CERTAIN HEADSTONES AND MARKERS FURNISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (i) as subsection (j); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (h) the following new subsection (i):

"(i)(1) In addition to any other authority under this section, in the case of an individual whose grave is not in a covered cemetery (as that term is defined in subsection (f)(2)) and for whom the Secretary has furnished a headstone or marker under subsection (a) or (d), the Secretary, if feasible

and upon request, may replace the headstone or marker to add an inscription for the surviving spouse or eligible dependent child of such individual following the death of the surviving spouse or eligible dependent child.

"(2) If the spouse or eligible dependent child of an individual referred to in paragraph (1) predeceases the individual, the Secretary may, if feasible and upon request, include an inscription for the spouse or dependent child on the headstone or marker furnished for the individual under subsection (a) or (d)."

(b) **APPLICATION.**—Subsection (i) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to an individual who dies on or after October 1, 2019.

SEC. 2205. AID TO COUNTIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT, EXPANSION, AND IMPROVEMENT OF VETERANS' CEMETERIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting "or county" after "State" each place it appears;

(2) in subsection (a)(1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "subsection (b)" and inserting "subsections (b), (c), (d), and (g)";

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

"(g)(1) The Secretary may make a grant to a county under this section only if—

"(A)(i) the State in which the county is located does not have a veterans' cemetery owned by the State;

"(ii) the State is not in receipt of a grant under this section for the construction of a new veterans' cemetery to be owned by the State;

"(iii) the State did not apply for a grant under this section during the previous year;

"(iv) no tribal organization from the State in which the county is located has a veterans' cemetery on trust land owned by, or held in trust for, the tribal organization;

"(v) no such tribal organization is in receipt of a grant under this section for the construction of a new veterans' cemetery to be located on such land; and

"(vi) no such tribal organization applied for a grant under this section during the previous year; and

"(B) the county demonstrates in the application under subsection (a)(2), to the satisfaction of the Secretary, that the county has the resources necessary to operate and maintain the veterans' cemetery owned by the county.

"(2)(A) If a county and the State in which the county is located both apply for a grant under this section for the same year, the Secretary shall give priority to the State.

"(B) If a county and a tribal organization from the State in which the county is located both apply for a grant under this section for the same year, the Secretary shall give priority to the tribal organization.

"(3) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this subsection."; and

(4) in subsection (f)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as subsection (h);

(B) by moving such subsection, as so redesignated, to the location after subsection (g), as added by paragraph (3);

(C) in subsection (h), as so redesignated and moved, by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively; and

(D) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), as so redesignated, by striking "this subsection" and inserting "this section".

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.**—

(1) **SECTION HEADING.**—The heading of such section is amended by inserting "counties, and tribal organizations" after "States".

(2) **TABLE OF SECTIONS.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 24 of such

title is amended by striking the item relating to section 2408 and inserting the following new item:

"2408. Aid to States, counties, and tribal organizations for establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans' cemeteries."

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take on effect on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2206. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANTS TO STATES, COUNTIES, AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR OPERATING AND MAINTAINING VETERANS' CEMETERIES.

Section 2408(e)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "\$5,000,000" and inserting "\$10,000,000".

SEC. 2207. PROVISION OF URNS AND COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES FOR REMAINS OF CERTAIN VETERANS WHOSE CREMATED REMAINS ARE NOT INTERRED IN CERTAIN CEMETERIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2204 of this title, is further amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (h), (i), and (j) as subsections (i), (j), and (k), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (g) the following new subsection (h):

"(h)(1) In lieu of furnishing a headstone or marker under this section for a deceased individual described in paragraph (3), the Secretary shall furnish, upon request and at the expense of the United States—

"(A) an urn made of any material to signify the individual's status as a veteran, in which the remains of such individual may be placed at private expense; or

"(B) a commemorative plaque signifying the individual's status as a veteran.

"(2) If the Secretary furnishes an urn or commemorative plaque for an individual under paragraph (1), the Secretary may not provide for such individual—

"(A) a headstone or marker under this section; or

"(B) any burial benefit under section 2402 of this title.

"(3) A deceased individual described in this paragraph is an individual—

"(A) who served in the Armed Forces on or after April 6, 1917;

"(B) who is eligible for a headstone or marker furnished under subsection (d) (or would be so eligible but for the date of the death of the individual); and

"(C) whose remains were cremated and not interred in a national cemetery, a State veterans' cemetery, a tribal cemetery, a county cemetery, or a private cemetery.

"(4)(A) Any urn or commemorative plaque furnished under this subsection shall be the personal property of the next of kin or such other individual as the Secretary considers appropriate.

"(B) The Federal Government shall not be liable for any damage to an urn or commemorative plaque furnished under this subsection that occurs after the date on which the urn or commemorative plaque is so furnished.

"(5) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this subsection."

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take on effect on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2208. TRAINING OF STATE AND TRIBAL VETERANS' CEMETERY PERSONNEL BY NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by sections 2205 and 2206 of this title, is further amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1)—
 (A) in subparagraph (A)—
 (i) by striking “and (ii) the cost” and inserting “(ii) the cost”; and
 (ii) by inserting “; and (iii) training costs described in subsection (c)(1)” before the semicolon; and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—
 (i) by striking “and (ii) the cost” and inserting “(ii) the cost”; and
 (ii) by inserting “; and (iii) training costs described in subsection (c)(1)” before the period;

(2) by redesignating subsections (c) through (h) as subsections (d) through (i), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

“(c)(1) A grant under this section for a purpose described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of subsection (a)(1) may be used, solely or in part, for training costs, including travel expenses and up to four weeks of lodging expenses, associated with attendance by employees of a veterans’ cemetery owned by a State or on trust land owned by, or held in trust for, a tribal organization at training provided by the National Cemetery Administration.

“(2) Any employee described in paragraph (1) who participates in training described in such paragraph shall fulfill a service requirement as determined by the Secretary.

“(3) The Secretary may by regulation prescribe such additional terms and conditions for grants used for training costs under this subsection as the Secretary considers appropriate.”.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than each of two years and five years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on training provided by the National Cemetery Administration under subsection (c) of section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The attrition rate with respect to individuals who participate in the training described in paragraph (1).

(B) A description of how State and tribal veterans’ cemeteries that used grants awarded under section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, for training costs under subsection (c) of such section, as added by subsection (a), have improved as a result of the training, according to the administrators of such cemeteries.

(C) An identification of how many State and tribal veterans’ cemeteries used the authority provided by subsection (c) of section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), in order to train individuals.

(D) The amount obligated or expended as a result of the authority described in subparagraph (C).

TITLE III—HEALTH CARE

Subtitle A—Health Care Generally

SEC. 3001. EXPANSION OF MODIFICATIONS TO VETERAN DIRECTED CARE PROGRAM.

Section 2006 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116–136) is amended—

(1) by striking “During a public health emergency” each place it appears and inserting “During the period specified in subsection (f)”;

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “during a public health emer-

gency” and inserting “during the period specified in subsection (f)”;

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “an area agency on aging” and inserting “a covered provider”;

(3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following new subsections:

“(e) TRANSFER OF CERTAIN VETERANS TO THE PROGRAM.—During the period specified in subsection (f), the Secretary shall allow a veteran residing in an area covered by the Program to be transferred to the Program for the duration of such period if—

“(1) the veteran had been receiving extended care services paid for by the Department, such as adult day services or home-maker or home health aide services, immediately preceding such period; and

“(2) those services are no longer available due to a public health emergency.

“(f) PERIOD SPECIFIED.—The period specified in this subsection is the period beginning on the date on which a public health emergency was first declared and ending on the date that is 60 days after the date on which a public health emergency is no longer in effect.

“(g) COVERED PROVIDER DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘covered provider’ means a provider participating in the Program, including—

“(1) an Aging and Disability Resource Center, an area agency on aging, or a State agency (as those terms are defined in section 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3002)); or

“(2) a center for independent living (as defined in section 702 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796a)).”.

SEC. 3002. PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION OF A HEALTH CARE COPAYMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FROM A VETERAN WHO IS A MEMBER OF AN INDIAN TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1730A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking “catastrophically disabled” and inserting “certain”;

(2) by inserting “(a) PROHIBITION.—” before “Notwithstanding”;

(3) by striking “a veteran who is catastrophically disabled, as defined by the Secretary,” and inserting “a covered veteran”;

(4) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘covered veteran’ means a veteran who—

“(1) is catastrophically disabled, as defined by the Secretary; or

“(2) is an Indian or urban Indian (as those terms are defined in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603)).”.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 1730A and inserting the following:

“1730A. Prohibition on collection of copayments from certain veterans.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the day that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3003. OVERSIGHT FOR STATE HOMES REGARDING COVID-19 INFECTIONS, RESPONSE CAPACITY, AND STAFFING LEVELS.

(a) REPORTING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, each State home shall submit weekly to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the National Healthcare Safety Network of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through an electronic medium and in a standardized format specified by the Secretary, a report on the emergency.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by paragraph (1) for a State home shall include the following:

(A) The number of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 infections among residents and staff, including residents previously treated for COVID-19, disaggregated by—

(i) veteran, spouse of a veteran, staff, and other;

(ii) race and ethnicity;

(iii) gender; and

(iv) age.

(B) The number of total deaths and COVID-19 deaths among residents and staff, disaggregated by—

(i) veteran, spouse of a veteran, staff, and other;

(ii) race and ethnicity;

(iii) gender; and

(iv) age.

(C) An assessment of the supply of personal protective equipment and hand hygiene supplies.

(D) An assessment of ventilator capacity and supplies.

(E) The number of resident beds and the occupancy rate, disaggregated by veteran, spouse of a veteran, and other.

(F) An assessment of the access of residents to testing for COVID-19.

(G) An assessment of staffing shortages, if any.

(H) Such other information as the Secretary may specify.

(b) PUBLICATION OF TOTAL INFECTIONS AND DEATHS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than weekly thereafter, the Secretary shall post on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs—

(A) the total number of residents and staff of State homes who are infected with COVID-19; and

(B) the total number of such residents and staff who have died from COVID-19.

(2) INFORMATION ON RESIDENTS AND STAFF.—The Secretary shall disaggregate information on residents and staff published under paragraph (1) by veteran, staff, and other.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.—The term “covered public health emergency” means an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority.

(2) STATE HOME.—The term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3004. GRANTS FOR STATE HOMES LOCATED ON TRIBAL LANDS.

(a) STATE HOME DEFINED.—Section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “or Indian tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304))” after “(other than a possession)”.

(b) PAYMENTS TO STATE HOMES.—Section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) In this subchapter, the term ‘State’ means each of the several States and each Indian tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)).”.

(c) STATE HOME CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 8131(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “includes each Indian tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)) but” before “does not”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 8132 of such title is amended by striking “several”.

(d) ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.—

(1) **CONSULTATION WITH INDIAN TRIBES.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with Indian tribes to determine if any legislative or administrative action is necessary to modify the State home program to function efficiently in support of State homes operated by Indian tribes pursuant to the amendments made by this section.

(2) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 90 days after completing consultations under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report recommending legislative action that the Secretary considers appropriate to modify the State home program described in such paragraph in light of those consultations.

(3) **MODIFICATIONS.**—Not later than 180 days after completing consultations under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall make any modifications to regulations implementing the State home program, for which legislative action is not necessary, as the Secretary considers appropriate in light of those consultations.

(e) **TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide technical support and assistance to Indian tribes in carrying out the State home program at State homes operated by Indian tribes pursuant to the amendments made by this section.

(f) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.**—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States of the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

(2) **INDIAN TRIBE.**—The term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(3) **STATE HOME.**—The term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code.

(4) **STATE HOME PROGRAM.**—The term “State home program” means the program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for which payments are made under subchapter V of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and assistance is provided under subchapter III of chapter 81 of such title.

SEC. 3005. CONTINUATION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH TRANSITION TRAINING PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **DURATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the Women’s Health Transition Training program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (in this section referred to as the “Program”) until at least one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year and ten days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the Program that includes the following:

(1) The number of women members of the Armed Forces, disaggregated by military department (with respect to the Department of the Navy, disaggregated by the Navy and Marine Corps), who participated in the Program.

(2) The number of courses held under the Program.

(3) The locations at which such courses were held, the number of seats available for

such courses, and the number of participants at each such location.

(4) With respect to the number of members of the Armed Forces who participated in the Program as specified under paragraph (1)—

(A) the number who enrolled in the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) the number who attended at least one health care appointment at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(5) Data relating to—

(A) satisfaction with courses held under the Program;

(B) improved awareness of health care services administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

(C) any other available statistics regarding the Program.

(6) A discussion of regulatory, legal, or resource barriers to—

(A) making the Program permanent to enable access to services provided under the Program by a greater number of women members of the Armed Forces at locations throughout the United States;

(B) offering the Program online for women members of the Armed Forces who are unable to attend courses held under the Program in person; and

(C) the feasibility of automatically enrolling Program participants in the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code.

(c) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 3006. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO FURNISH MEDICALLY NECESSARY TRANSPORTATION FOR NEWBORN CHILDREN OF CERTAIN WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 1786 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 9102 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter before paragraph (1), by inserting “and transportation necessary to receive such services” after “described in subsection (b)”; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “or”;

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

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

“(3) another location, including a health care facility, if the veteran delivers the child before arriving at a facility described in paragraph (1) or (2).”;

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, including necessary health care services provided by a facility other than the facility where the newborn child was delivered (including a specialty pediatric hospital) that accepts transfer of the newborn child and responsibility for treatment of the newborn child”; and

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

“(d) **TRANSPORTATION.**—(1) Transportation furnished under subsection (a) to, from, or between care settings to meet the needs of a newborn child includes costs for either or both the newborn child and parents.

“(2) Transportation furnished under subsection (a) includes transportation by ambu-

lance, including air ambulance, or other appropriate medically staffed modes of transportation—

“(A) to another health care facility (including a specialty pediatric hospital) that accepts transfer of the newborn child or otherwise provides post-delivery care services when the treating facility is not capable of furnishing the care or services required; or

“(B) to a health care facility in a medical emergency of such nature that a prudent layperson reasonably expects that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would be hazardous to life or health.

“(3) Amounts paid by the Department for transportation under this section shall be derived from the Medical Services appropriations account of the Department.

“(e) **REIMBURSEMENT OR PAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES OR TRANSPORTATION.**—(1) Pursuant to regulations the Secretary shall prescribe to establish rates of reimbursement and any limitations thereto under this section, the Secretary shall directly reimburse a covered entity for health care services or transportation services provided under this section, unless the cost of the services or transportation is covered by an established agreement or contract. If such an agreement or contract exists, its negotiated payment terms shall apply.

“(2)(A) Reimbursement or payment by the Secretary under this section on behalf of an individual to a covered entity shall, unless rejected and refunded by the covered entity within 30 days of receipt, extinguish any liability on the part of the individual for the health care services or transportation covered by such payment.

“(B) Neither the absence of a contract or agreement between the Secretary and a covered entity nor any provision of a contract, agreement, or assignment to the contrary shall operate to modify, limit, or negate the requirements of subparagraph (A).

“(3) In this subsection, the term ‘covered entity’ means any individual, transportation carrier, organization, or other entity that furnished or paid for health care services or transportation under this section.”.

(b) **TREATMENT OF CERTAIN EXPENSES ALREADY INCURRED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Pursuant to such regulations as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prescribe, with respect to transportation furnished in order for a newborn child of a veteran to receive health care services under section 1786 of title 38, United States Code, during the period specified in paragraph (2), the Secretary may—

(A) waive a debt owed by the veteran to the Department of Veterans Affairs or reimburse expenses already paid by the veteran to the Department for such transportation;

(B) reimburse the veteran for expenses already paid by the veteran to a covered entity for such transportation; or

(C) reimburse a covered entity for the costs of such transportation.

(2) **PERIOD SPECIFIED.**—The period specified in this paragraph is the period beginning on May 5, 2010, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) **COVERED ENTITY DEFINED.**—In this subsection, the term “covered entity” has the meaning given that term in section 1786(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 3007. WAIVER OF REQUIREMENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR RECEIPT OF PER DIEM PAYMENTS FOR DOMICILIARY CARE AT STATE HOMES AND MODIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SUCH PAYMENTS.

(a) **WAIVER OF REQUIREMENTS.**—Notwithstanding section 1741 of title 38, United States Code (as amended by subsection (b)),

the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall modify section 51.51(b) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), to provide the Secretary the authority to waive the requirements under such section 51.51(b) for a veteran to be eligible for per diem payments for domiciliary care at a State home if—

(1) the veteran has met not fewer than four of the requirements set forth in such section; or

(2) such waiver would be in the best interest of the veteran.

(b) **MODIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY.**—Section 1741(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended, in the flush text following subparagraph (B), by striking “in a Department facility” and inserting “under the laws administered by the Secretary”.

(c) **STATE HOME DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3008. EXPANSION OF QUARTERLY UPDATE OF INFORMATION ON STAFFING AND VACANCIES AT FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INCLUDE INFORMATION ON DURATION OF HIRING PROCESS.

(a) **QUARTERLY UPDATE.**—Subsection (a)(1) of section 505 of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-182; 38 U.S.C. 301 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(E) Beginning with any update under paragraph (3) on or after the date of the enactment of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, the following:

“(i) For employees appointed under paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of title 38, United States Code, the number of employees for which the duration of the process from validation of vacancy to receipt of official offer and notification of actual start date exceeds the metrics laid out in the Time to Hire Model of the Veterans Health Administration, or successor model.

“(ii) The percentage of employees who are described in clause (i) compared to all employees appointed under paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of such title during the same period.

“(iii) The average number of days potential hires or new hires appointed under paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of such title spent in each phase of the Time to Hire Model, or successor model.”.

(b) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Subsection (b) of such section is amended, in the first sentence, by adding before the period at the end the following: “and to improve the onboard timeline for facilities for which the duration of the onboarding process exceeds the metrics laid out in the Time to Hire Model of the Veterans Health Administration, or successor model”.

SEC. 3009. REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITIES TO HAVE PHYSICAL LOCATION FOR THE DISPOSAL OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES MEDICATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that each covered Department medical facility has a physical location where patients may dispose of controlled substances medications.

(b) **COVERED DEPARTMENT MEDICAL FACILITY.**—In this section, the term “covered Department medical facility” means a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs with an onsite pharmacy or a physical location dedicated for law enforcement purposes.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect on January 1, 2022.

SEC. 3010. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVATION BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program for a one-year period, beginning not later than August 15, 2021, to provide certain students described in subsection (d) a clinical observation experience at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **MEDICAL CENTER SELECTION.**—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under this section at not fewer than five medical centers of the Department. In selecting such medical centers, the Secretary shall ensure regional diversity among such selected medical centers.

(c) **CLINICAL OBSERVATION SESSIONS.**—

(1) **FREQUENCY AND DURATION.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall—

(A) provide at least one and not more than three clinical observation sessions at each medical center selected during each calendar year;

(B) ensure that each clinical observation session—

(i) lasts between four and six months; and

(ii) to the extent practicable, begins and ends concurrently with one or more academic terms of an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)); and

(C) ensure that the clinical observation sessions provided at a medical center have minimal overlap.

(2) **SESSIONS.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the pilot program consists of clinical observation sessions as follows:

(A) Each session shall allow for not fewer than five students nor greater than 15 students to participate in the session.

(B) Each session shall consist of not fewer than 20 observational hours nor greater than 40 observational hours.

(C) A majority of the observational hours shall be spent observing a health professional. The other observational hours shall be spent in a manner that ensures a robust, well rounded experience that exposes the students to a variety of aspects of medical care and health care administration.

(D) Each session shall provide a diverse clinical observation experience.

(d) **STUDENTS.**—

(1) **SELECTION.**—The Secretary shall select to participate in the pilot program under subsection (a) students who are—

(A) nationals of the United States;

(B) enrolled in an accredited program of study at an institution of higher education; and

(C) referred by their institution of higher education following an internal application process.

(2) **PRIORITY.**—In making such selection, the Secretary shall give priority to each of the following five categories of students:

(A) Students who, at the time of the completion of their secondary education, resided in a health professional shortage area (as defined in section 332 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254e)).

(B) First generation college students (as defined in section 402A(h)(3) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a))).

(C) Students who have been referred by minority-serving institutions (as defined in section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a))).

(D) Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code).

(E) Students who indicate an intention to specialize in a health professional occupation identified by the Inspector General of the Department under section 7412 of title 38, United States Code, as having a staffing shortage.

(3) **ASSIGNMENT TO MEDICAL CENTERS.**—The Secretary shall assign students selected under paragraph (1) to medical centers selected under subsection (b) without regard for whether such medical centers have staffing shortages in any health professional occupation pursuant to section 7412 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) **OTHER MATTERS.**—In carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall—

(1) establish a formal status to facilitate the access to medical centers of the Department by student observers participating in the pilot program;

(2) establish standardized legal, privacy, and ethical requirements for the student observers, including with respect to—

(A) ensuring that no student observer provides any care to patients while participating as an observer; and

(B) ensuring the suitability of a student to participate in the pilot program to ensure that the student poses no risk to patients;

(3) develop and implement a partnership strategy with minority-serving institutions to encourage referrals;

(4) create standardized procedures for student observers;

(5) create an online information page about the pilot program on the internet website of the Department;

(6) publish on the online information page created under paragraph (5) the locations of such centers, and other information on the pilot program, not later than 180 days before the date on which applications are required to be submitted by potential student observers;

(7) identify medical centers and specific health professionals participating in the pilot program; and

(8) notify the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the medical centers selected under subsection (c) within 30 days of selection, to facilitate program awareness.

(f) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the results of the pilot program, including—

(1) the number and demographics of all applicants, those accepted to participate in the pilot program, and those who completed the pilot program; and

(2) if participating institutions of higher education choose to administer satisfaction surveys that assess the experience of those who completed the pilot program, the results of any such satisfaction surveys, provided at the discretion of the institution of higher education.

(g) **SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVATION BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.**—It is the sense of Congress that the pilot program described in subsection (a) should be designed to—

(1) increase the awareness, knowledge, and empathy of future health professionals toward the health conditions common to veterans;

(2) increase the diversity of the recruitment pool of future physicians of the Department; and

(3) expand clinical observation opportunities for all students by encouraging students of all backgrounds to consider a career in the health professions.

(h) **NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this section. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

Subtitle B—Scheduling and Consult Management

SEC. 3101. PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE.

(a) PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish a process and requirements for scheduling appointments for—

(i) health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(ii) health care furnished through the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, by a non-Department health care provider; and

(B) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a description of such process and requirements.

(2) **ELEMENTS OF DESCRIPTION.**—The description of the process and requirements for scheduling appointments for health care required to be submitted under paragraph (1)(B) shall include—

(A) information on how such process and requirements take into account the access standards established under section 1703B of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) the maximum number of days allowed to complete each step of such process.

(3) PERIODIC REVISION.—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may revise the process and requirements required under paragraph (1) as the Secretary considers necessary.

(B) **SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 30 days before revising the process and requirements under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a description of such revised process and requirements, including a description of any modifications to the certification and training under subsection (b).

(b) CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING ON PROCESSES AND REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) **CERTIFICATION.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall require each individual involved in the scheduling of appointments for health care from the Department or health care described in subsection (a)(1)(A)(ii), including schedulers, clinical coordinators, and supervisors, to certify to the Secretary that the individual understands the process and requirements established under subsection (a), including the maximum number of days allowed to complete each step of such process.

(2) **NEW EMPLOYEES.**—The Secretary shall require each employee hired by the Department on or after the date of the enactment of this Act who is to be involved in the scheduling of appointments for health care from the Department or health care described in subsection (a)(1)(A)(ii)—

(A) to undergo training on the process and requirements established under subsection (a) as part of training for the position for which the employee has been hired; and

(B) to make the certification to the Secretary required under paragraph (1).

(c) METHOD TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish or maintain a method or tool—

(A) to enable monitoring of the compliance of the Department with the process and requirements established under subsection (a), including compliance with policies of the Department relating to the maximum number

of days allowed to complete each step of such process; and

(B) to ensure that each medical facility of the Department complies with such process and requirements.

(2) USE THROUGHOUT DEPARTMENT.—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall require each medical facility of the Department to use the method or tool described in paragraph (1).

(B) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report indicating whether each medical facility of the Department is using the method or tool described in paragraph (1).

(d) **COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.**—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the compliance of the Secretary with the requirements of this section.

SEC. 3102. AUDITS REGARDING SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS AND MANAGEMENT OF CONSULTATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than each of one year and two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide for the conduct of a facility-level audit of the scheduling of appointments and the management of consultations for health care under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(b) APPLICATION.—

(1) **FIRST AUDIT.**—The first audit required under subsection (a) shall apply to each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) **SECOND AUDIT.**—The second audit required under subsection (a) shall apply to only those medical facilities of the Department that are in need of corrective action based on the first audit, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) **ELEMENTS.**—Each audit conducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) With respect to each medical center of the Department covered by the audit, an assessment of any scheduling or consultation management issues at that medical center, including the following:

(A) An assessment of noncompliance with policies of the Veterans Health Administration relating to scheduling appointments and managing consultations.

(B) An assessment of the extent to which appointments or consultations are not timely processed.

(C) A description of any backlogs in appointments or consultations that are awaiting action.

(D) An assessment of whether consultations are appropriately processed.

(E) Data with respect to consultations as follows:

(i) Consultations that were scheduled within the request window.

(ii) Duplicate consultation requests.

(iii) Consultations that were discontinued.

(iv) Delays in consultations.

(v) Consultations that were not properly closed or discontinued, including a description of remediation attempts.

(F) A review for accuracy with respect to consultation management as follows:

(i) A review of the accuracy of the type of service, either administrative or clinical, that is inputted in the electronic health record.

(ii) A review of the accuracy of the type of consultation setting, either inpatient or outpatient, that is inputted in the electronic health record.

(iii) A review of the appropriateness of the level of urgency of the consultation that is inputted in the electronic health record.

(iv) A review of any delayed or unresolved consultations.

(2) An identification of such recommendations for corrective action as the Secretary considers necessary, including additional training, increased personnel, and other resources.

(3) A certification that the director of each medical center of the Department covered by the audit is in compliance with the process and requirements established under section 3101(a) and such other requirements relating to the scheduling of appointments and management of consultations as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(4) With respect to referrals for health care between health care providers or facilities of the Department, a measurement of, for each medical facility of the Department covered by the audit—

(A) the period of time between—

(i) the date that a clinician of the Department determines that a veteran requires care from another health care provider or facility and the date that the referral for care is sent to the other health care provider or facility;

(ii) the date that the referral for care is sent to the other health care provider or facility and the date that the other health care provider or facility accepts the referral;

(iii) the date that the other health care provider or facility accepts the referral and the date that the appointment with the other health care provider or at the other facility is made; and

(iv) the date that the appointment with the other health care provider or at the other facility is made and the date of the appointment with the other health care provider or at the other facility; and

(B) any other period of time that the Secretary determines necessary to measure.

(5) With respect to referrals for non-Department health care originating from medical facilities of the Department, a measurement of, for each such facility covered by the audit—

(A) the period of time between—

(i) the date that a clinician of the Department determines that a veteran requires care, or a veteran presents to the Department requesting care, and the date that the referral for care is sent to a non-Department health care provider;

(ii) the date that the referral for care is sent to a non-Department health care provider and the date that a non-Department health care provider accepts the referral;

(iii) the date that a non-Department health care provider accepts the referral and the date that the referral to a non-Department health care provider is completed;

(iv) the date that the referral to a non-Department health care provider is completed and the date that an appointment with a non-Department health care provider is made; and

(v) the date that an appointment with a non-Department health care provider is made and the date that an appointment with a non-Department health care provider occurs; and

(B) any other period of time that the Secretary determines necessary to measure.

(d) **CONDUCT OF AUDIT BY THIRD PARTY.**—Each audit conducted under subsection (a) with respect to a medical facility of the Department shall be conducted by an individual or entity that is not affiliated with the facility.

(e) TRANSMITTAL TO VHA.—Each audit conducted under subsection (a) shall be transmitted to the Under Secretary for Health of the Department so that the Under Secretary can—

(1) strengthen oversight of the scheduling of appointments and management of consultations throughout the Department;

(2) monitor national policy on such scheduling and management; and

(3) develop a remediation plan to address issues uncovered by those audits.

(f) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31 of each year in which an audit is conducted under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the audit conducted during that year.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The Secretary shall include in each report required by paragraph (1)—

(A) the nationwide results of the audit conducted under subsection (a);

(B) the results of such audit with respect to each medical facility of the Department covered by such audit;

(C) an assessment of how the Department strengthened oversight of the scheduling of appointments and management of consultations at each such facility as a result of the audit;

(D) an assessment of how the audit informed the national policy of the Department with respect to the scheduling of appointments and management of consultations; and

(E) a description of any remediation plans to address issues raised by the audit that was completed.

SEC. 3103. ADMINISTRATION OF NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE.

(a) CERTIFICATION OF PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF NON-DEPARTMENT CARE.—

(1) REVIEW.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the staffing, training, and other requirements necessary to administer section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

(B) ELEMENTS.—The review conducted under subparagraph (A) shall include, with respect to each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs—

(i) an assessment of the type of positions required to be staffed at the medical facility;

(ii) the number of such positions authorized;

(iii) the number of such positions funded;

(iv) the number of such positions filled; and

(v) the number of additional such positions required to be authorized.

(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives—

(A) the results of the review conducted under paragraph (1); and

(B) a certification that the Secretary has established all staffing, training, and other requirements required to be reviewed under such paragraph.

(b) SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS.—

(1) MEASUREMENT OF TIMELINESS FOR EACH FACILITY.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall measure, with respect to referrals for non-Department health care originating from medical facilities of the Department, for each such facility—

(A) the period of time between—

(i) the date that a clinician of the Department determines that a veteran requires care, or a veteran presents to the Department requesting care, and the date that the referral for care is sent to a non-Department health care provider;

(ii) the date that the referral for care is sent to a non-Department health care provider and the date that a non-Department health care provider accepts the referral;

(iii) the date that a non-Department health care provider accepts the referral and the date that the referral to a non-Department health care provider is completed;

(iv) the date that the referral to a non-Department health care provider is completed and the date that an appointment with a non-Department health care provider is made; and

(v) the date that an appointment with a non-Department health care provider is made and the date that an appointment with a non-Department health care provider occurs; and

(B) any other period of time that the Secretary determines necessary to measure.

(2) SUBMISSIONS TO CONGRESS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives the data measured under paragraph (1), disaggregated by medical facility.

(B) UPDATE.—Not less frequently than bi-weekly, the Secretary shall update the data submitted under subparagraph (A).

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—

(1) REVIEW.—Beginning not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall review compliance by the Secretary with the requirements of this section, including a review of the validity and reliability of data submitted by the Secretary under subsection (b)(2).

(2) REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives the results of the review conducted under paragraph (1).

SEC. 3104. EXAMINATION OF HEALTH CARE CONSULTATION AND SCHEDULING POSITIONS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROPER GRADING OF CONSULTATION AND SCHEDULING POSITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an examination of health care positions of the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine whether health care positions involved in the consultation and scheduling processes are appropriately graded.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the examination under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with health care staffing experts in the Federal Government and the private sector.

(3) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the results of the examination conducted under paragraph (1).

(b) REVIEW OF ONBOARDING PROCESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress—

(1) a review of the onboarding process of individuals in health care positions described in subsection (a), including how long it takes to hire those individuals; and

(2) a description of any changes that the Secretary has made or plans to make to improve that process.

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

TITLE IV—NAVY SEAL BILL MULDER

SEC. 4001. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Navy SEAL Bill Mulder Act of 2020”.

Subtitle A—Service-connection and COVID-19

SEC. 4101. PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE-CONNECTION FOR MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES WHO CONTRACT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 1164. Presumptions of service-connection for Coronavirus Disease 2019

“(a) PRESUMPTIONS GENERALLY.—(1) For purposes of laws administered by the Secretary and subject to section 1113 of this title, if symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (in this section referred to as ‘COVID-19’) described in subsection (d) manifest within one of the manifestation periods described in paragraph (2) in an individual who served in a qualifying period of duty described in subsection (b)—

“(A) infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (in this section referred to as ‘SARS-CoV-2’) shall be presumed to have occurred during the qualifying period of duty;

“(B) COVID-19 shall be presumed to have been incurred during the qualifying period of duty; and

“(C) if the individual becomes disabled or dies as a result of COVID-19, it shall be presumed that the individual became disabled or died during the qualifying period of duty for purposes of establishing that the individual served in the active military, naval, or air service.

“(2)(A) The manifestation periods described in this paragraph are the following:

“(i) During a qualifying period of duty described in subsection (b), if that period of duty was more than 48 continuous hours in duration.

“(ii) Within 14 days after the individual's completion of a qualifying period of duty described in subsection (b).

“(iii) An additional period prescribed under subparagraph (B).

“(B)(i) If the Secretary determines that a manifestation period of more than 14 days after completion of a qualifying period of service is appropriate for the presumptions under paragraph (1), the Secretary may prescribe that additional period by regulation.

“(ii) A determination under clause (i) shall be made in consultation with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“(b) QUALIFYING PERIOD OF DUTY DESCRIBED.—A qualifying period of duty described in this subsection is—

“(1) a period of active duty performed—

“(A) during the national emergency declared by the President under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.); and

“(B) before the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020; or

“(2) training duty under title 10 or full-time National Guard duty (as defined in section 101 of title 10), performed under orders issued on or after March 13, 2020—

“(A) during the national emergency declared by the President under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.); and

“(B) before the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020.

“(c) APPLICATION OF PRESUMPTIONS FOR TRAINING DUTY.—When, pursuant to subsection (a), COVID-19 is presumed to have been incurred during a qualifying period of duty described in subsection (b)(2)—

“(1) COVID-19 shall be deemed to have been incurred in the line of duty during a period of active military, naval, or air service; and

“(2) where entitlement to benefits under this title is predicated on the individual who was disabled or died being a veteran, benefits for disability or death resulting from COVID-19 as described in subsection (a) shall be paid or furnished as if the individual was a veteran, without regard to whether the period of duty would constitute active military, naval, or air service under section 101 of this title.

“(d) SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19.—For purposes of subsection (a), symptoms of COVID-19 are those symptoms that competent medical evidence demonstrates are experienced by an individual affected and directly related to COVID-19.

“(e) MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND OPINIONS.—If there is a question of whether the symptoms experienced by an individual described in paragraph (1) of subsection (a) during a manifestation period described in paragraph (2) of such subsection are attributable to COVID-19 resulting from infection with SARS-CoV-2 during the qualifying period of duty, in determining whether a medical examination or medical opinion is necessary to make a decision on the claim within the meaning of section 5103A(d) of this title, a qualifying period of duty described in subsection (b) of this section shall be treated as if it were active military, naval, or air service for purposes of section 5103A(d)(2)(B) of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such subchapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“1164. Presumptions of service-connection for Coronavirus Disease 2019.”.

Subtitle B—Assistance for Homeless Veterans

SEC. 4201. FLEXIBILITY FOR THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN CARING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS DURING A COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.

(a) GENERAL SUPPORT.—

(1) USE OF FUNDS.—During a covered public health emergency, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs to carry out sections 2011, 2012, 2031, and 2061 of title 38, United States Code, to provide to homeless veterans and veterans participating in the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (commonly referred to as “HUD-VASH”), as the Secretary determines is needed, the following:

(A) Assistance required for safety and survival (such as food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items).

(B) Transportation required to support stability and health (such as for appointments with service providers, conducting housing searches, and obtaining food and supplies).

(C) Communications equipment and services (such as tablets, smartphones, disposable phones, and related service plans) required to support stability and health (such as maintaining contact with service providers, prospective landlords, and family).

(D) Such other assistance as the Secretary determines is needed.

(2) HOMELESS VETERANS ON LAND OF THE DEPARTMENT.—

(A) COLLABORATION.—During a covered public health emergency, to the extent possible, the Secretary may collaborate with one or more organizations to manage use of land of the Department for homeless veterans for living and sleeping.

(B) ELEMENTS.—Collaboration under subparagraph (A) may include the provision by either the Secretary or the organization of food services and security for property, buildings, and other facilities owned or controlled by the Department.

(b) GRANT AND PER DIEM PROGRAM.—

(1) LIMITS ON RATES FOR PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—Section 20013(b) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (38 U.S.C. 2011 note; Public Law 116-136) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(B) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as so redesignated, by inserting “(1)” before “In the case”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) If the Secretary waives any limit on grant amounts or rates for per diem payments under paragraph (1), notwithstanding section 2012(a)(2)(B) of such title, the maximum rate for per diem payments described in paragraph (1)(B) shall be three times the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under section 1741 of such title.”.

(2) MODIFICATION OF FUNDING LIMITS FOR GRANTS.—Subsection (c)(2) of section 2011 of title 38, United States Code, shall not apply to any grant awarded during a covered public health emergency under such section for a project described in subsection (b)(1) of such section.

(3) USE OF PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—During a covered public health emergency, a recipient of a grant or an eligible entity under the grant and per diem program of the Department (in this subsection referred to as the “program”) may use per diem payments under sections 2012 and 2061 of title 38, United States Code, to provide assistance required for safety and survival (such as food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items) for—

(A) homeless veterans; and

(B) formerly homeless veterans residing in a facility operated wholly or in part by such a recipient or eligible entity receiving per diem payments under section 2012 of such title.

(4) ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, under the program, the Secretary may provide amounts for additional transitional housing beds to facilitate access to housing and services provided to homeless veterans.

(B) NOTICE; COMPETITION; PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE.—The Secretary may provide amounts under subparagraph (A)—

(i) without notice or competition; and

(ii) for a period of performance determined by the Secretary.

(5) INSPECTIONS AND LIFE SAFETY CODE REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, the Secretary may waive any requirement under subsection (b) or (c) of section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, in order to allow the recipient of a grant or an eligible entity under the program—

(i) to quickly identify temporary alternate sites of care for homeless veterans that are suitable for habitation;

(ii) to facilitate social distancing or isolation needs; or

(iii) to facilitate activation or continuation of a program for which a grant has been awarded.

(B) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may waive a requirement pursuant to the authority provided by subparagraph (A) with respect to a facility of a recipient of a grant or an eligible entity under the program only if the facility meets applicable local safety requirements, including fire safety requirements.

(6) DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY RELATING TO GRANTS.—During a covered public health emergency, if the recipient of a grant awarded before or during such emergency under section 2011 of title 38, United States Code, for a project described in subsection (b)(1) of such section is no longer providing services in accordance with the terms of the grant, the recipient shall not be subject during such emergency to any property disposition requirements relating to the grant under subsection (c) or (f) of section 61.67 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 200.311(c) of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations.

(c) INSPECTION AND LIFE SAFETY CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR THERAPEUTIC HOUSING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, the Secretary may waive any inspection or life safety code requirement under subsection (c) of section 2032 of title 38, United States Code—

(A) to allow quick identification of temporary alternate sites of care for homeless veterans that are suitable for habitation;

(B) to facilitate social distancing or isolation needs; or

(C) to facilitate the operation of housing under such section.

(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may waive a requirement pursuant to the authority provided by paragraph (1) with respect to a residence or facility referred to in such section 2032 only if the residence or facility, as the case may be, meets applicable local safety requirements, including fire safety requirements.

(d) ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TELEHEALTH SERVICES.—To the extent practicable, during a covered public health emergency, the Secretary shall ensure that veterans participating in or receiving services from a program under chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, have access to telehealth services to which such veterans are eligible under the laws administered by the Secretary, including by ensuring that telehealth capabilities are available to—

(1) such veterans;

(2) case managers of the Department of programs for homeless veterans authorized under such chapter; and

(3) community-based service providers for homeless veterans receiving funds from the Department through grants or contracts.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.—The term “covered public health emergency” means an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority.

(2) HOMELESS VETERAN; VETERAN.—The terms “homeless veteran” and “veteran” have the meanings given those terms in section 2002 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) TELEHEALTH.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “telehealth” means the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.

(B) TECHNOLOGIES.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), “telecommunications technologies” include video conferencing, the internet, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless communications.

SEC. 4202. LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AND VETERANS AT RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2022 the following new section:

“§ 2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness

“(a) GRANTS.—Subject to the availability of appropriations provided for such purpose, the Secretary shall award grants to eligible entities that provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

“(b) CRITERIA.—(1) The Secretary shall—

“(A) establish criteria and requirements for grants under this section, including criteria for entities eligible to receive such grants; and

“(B) publish such criteria and requirements in the Federal Register.

“(2) In establishing criteria and requirements under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

“(A) take into consideration any criteria and requirements needed with respect to carrying out this section in rural communities, on trust lands, and in the territories and possessions of the United States; and

“(B) consult with organizations that have experience in providing services to homeless veterans, including—

“(i) veterans service organizations;

“(ii) the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps; and

“(iii) such other organizations as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may award a grant under this section to an entity applying for such a grant only if the applicant for the grant—

“(1) is a public or nonprofit private entity with the capacity (as determined by the Secretary) to effectively administer a grant under this section;

“(2) demonstrates that adequate financial support will be available to carry out the services for which the grant is sought consistent with the application;

“(3) agrees to meet the applicable criteria and requirements established under subsection (b)(1); and

“(4) has, as determined by the Secretary, demonstrated the capacity to meet such criteria and requirements.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants under this section shall be used to provide homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness the following legal services:

“(1) Legal services relating to housing, including eviction defense, representation in landlord-tenant cases, and representation in foreclosure cases.

“(2) Legal services relating to family law, including assistance in court proceedings for child support, divorce, estate planning, and family reconciliation.

“(3) Legal services relating to income support, including assistance in obtaining public benefits.

“(4) Legal services relating to criminal defense, including defense in matters symptomatic of homelessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and driver’s license revocation, to reduce recidivism and facilitate the overcoming of reentry obstacles in employment or housing.

“(5) Legal services relating to requests to upgrade the characterization of a discharge or dismissal of a former member of the Armed Forces under section 1553 of title 10.

“(6) Such other legal services as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(e) FUNDS FOR WOMEN VETERANS.—For any fiscal year, not less than 10 percent of the amount authorized to be appropriated for grants under this section shall be used to provide legal services described in subsection (d) to women veterans.

“(f) LOCATIONS.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall award grants under this section to eligible entities in a manner that is equitably distributed across the geographic regions of the United States, including with respect to—

“(1) rural communities;

“(2) trust lands (as defined in section 3765 of this title);

“(3) Native Americans; and

“(4) tribal organizations (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)).

“(g) BIENNIAL REPORTS.—(1) Not less frequently than once every two years, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on grants awarded under this section.

“(2) To the extent feasible, each report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following with respect to the period covered by the report:

“(A) The number of homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness assisted.

“(B) A description of the legal services provided.

“(C) A description of the legal matters addressed.

“(D) An analysis by the Secretary with respect to the operational effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the services provided.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2022 the following new item:

“2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.”.

(c) CRITERIA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and publish in the Federal Register the criteria and requirements pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 2022A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 4203. GAP ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN VETERANS WHO ARE HOMELESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall complete an analysis of programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless or precariously housed to identify the areas in which such programs are failing to meet the needs of such women.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the analysis completed under subsection (a).

SEC. 4204. IMPROVEMENTS TO GRANTS AWARDED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ENTITIES THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) INCREASE IN PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—Paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(2)(A)(i) Except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (B), the rate for such per diem

payments shall be the daily cost of care estimated by the grant recipient or eligible entity adjusted by the Secretary under clause (ii).

“(ii)(I) The Secretary shall adjust the rate estimated by the grant recipient or eligible entity under clause (i) to exclude other sources of income described in subclause (III) that the grant recipient or eligible entity certifies to be correct.

“(II) Each grant recipient or eligible entity shall provide to the Secretary such information with respect to other sources of income as the Secretary may require to make the adjustment under subclause (I).

“(III) The other sources of income referred to in subclauses (I) and (II) are payments to the grant recipient or eligible entity for furnishing services to homeless veterans under programs other than under this subchapter, including payments and grants from other departments and agencies of the United States, from departments or agencies of State or local government, and from private entities or organizations.

“(iii) For purposes of calculating the rate for per diem payments under clause (i), in the case of a homeless veteran who has care of a minor dependent while receiving services from the grant recipient or eligible entity, the daily cost of care of the homeless veteran shall be the sum of the daily cost of care of the homeless veteran determined under clause (i) plus, for each such minor dependent, an amount that equals 50 percent of such daily cost of care.

“(B)(i)(I) Except as provided in clause (ii), and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may adjust the rate for per diem payments under this paragraph, as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(II) Any adjustment made under this clause—

“(aa) may not result in a rate that—

“(AA) is lower than the rate in effect under this paragraph as in effect immediately preceding the date of the enactment of the Navy SEAL Bill Mulder Act of 2020; or

“(BB) exceeds the rate that is 115 percent of the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of this title, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section; and

“(bb) may be determined on the basis of locality.

“(ii) In the case of services furnished to a homeless veteran who is placed in housing that will become permanent housing for the veteran upon termination of the furnishing of such services to such veteran, the maximum rate of per diem authorized under this section is 150 percent of the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of this title, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section.”.

(b) REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN FEES.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) REIMBURSEMENT OF ENTITIES FOR CERTAIN FEES.—The Secretary may reimburse a recipient of a grant under section 2011, 2013, or 2061 of this title or a recipient of per diem payments under this section for fees charged to that grant or per diem payment recipient for the use of the homeless management information system described in section 402(f) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360a(f))—

“(1) in amounts the Secretary determines to be reasonable; and

“(2) if the Secretary determines that the grant or per diem payment recipient is unable to obtain information contained in such system through other means and at no cost to the grant or per diem payment recipient.”.

SEC. 4205. REPEAL OF SUNSET ON AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT PROGRAM OF REFERRAL AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR VETERANS AT RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS WHO ARE TRANSITIONING FROM CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2023 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (d); and
(2) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (d).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2021(a)(4) of such title is amended by striking “section 2023(e)” and inserting “section 2023(d)”.

SEC. 4206. COORDINATION OF CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS RECEIVING HOUSING VOUCHERS UNDER TRIBAL HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT-VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM.

Section 2003 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON ASSISTANCE FROM INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE.—The Secretary may enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Health and Human Services under which case managers of the Indian Health Service may provide case management assistance to veterans who receive housing vouchers under the Tribal Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (Tribal HUD-VASH) program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.”.

SEC. 4207. CONTRACTS RELATING TO CASE MANAGERS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS IN SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 304 of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-154; 38 U.S.C. 2041 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—
(A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:
“(2)(A) The director of each covered medical center shall seek to enter into one or more contracts or agreements described in paragraph (1).
“(B) Any contract or agreement under subparagraph (A) may require that each case manager employed by an eligible entity who performs services under the contract or agreement has credentials equivalent to the credentials required for a case manager of the Department.

“(C)(i) The Secretary may waive the requirement under subparagraph (A) with respect to a covered medical center if the Secretary determines that fulfilling such requirement is infeasible.
“(ii) If the Secretary grants a waiver under clause (i), the Secretary shall, not later than 90 days after granting such waiver, submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing—

“(I) an explanation of the determination made under clause (i);
“(II) a plan to increase the number of case managers of the Department; and
“(III) a plan for the covered medical center to increase use of housing vouchers allocated to that medical center under the program described in paragraph (1).

“(D) In this paragraph, the term ‘covered medical center’ means a medical center of the Department with respect to which the Secretary determines that—

“(i) more than 15 percent of all housing vouchers allocated to that medical center under the program described in paragraph (1) during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which such determination was made

were unused due to a lack of case management services provided by the Secretary; and
“(ii) one or more case manager positions have been vacant for at least nine consecutive months immediately preceding the date of such determination.”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2)—
(A) in the matter before subparagraph (A), by striking “, including because—” and inserting a period; and
(B) by striking subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C).

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the first day of the first fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4208. REPORT ON STAFFING OF DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every three years thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that includes the following:

(1) An assessment of the hiring needs of the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (in this section referred to as the “HUD-VASH program”), including—

(A) an identification of the number of case managers of the HUD-VASH program as of the date of the report including—
(i) the total number of vacancies; and
(ii) the vacancies at each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs;
(B) the number of case managers of the HUD-VASH program that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development jointly determine necessary to meet the needs of the Department and the program; and
(C) the amount of turnover among case managers of the HUD-VASH program and whether the turnover was planned or unexpected.

(2) An assessment of how compensation, including recruitment and retention incentives, for case managers of the HUD-VASH program affects turnover, and what percentage of retention compensation is provided to such case managers at each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs (compared to other positions).

(3) A comparison of compensation described in paragraph (2) with the compensation provided to State, local, and nongovernmental housing employees at comparable training and experience levels.
(4) Examples of how the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have worked with non-Federal partners (such as local governments, nongovernmental organizations, veterans service organizations, and employee unions) to meet the staffing needs of the HUD-VASH program.

(5) Examples of how medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs with high retention rates for case managers of the HUD-VASH program have been able to maintain staffing levels.

Subtitle C—Retraining Assistance for Veterans

SEC. 4301. ACCESS FOR THE SECRETARIES OF LABOR AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TO THE FEDERAL DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES.

Section 453A(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653a(h)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) VETERAN EMPLOYMENT.—The Secretaries of Labor and of Veterans Affairs shall have access to information reported by em-

ployers pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for purposes of tracking employment of veterans.”.

SEC. 4302. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBLE CLASS OF PROVIDERS OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR VETERANS.

Section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following: “The Secretary shall treat an individual as an eligible veteran if the Secretary determines that the individual shall become an eligible veteran fewer than 180 days after the date of such determination. If an individual treated as an eligible veteran by reason of the preceding sentence does anything to make the veteran ineligible during the 180-day period referred to in such sentence, the Secretary may require the veteran to repay any benefits received by such veteran by reason of such sentence.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—
(A) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking “has been operational for at least 2 years” and inserting “employs instructors whom the Secretary determines are experts in their respective fields in accordance with paragraph (6)”;

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

“(6) EXPERTS.—The Secretary shall determine whether instructors are experts under paragraph (3)(A) based on evidence furnished to the Secretary by the provider regarding the ability of the instructors to—

“(A) identify professions in need of new employees to hire, tailor the programs to meet market needs, and identify the employers likely to hire graduates;
“(B) effectively teach the skills offered to eligible veterans;

“(C) provide relevant industry experience in the fields of programs offered to incoming eligible veterans; and
“(D) demonstrate relevant industry experience in such fields of programs.”;

(3) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting “(not including an individual described in the second sentence of subsection (b))” after “each eligible veteran”;

(B) by inserting “or part-time” after “full-time”;

(4) in subsection (g), by striking “\$15,000,000” and inserting “\$45,000,000”;

(5) by adding at the end the following new subsection (i):

“(i) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN ACCOUNTING OF ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may not consider enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section to be assistance under a provision of law referred to in section 3695 of title 38, United States Code.”.

SEC. 4303. PILOT PROGRAM FOR OFF-BASE TRANSITION TRAINING FOR VETERANS AND SPOUSES.

(a) EXTENSION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (a) of section 301 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 10 U.S.C. 1144 note) is amended—

(1) by striking “During the two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act” and inserting “During the five-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Navy SEAL Bill Mulder Act of 2020”; and

(2) by striking “to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing such program to eligible individuals at locations other than military installations”.

(b) LOCATIONS.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking “STATES” and inserting “LOCATIONS”; and

(B) by striking “not less than three and not more than five States” and inserting “not fewer than 50 locations in States (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code)”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “at least two” and inserting “at least 20”; and

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

“(5) PREFERENCES.—In selecting States for participation in the pilot program, the Secretary shall provide a preference for any State with—

“(A) a high rate of usage of unemployment benefits for recently separated members of the Armed Forces; or

“(B) a labor force or economy that has been significantly impacted by a covered public health emergency.

“(6) COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘covered public health emergency’ means—

“(A) the public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) on January 31, 2020, with respect to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); or

“(B) a domestic emergency declared, based on an outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), by the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or a State or local authority.”.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Each such report shall include information about the employment outcomes of the eligible individuals who received such training during the year covered by the report.”.

(d) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (f) of such section is repealed.

SEC. 4304. GRANTS FOR PROVISION OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AFTER SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, OR DISCHARGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make grants to eligible organizations for the provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces who are separated, retired, or discharged from the Armed Forces, and spouses of such members.

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to provide to members of the Armed Forces and spouses described in subsection (a) resume assistance, interview training, job recruitment training, and related services leading directly to successful transition, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, an organization shall submit to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, may require.

(d) PRIORITY.—In making grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to an organization that—

(1) provides multiple forms of services described in subsection (b); or

(2) is located in a State with—

(A) a high rate of unemployment among veterans;

(B) a high rate of usage of unemployment benefits for recently separated members of the Armed Forces; or

(C) a labor force or economy that has been significantly impacted by a covered public health emergency (as such term is defined in section 131(n)).

(e) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—A grant under this section shall be in an amount that does not

exceed 50 percent of the amount required by the organization to provide the services described in subsection (b).

(f) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall carry out this section not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to provide a grant under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary implements the grant program under this section.

SEC. 4305. ONE-YEAR INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the covered officials, shall enter into an agreement with an appropriate entity with experience in adult education to carry out a one-year independent assessment of the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code (TAP), including—

(1) the effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program for members of each military department during the entire military life cycle;

(2) the appropriateness of the career readiness standards of the Transition Assistance Program;

(3) a review of information that is provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs under the Transition Assistance Program, including mental health data;

(4) whether the Transition Assistance Program effectively addresses the challenges veterans face entering the civilian workforce and in translating experience and skills from military service to the job market;

(5) whether the Transition Assistance Program effectively addresses the challenges faced by the families of veterans making the transition to civilian life;

(6) appropriate metrics regarding outcomes of the Transition Assistance Program for members of the Armed Forces one year after separation, retirement, or discharge from the Armed Forces;

(7) what the Secretary, in consultation with the covered officials and veterans service organizations, determine to be successful outcomes for the Transition Assistance Program;

(8) whether members of the Armed Forces achieve successful outcomes for the Transition Assistance Program, as determined under paragraph (7);

(9) how the Secretary and the covered officials provide feedback to each other regarding such outcomes;

(10) recommendations for the Secretaries of the military departments regarding how to improve outcomes for members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, and discharge; and

(11) other topics the Secretary and the covered officials determine would aid members of the Armed Forces as they transition to civilian life.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the completion of the independent assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary and the covered officials shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress—

(1) the findings and recommendations (including recommended legislation) of the independent assessment prepared by the entity described in subsection (a); and

(2) responses of the Secretary and the covered officials to the findings and recommendations described in paragraph (1).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(2) COVERED OFFICIALS.—The term “covered officials” means—

(A) the Secretary of Defense;

(B) the Secretary of Labor;

(C) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration; and

(D) the Secretaries of the military departments.

(3) MILITARY DEPARTMENT.—The term “military department” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 4306. LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON CHANGES TO TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) STUDY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall conduct a five-year longitudinal study regarding the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code (TAP), on three separate cohorts of members of the Armed Forces who have separated from the Armed Forces, including—

(1) a cohort that has attended counseling under the Transition Assistance Program as implemented on the date of the enactment of this Act;

(2) a cohort that attends counseling under the Transition Assistance Program after the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor implement changes recommended in the report under section 136(b); and

(3) a cohort that has not attended counseling under the Transition Assistance Program.

(b) PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date that is one year after the date of the initiation of the study under subsection (a), and annually thereafter for the three subsequent years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a progress report of activities under the study during the immediately preceding year.

(c) FINAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the study under subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report of final findings and recommendations based on the study.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The final report under paragraph (1) shall include information regarding the following:

(A) The percentage of each cohort that received unemployment benefits during the study under subsection (a).

(B) The numbers of months members of each cohort were employed during the study.

(C) Annual starting and ending salaries of members of each cohort who were employed during the study.

(D) How many members of each cohort enrolled in an institution of higher learning, as that term is defined in section 3452(f) of title 38, United States Code.

(E) The academic credit hours, degrees, and certificates obtained by members of each cohort during the study.

(F) The annual income of members of each cohort.

(G) The total household income of members of each cohort.

(H) How many members of each cohort own their principal residences.

(I) How many dependents members of each cohort have.

(J) The percentage of each cohort that achieves a successful outcome for the Transition Assistance Program, as determined under section 136(a)(7).

(K) Other criteria the Secretaries and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration determine appropriate.

(d) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

TITLE V—DEBORAH SAMPSON

SEC. 5001. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Deborah Sampson Act of 2020”.

Subtitle A—Improving Access for Women Veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs

SEC. 5101. OFFICE OF WOMEN’S HEALTH IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) CHIEF OFFICER OF WOMEN’S HEALTH.—Subsection (a) of section 7306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (10) as paragraph (11); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following new paragraph (10):

“(10) The Chief Officer of Women’s Health.”

(b) ORGANIZATION OF OFFICE AND ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end of the following new sections:

“§ 7310. Office of Women’s Health

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Under Secretary for Health shall establish and operate in the Veterans Health Administration the Office of Women’s Health (in this section referred to as the ‘Office’).

“(2) The Office shall be located at the Central Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(3)(A) The head of the Office is the Chief Officer of Women’s Health (in this section referred to as the ‘Chief Officer’).

“(B) The Chief Officer shall report to the Under Secretary for Health.

“(4) The Under Secretary for Health shall provide the Office with such staff and other support as may be necessary for the Office to carry out effectively the functions of the Office under this section.

“(5) The Under Secretary for Health may reorganize existing offices within the Veterans Health Administration as of the date of the enactment of this section in order to avoid duplication with the functions of the Office.

“(b) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the Office include the following:

“(1) To provide a central office for monitoring and encouraging the activities of the Veterans Health Administration with respect to the provision, evaluation, and improvement of health care services provided to women veterans by the Department.

“(2) To develop and implement standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans by the Department.

“(3) To monitor and identify deficiencies in standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans by the Department, to provide technical assistance to medical

facilities of the Department to address and remedy deficiencies, and to perform oversight of implementation of such standards of care.

“(4) To monitor and identify deficiencies in standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans provided through the community pursuant to this title and to provide recommendations to the appropriate office to address and remedy any deficiencies.

“(5) To oversee distribution of resources and information related to health programming for women veterans under this title.

“(6) To promote the expansion and improvement of clinical, research, and educational activities of the Veterans Health Administration with respect to the health care of women veterans.

“(7) To provide, as part of the annual budgeting process, recommendations with respect to the amounts to be requested for furnishing hospital care and medical services to women veterans pursuant to chapter 17 of this title, including, at a minimum, recommendations that ensure that such amounts either reflect or exceed the proportion of veterans enrolled in the system of patient enrollment of the Department established and operated under section 1705(a) of this title who are women.

“(8) To provide recommendations to the Under Secretary for Health with respect to modifying the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system, or successor system, to ensure that resource allocations under such system, or successor system, reflect the health care needs of women veterans.

“(9) To carry out such other duties as the Under Secretary for Health may require.

“(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—(1) If the Under Secretary for Health determines not to implement any recommendation made by the Chief Officer with respect to the allocation of resources to address the health care needs of women veterans, the Secretary shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of such determination by not later than 30 days after the date on which the Under Secretary for Health receives the recommendation.

“(2) Each notification under paragraph (1) relating to a determination with respect to a recommendation shall include the following:

“(A) The reasoning of the Under Secretary for Health in making the determination.

“(B) An alternative, if one is selected, to the recommendation that the Under Secretary for Health will carry out to fulfill the health care needs of women veterans.

“(d) STANDARDS OF CARE.—For purposes of carrying out the functions of the Office under this section, the standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans from the Department shall include, at a minimum, the following:

“(1) A requirement for—

“(A) at least one designated women’s health primary care provider at each medical center of the Department whose duties include, to the extent practicable, providing training to other health care providers of the Department with respect to the needs of women veterans; and

“(B) at least one designated women’s health primary care provider at each community-based outpatient clinic of the Department who may serve women patients as a percentage of the total duties of the provider.

“(2) Other requirements as determined by the Under Secretary for Health.

“(e) OUTREACH.—The Chief Officer shall ensure that—

“(1) not less frequently than biannually, each medical facility of the Department holds a public forum for women veterans

that occurs outside of regular business hours; and

“(2) not less frequently than quarterly, each medical facility of the Department convenes a focus group of women veterans that includes a discussion of harassment occurring at such facility.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ has the meaning given that term in section 7310A(h) of this title.

“(2) The term ‘facility of the Department’ has the meaning given the term ‘facilities of the Department’ in section 1701(3) of this title.

“(3) The term ‘Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system’ means the resource allocation system established pursuant to section 429 of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-204; 110 Stat. 2929).

“§ 7310A. Annual reports on women’s health

“(a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than December 1 of each year, the Chief Officer of Women’s Health shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing the matters under subsections (b) through (g).

“(b) OFFICE OF WOMEN’S HEALTH.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include a description of—

“(1) actions taken by the Office of Women’s Health established under section 7310 of this title in the preceding fiscal year to improve the provision of health care by the Department to women veterans;

“(2) any identified deficiencies related to the provision of health care by the Department to women veterans and the standards of care established in such section and the plan of the Department to address such deficiencies;

“(3) the funding and personnel provided to the Office and whether additional funding or personnel are needed to meet the requirements of such section; and

“(4) other information that would be of interest to the appropriate congressional committees with respect to oversight of the provision of health care by the Department to women veterans.

“(c) ACCESS TO GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.—(1) Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the access of women veterans to gender-specific services under contracts, agreements, or other arrangements with non-Department medical providers entered into by the Secretary for the provision of hospital care or medical services to veterans.

“(2) The analysis under paragraph (1) shall include data and performance measures for the availability of gender-specific services described in such paragraph, including—

“(A) the average wait time between the preferred appointment date of the veteran and the date on which the appointment is completed;

“(B) the average driving time required for veterans to attend appointments; and

“(C) reasons why appointments could not be scheduled with non-Department medical providers.

“(d) MODELS OF CARE.—(1) Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the use by the Department of general primary care clinics, separate but shared spaces, and women’s health centers as delivery of care models for women veterans.

“(2) The analysis under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) The number of facilities of the Department that fall into each delivery of care model described in such paragraph, disaggregated by Veterans Integrated Service Network and State.

“(B) A description of the criteria used by the Department to determine which such model is most appropriate for each facility of the Department.

“(C) An assessment of how the Department decides to make investments to modify facilities to a different model.

“(D) A description of what, if any, plans the Department has to modify facilities from general primary care clinics to another model.

“(E) An assessment of whether any facilities could be modified to a separate but shared space for a women's health center within planned investments under the strategic capital investment planning process of the Department.

“(F) An assessment of whether any facilities could be modified to a separate or shared space or a women's health center with minor modifications to existing plans under the strategic capital investment planning process of the Department.

“(G) An assessment of whether the Department has a goal for how many facilities should fall into each such model.

“(e) STAFFING.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the staffing of the Department relating to the treatment of women, including the following, disaggregated by Veterans Integrated Service Network and State (except with respect to paragraph (4)):

“(1) The number of women's health centers.

“(2) The number of patient aligned care teams of the Department relating to women's health.

“(3) The number of full- and part-time gynecologists of the Department.

“(4) The number of designated women's health care providers of the Department, disaggregated by facility of the Department.

“(5) The number of health care providers of the Department who have completed a mini-residency for women's health care through the Women Veterans Health Care Mini-Residency Program of the Department during the one-year period preceding the submittal of the report and the number of mini-residency training slots for such program that are available during the one-year period following such date.

“(6) The number of designated women's health care providers of the Department who have sufficient women patient loads or case complexities to retain their competencies and proficiencies.

“(f) ACCESSIBILITY AND TREATMENT OPTIONS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the accessibility and treatment options for women veterans, including the following:

“(1) An assessment of wheelchair accessibility of women's health centers of the Department, including, with respect to each such center, an assessment of accessibility for each kind of treatment provided at the center, including with respect to radiology and mammography, that addresses all relevant factors, including door sizes, hoists, and equipment.

“(2) The options for women veterans to access mental health providers and primary care providers who are women.

“(3) The options for women veterans at medical facilities of the Department with respect to clothing sizes, including for gowns, drawstring pants, and pajamas.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

“(B) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

“(2) The term ‘gender-specific services’ means mammography, obstetric care, gynecological care, and such other services as the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(2) REFERENCES TO HEALTH CARE AND SERVICES.—The references to health care and the references to services in sections 7310 and 7310A of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1), are references to the health care and services included in the medical benefits package provided by the Department as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7309A the following new items:

“7310. Office of Women's Health.

“7310A. Annual reports on women's health.”.

(c) INITIAL REPORT.—The Chief Officer of Women's Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit the initial report under section 7310A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (b), by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5102. WOMEN VETERANS RETROFIT INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prioritize the retrofitting of existing medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with fixtures, materials, and other outfitting measures to support the provision of care to women veterans at such facilities.

(b) PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a plan to address deficiencies in environment of care for women veterans at medical facilities of the Department.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An explanation of the specific environment of care deficiencies that need correcting.

(B) An assessment of how the Secretary prioritizes retrofitting existing medical facilities to support provision of care to women veterans in comparison to other requirements.

(C) A five-year strategic plan and cost projection for retrofitting medical facilities of the Department to support the provision of care to women veterans as required under subsection (a).

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subject to appropriations and the plan under (b), there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$20,000,000 to carry out subsection (a) in addition to amounts otherwise made available to the Secretary for the purposes set forth in such subsection.

SEC. 5103. ESTABLISHMENT OF ENVIRONMENT OF CARE STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a policy under which the environment of care standards and inspections at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs include—

(1) an alignment of the requirements for such standards and inspections with the women's health handbook of the Veterans Health Administration;

(2) a requirement for the frequency of such inspections;

(3) delineation of the roles and responsibilities of staff at each medical center who are responsible for compliance;

(4) the requirement that each medical center submit to the Secretary and make pub-

licly available a report on the compliance of the medical center with the standards; and

(5) a remediation plan.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report certifying in writing that the policy required by subsection (a) has been finalized and disseminated to all medical centers of the Department.

SEC. 5104. PROVISION OF REINTEGRATION AND READJUSTMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS IN GROUP RETREAT SETTINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1712A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)(B)—

(A) in clause (ii), by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb);

(B) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II);

(C) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as redesignated by subparagraph (B), by striking “Counseling” and inserting “(i) Counseling”; and

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

“(ii)(I) Except as provided in subclauses (IV) and (V), counseling furnished to an individual under subparagraph (A) may include reintegration and readjustment services described in subclause (II) furnished in group retreat settings.

“(II) Reintegration and readjustment services described in this subclause are the following:

“(aa) Information on reintegration of the individual into family, employment, and community.

“(bb) Financial counseling.

“(cc) Occupational counseling.

“(dd) Information and counseling on stress reduction.

“(ee) Information and counseling on conflict resolution.

“(ff) Such other information and counseling as the Secretary considers appropriate to assist the individual in reintegration into family, employment, and community.

“(III) In furnishing reintegration and readjustment services under subclause (I), the Secretary shall offer women the opportunity to receive such services in group retreat settings in which the only participants are women.

“(IV) An individual described in subparagraph (C)(v) may receive reintegration and readjustment services under subclause (I) of this clause only if the individual receives such services with a family member described in subclause (I) or (II) of such subparagraph.

“(V) In each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025, the maximum number of individuals to whom integration and readjustment services may be furnished in group retreat settings under this subclause (I) shall not exceed 1,200 individuals.”.

(b) REQUEST FOR SERVICES.—Subsection (a)(2) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking “Upon” and inserting “(A) Upon”;

(2) by striking “paragraph (1)(B)” and inserting “paragraph (1)(B)(i)”; and

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

“(B) Upon the request of an individual described in paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary shall furnish the individual reintegration and readjustment services in group retreat settings under paragraph (1)(B)(ii) if the Secretary determines the experience will be therapeutically appropriate.”.

SEC. 5105. PROVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into one or

more agreements with public or private entities to provide legal services to women veterans.

(b) **FOCUS.**—The focus of an agreement entered into under subsection (a) shall be to address the following unmet needs of women veterans as set forth in the most recently completed Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups for Veterans (CHALENG for Veterans) survey:

- (1) Child support.
- (2) Prevention of eviction and foreclosure.
- (3) Discharge upgrades.
- (4) Financial guardianship.
- (5) Credit counseling.
- (6) Family reconciliation assistance.

SEC. 5106. COMPTROLLER GENERAL SURVEYS AND REPORT ON SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROVIDED FOR VERY LOW-INCOME WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) **SURVEYS.**—

(1) **SURVEY OF WOMEN VETERANS.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall survey women veterans who have received or are receiving supportive services provided under section 2044 of title 38, United States Code, to determine satisfaction with the ability of such services to meet the specific needs of such veterans.

(2) **SURVEY OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.**—The Comptroller General shall survey eligible entities receiving financial assistance under such section and other partners of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including veterans service organizations and the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans, on the view of such entities and partners regarding—

(A) whether the Department is meeting the needs of women veterans through the provision of supportive services under such section; and

(B) any additional supportive services that may be required to meet such needs.

(b) **REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide supportive services to women veterans under section 2044 of title 38, United States.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A review of how the Department determines which categories of supportive services would be beneficial to women veterans who receive services under such section.

(B) A description of the challenges women veterans who have children face in accessing supportive services under such section, including with respect to accessing—

- (i) homeless shelters with their children;
- (ii) homeless shelters that have restrictions on male children; and
- (iii) affordable child care.

(C) A description of how the Department identifies eligible entities under such section that can provide supportive services to meet the needs of women veterans, including eligible entities with experience in—

- (i) intimate partner violence;
- (ii) legal matters pertaining especially to women veterans, including temporary restraining orders and child care orders;
- (iii) supportive services for children; and
- (iv) the evaluation of which categories of services would be beneficial to women veterans who receive such services under such section.

(D) A description of how much the Department spends, from funds appropriated to carry out such section and funds provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116-136), on

supportive services specifically for women veterans, and in particular, on the services described in subparagraph (A).

(E) The results of the surveys conducted under subsection (a).

(F) A review of the resources and programming offered to woman veterans under such section.

(G) An assessment of such other areas as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

SEC. 5107. PROGRAMS ON ASSISTANCE FOR CHILD CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS.

(a) **ASSISTANCE FOR CHILD CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS RECEIVING HEALTH CARE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter I of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§1709C. Assistance for child care for certain veterans receiving health care

“(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to provide, subject to subsection (b), assistance to qualified veterans described in subsection (c) to obtain child care so that such veterans can receive health care services described in subsection (c)(2).

“(b) LIMITATION ON PERIOD OF PAYMENTS.—Assistance may be provided to a qualified veteran under this section for receipt of child care only during the period that the qualified veteran—

“(1) receives the types of health care services described in subsection (c)(2) at a facility of the Department; and

“(2) requires travel to and return from such facility for the receipt of such health care services.

“(c) QUALIFIED VETERANS.—For purposes of this section, a qualified veteran is a veteran who—

“(1) is the primary caretaker of a child or children; and

“(2)(A) receives from the Department—

“(i) regular mental health care services;

“(ii) intensive mental health care services; or

“(iii) such other intensive health care services that the Secretary determines that provision of assistance to the veteran to obtain child care would improve access to such health care services by the veteran; or

“(B) is in need of regular or intensive mental health care services from the Department, and but for lack of child care services, would receive such health care services from the Department.

“(d) LOCATIONS.—Not later than five years after the date of the enactment of the Deborah Sampson Act of 2020, the Secretary shall carry out the program at each medical center of the Department.

“(e) FORMS OF CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE.—(1) Child care assistance under this section may include the following:

“(A) Stipends for the payment of child care offered by a licensed child care center (either directly or through a voucher program) that shall be, to the extent practicable, modeled after the Department of Veterans Affairs Child Care Subsidy Program established pursuant to section 630 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2002 (Public Law 107-67; 115 Stat. 552).

“(B) Direct provision of child care at an on-site facility of the Department.

“(C) Payments to private child care agencies.

“(D) Collaboration with facilities or programs of other Federal agencies.

“(E) Such other forms of assistance as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(2) In providing child care assistance under this section, the child care needs of the local area shall be considered and the head of each medical center may select the

type of care that is most appropriate or feasible for such medical center.

“(3) In the case that child care assistance under this section is provided as a stipend under paragraph (1)(A), such stipend shall cover the full cost of such child care.”

(2) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 205(e) of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-163; 38 U.S.C. 1710 note) is amended by striking “September 30, 2020” and inserting “the date of the enactment of the Deborah Sampson Act of 2020”.

(3) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1709B the following new item:

“1709C. Assistance for child care for certain veterans receiving health care.”

(b) **PILOT PROGRAM ON ASSISTANCE FOR CHILD CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS RECEIVING READJUSTMENT COUNSELING AND RELATED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing, subject to paragraph (2), assistance to qualified veterans described in paragraph (3) to obtain child care so that such veterans can receive readjustment counseling and related mental health services.

(2) **LIMITATION ON PERIOD OF PAYMENTS.**—Assistance may be provided to a qualified veteran under the pilot program for receipt of child care only during the period that the qualified veteran receives readjustment counseling and related health care services at a Vet Center.

(3) **QUALIFIED VETERANS.**—For purposes of this subsection, a qualified veteran is a veteran who—

(A) is the primary caretaker of a child or children; and

(B)(i) receives from the Department regular readjustment counseling and related mental health services; or

(ii) is in need of regular readjustment counseling and related mental health services from the Department, and but for lack of child care services, would receive such counseling and services from the Department.

(4) **LOCATIONS.**—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program in not fewer than three Readjustment Counseling Service Regions selected by the Secretary for purposes of the pilot program.

(5) **FORMS OF CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Child care assistance under the pilot program may include the following:

(i) Stipends for the payment of child care offered by a licensed child care center (either directly or through a voucher program) that shall be, to the extent practicable, modeled after the Department of Veterans Affairs Child Care Subsidy Program established pursuant to section 630 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2002 (Public Law 107-67; 115 Stat. 552).

(ii) Payments to private child care agencies.

(iii) Collaboration with facilities or programs of other Federal agencies.

(iv) Such other forms of assistance as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(B) **LOCAL AREA.**—In providing child care assistance under the pilot program, the child care needs of the local area shall be considered and the head of each Vet Center may select the type of care that is most appropriate or feasible for such Vet Center.

(C) **USE OF STIPEND.**—In the case that child care assistance under the pilot program is provided as a stipend under subparagraph

(A)(i), such stipend shall cover the full cost of such child care.

(6) DURATION.—The pilot program shall be carried out during the two-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(7) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program.

(B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subparagraph (A) shall include the findings and conclusions of the Secretary regarding the pilot program, and shall include such recommendations for the continuation or expansion of the pilot program as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(8) VET CENTER DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “Vet Center” has the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 5108. AVAILABILITY OF PROSTHETICS FOR WOMEN VETERANS FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ACCESS AT EACH MEDICAL FACILITY.—Section 1714(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “(a) Any veteran” and inserting “(a)(1) Any veteran”; and

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

“(2) In furnishing prosthetic appliances under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure women veterans are able to access clinically appropriate prosthetic appliances through each medical facility of the Department.”.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the availability from the Department of Veterans Affairs of prosthetics made for women veterans, including an assessment of the availability of such prosthetics at medical facilities of the Department.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a list of all devices classified by the Department as prosthetic devices, including a breakdown of whether a device is considered gender-neutral or gender-specific;

(B) for gender-neutral devices, a breakdown of sizing;

(C) the average time it takes for a woman veteran to receive a prosthetic device after it is prescribed, disaggregated by Veterans Integrated Service Network and medical center of the Department;

(D) the total number of women veterans utilizing the Department for prosthetic services, disaggregated by facility of the Department;

(E) an assessment of efforts by the Department on research, development, and employment of additive manufacture technology (commonly referred to as 3D printing) to provide prosthetic items for women veterans;

(F) the results of a survey with a representative sample of not fewer than 50,000 veterans (of which women shall be overrepresented) in an amputee care program on satisfaction with prosthetics furnished or procured by the Department that replace appendages or their function; and

(G) such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

SEC. 5109. REQUIREMENT TO IMPROVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WOMEN VETERANS CALL CENTER.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enhance the capabilities of the women veterans call center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to respond to requests by women veterans

for assistance with accessing health care and benefits furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary.

SEC. 5110. STUDY ON INFERTILITY SERVICES FURNISHED AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the infertility services offerings at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study conducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the following:

(A) The availability of infertility services at facilities of the Department and through laws administered by the Secretary for the provision of non-Department care.

(B) The demand for such services from eligible individuals.

(2) Identification of potential challenges in accessing infertility services for eligible individuals.

(3) An analysis of Department resources for the furnishing of infertility services, including analysis of Department workforce and non-Department providers.

(4) Development of recommendations for the improvement of infertility services under laws administered by the Secretary to improve eligible individuals’ access, delivery of services, and health outcomes.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the study conducted under subsection (a).

(d) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term “eligible individual” means an individual who is a veteran who is eligible for and enrolled in the health care system of the Department under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 5111. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON ACCESS TO FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BY RESERVISTS FOR COUNSELING AND TREATMENT RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, including members of the National Guard, should be able to access all health care facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not just Vet Centers, to receive counseling and treatment relating to military sexual trauma.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term “military sexual trauma” has the meaning given such term in section 1164(c) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 5501(a) of this title.

(2) VET CENTER.—The term “Vet Center” has the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of such title.

Subtitle B—Increasing Staff Cultural Competency

SEC. 5201. STAFFING OF WOMEN’S HEALTH PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS AT MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs has not fewer than one full-time or part-time women’s health primary care provider whose duties include, to the extent possible, providing training to other health care providers of the Department on the needs of women veterans.

SEC. 5202. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PRIMARY CARE AND EMERGENCY CARE CLINICIANS IN WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE MINI-RESIDENCY PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans

Affairs \$1,000,000 for each fiscal years 2021 through 2025 to provide opportunities for participation in the Women Veterans Health Care Mini-Residency Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for primary care and emergency care clinicians.

(b) TREATMENT OF AMOUNTS.—The amounts authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a) shall be in addition to amounts otherwise made available to the Secretary for the purposes set forth in such subsection.

SEC. 5203. ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN VETERAN TRAINING MODULE FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and make available to community providers a training module that is specific to women veterans.

(b) TRAINING MATERIALS PROVIDED.—Under the training module established and made available to community providers under subsection (a), the Secretary shall provide to community providers the same training materials relating to treatment of women veterans that is provided to health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that all health care providers treating women veterans have access to the same materials to support competency throughout the community.

(c) ADMINISTRATION OF TRAINING MODULE.—The Secretary shall administer the training module established under subsection (a) to community providers through an internet website of the Department.

(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the establishment of the training module under subsection (a), and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

(1) the utilization by community providers of the training module; and

(2) the effectiveness of the training module.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMUNITY PROVIDER.—The term “community provider” means a non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider who provides preauthorized health care to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) PREAUTHORIZED HEALTH CARE.—The term “preauthorized health care” means health care provided to a veteran that is authorized by the Secretary before being provided.

SEC. 5204. STUDY ON STAFFING OF WOMEN VETERAN PROGRAM MANAGER PROGRAM AT MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND TRAINING OF STAFF.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the use of the Women Veteran Program Manager program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine—

(1) if the program is appropriately staffed at each medical center of the Department;

(2) whether each medical center of the Department is staffed with a Women Veteran Program Manager; and

(3) whether it would be feasible and advisable to have a Women Veteran Program Ombudsman at each medical center of the Department.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the study conducted under subsection (a).

(c) TRAINING.—The Secretary shall ensure that all Women Veteran Program Managers and Women Veteran Program Ombudsmen

receive the proper training to carry out their duties.

SEC. 5205. STUDY ON WOMEN VETERAN COORDINATOR PROGRAM.

(a) **STUDY AND REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) complete a study on the Women Veteran Coordinator program of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the study completed under paragraph (1).

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The study required by subsection (a)(1) shall identify the following:

(1) If the program described in such subsection is appropriately staffed at each regional benefits office of the Department.

(2) Whether each regional benefits office of the Department is staffed with a Women Veteran Coordinator.

(3) The position description of the Women Veteran Coordinator.

(4) Whether an individual serving in the Women Veteran Coordinator position concurrently serves in any other position, and if so, the allocation of time the individual spends in each such position.

(5) A description of the metrics the Secretary uses to determine the job performance and effectiveness of the Women Veteran Coordinator.

SEC. 5206. STAFFING IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR PEER SPECIALISTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WHO ARE WOMEN.

(a) **ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall commence an assessment of the capacity of peer specialists of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are women.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The assessment required by paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the following:

(A) The geographical distribution of peer specialists of the Department who are women.

(B) The geographical distribution of women veterans.

(C) The number and proportion of women peer specialists who specialize in peer counseling on mental health or suicide prevention.

(D) The number and proportion of women peer specialists who specialize in peer counseling on non-mental health related matters.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the assessment required by subsection (a) has commenced, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report detailing the findings of the assessment.

(c) **STAFFING IMPROVEMENT PLAN.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after submitting the report under subsection (b), the Secretary, in consultation with the Inspector General, shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a plan, based on the results of the assessment required by subsection (a), to hire additional qualified peer specialists who are women, with special consideration for areas that lack peer specialists who are women.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The peer specialist positions included in the plan required by paragraph (1)—

(A) shall be non-volunteer, paid positions; and

(B) may be part-time positions.

Subtitle C—Eliminating Harassment and Assault

SEC. 5301. EXPANSION OF COVERAGE BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) **EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR COUNSELING AND TREATMENT.**—Section 1720D of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training” and inserting “duty, regardless of duty status or line of duty determination (as that term is used in section 12323 of title 10)”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training” and inserting “duty, regardless of duty status or line of duty determination (as that term is used in section 12323 of title 10)”; and

(2) by striking “veteran” each place it appears and inserting “former member of the Armed Forces”; and

(3) by striking “veterans” each place it appears and inserting “former members of the Armed Forces”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) In this section, the term ‘former member of the Armed Forces’ includes the following:

“(1) A veteran.

“(2) An individual described in section 1720I(b) of this title.”.

(b) **INCLUSION OF TREATMENT FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITIONS.**—Such section is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting “, to include care for physical health conditions, as appropriate,” after “counseling and appropriate care and services”; and

(ii) by striking “overcome psychological trauma” and inserting “treat a condition”; and

(iii) by striking “mental health professional” and inserting “health care professional”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “overcome psychological trauma” and inserting “treat a condition”; and

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “and other health care professionals” after “mental health professionals”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting “and other health care professionals” after “mental health professionals”.

SEC. 5302. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ON WOMEN VETERANS BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN VETERANS.

Section 542(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

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

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph (C):

“(C) an assessment of the effects of intimate partner violence on women veterans; and”.

SEC. 5303. ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI-SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 533. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy

“(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—(1) The Secretary, acting through the Office of Assault and Prevention of the Veterans Health Administration, shall establish a comprehensive policy to end harassment and sexual assault, including sexual harassment and gender-based harassment, throughout the Department.

“(2) The policy required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A process for employees and contractors of the Department to respond to reported incidents of harassment and sexual assault committed by any non-Department individual within a facility of the Department, including with respect to accountability or disciplinary measures.

“(B) A process for employees and contractors of the Department to respond to reported incidents of harassment and sexual assault of any non-Department individual within a facility of the Department.

“(C) A process for any non-Department individual to report harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraph (A), including an option for confidential reporting, and for the Secretary to respond to and address such reports.

“(D) Clear mechanisms for non-Department individuals to readily identify to whom and how to report incidents of harassment and sexual assault committed by another non-Department individual.

“(E) Clear mechanisms for employees and contractors of the Department to readily identify to whom and how to report incidents of harassment and sexual assault and how to refer non-Department individuals with respect to reporting an incident of harassment or sexual assault.

“(F) A process for, and mandatory reporting requirement applicable to, any employee or contractor of the Department who witnesses harassment or sexual assault described in subparagraph (A) or (B) within a facility of the Department, regardless of whether the individual affected by such harassment or sexual assault wants to report such harassment or sexual assault.

“(G) The actions possible, including disciplinary actions, for employees or contractors of the Department who fail to report incidents of harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraph (A) or (B) that the employees or contractors witness.

“(H) On an annual or more frequent basis, mandatory training for employees and contractors of the Department regarding how to report and address harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraphs (A) and (B), including bystander intervention training.

“(I) On an annual or more frequent basis, the distribution of the policy under this subsection and anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault educational materials by mail or email to each individual receiving a benefit under a law administered by the Secretary.

“(J) The prominent display of anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault messages in each facility of the Department, including how non-Department individuals may report harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) at such facility and the points of contact under subsection (b).

“(K) The posting on internet websites of the Department, including the main internet website regarding benefits of the Department and the main internet website regarding health care of the Department, of anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault banners specifically addressing harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

“(b) POINTS OF CONTACT.—The Secretary shall designate, as a point of contact to receive reports of harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (a)(2)—

“(1) at least one individual, in addition to law enforcement, at each facility of the Department (including Vet Centers under section 1712A of this title), with regard to that facility;

“(2) at least one individual employed in each Veterans Integrated Service Network, with regard to facilities in that Veterans Integrated Service Network;

“(3) at least one individual employed in each regional benefits office;

“(4) at least one individual employed at each location of the National Cemetery Administration; and

“(5) at least one individual employed at the Central Office of the Department to track reports of such harassment and sexual assault across the Department, disaggregated by facility.

“(c) ACCOUNTABILITY.—(1) The Secretary shall establish a policy to ensure that each facility of the Department and each director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network is responsible for addressing harassment and sexual assault at the facility and the Network.

“(2) The policy required by paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) a remediation plan for facilities that experience five or more incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or combination thereof, during any single fiscal year; and

“(B) taking appropriate actions under chapter 7 or subchapter V of chapter 74 of this title.

“(d) DATA.—The Secretary shall ensure that the in-take process for veterans at medical facilities of the Department includes a survey to collect the following information:

“(1) Whether the veteran feels safe at the facility and whether any events occurred at the facility that affect such feeling.

“(2) Whether the veteran wants to be contacted later by the Department with respect to such safety issues.

“(e) WORKING GROUP.—(1) The Secretary shall establish a working group to assist the Secretary in implementing policies to carry out this section.

“(2) The working group established under paragraph (1) shall consist of representatives from—

“(A) veterans service organizations;

“(B) State, local, and Tribal veterans agencies; and

“(C) other persons the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(3) The working group established under paragraph (1) shall develop, and the Secretary shall carry out—

“(A) an action plan for addressing changes at the local level to reduce instances of harassment and sexual assault;

“(B) standardized media for veterans service organizations and other persons to use in print and on the internet with respect to reducing harassment and sexual assault; and

“(C) bystander intervention training for veterans.

“(4) The working group established under paragraph (1) shall not be subject to the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

“(f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—(1) The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives an annual report on harassment and sexual assault described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (a)(2) in facilities of the Department.

“(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) Results of harassment and sexual assault programming, including the End Harassment program.

“(B) Results of studies from the Women’s Health Practice-Based Research Network of the Department relating to harassment and sexual assault.

“(C) Data collected on incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

“(D) A description of any actions taken by the Secretary during the year preceding the date of the report to stop harassment and sexual assault at facilities of the Department.

“(E) An assessment of the implementation of the training required in subsection (a)(2)(H).

“(F) A list of resources the Secretary determines necessary to prevent harassment and sexual assault at facilities of the Department.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘non-Department individual’ means any individual present at a facility of the Department who is not an employee or contractor of the Department.

“(2) The term ‘sexual harassment’ means unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 532 the following new item:

“533. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy.”.

(c) DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT.—Section 1720D(f) of such title is amended by striking “repeated.”.

(d) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall commence carrying out section 533 of such title, as added by subsection (a), not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5304. PILOT PROGRAM ON ASSISTING VETERANS WHO EXPERIENCE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of assisting former members of the Armed Forces who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault in accessing benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including coordinating access to medical treatment centers, housing assistance, and other benefits from the Department.

(b) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) during the two-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(c) COLLABORATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) in collaboration with—

(1) intimate partner violence shelters and programs;

(2) rape crisis centers;

(3) State intimate partner violence and sexual assault coalitions; and

(4) such other health care or other service providers that serve intimate partner violence or sexual assault victims as determined by the Secretary, particularly those providing emergency services or housing assistance.

(d) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary may conduct the following activities:

(1) Training for community-based intimate partner violence or sexual assault service providers on—

(A) identifying former members of the Armed Forces who have been victims of, or are currently experiencing, intimate partner violence or sexual assault;

(B) coordinating with local service providers of the Department; and

(C) connecting former members of the Armed Forces with appropriate housing, mental health, medical, and other financial assistance or benefits from the Department.

(2) Assistance to service providers to ensure access of veterans to intimate partner violence and sexual assault emergency services, particularly in underserved areas, including services for Native American veterans (as defined in section 3765 of title 38, United States Code).

(3) Such other outreach and assistance as the Secretary determines necessary for the provision of assistance under subsection (a).

(e) INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT OUTREACH COORDINATORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to effectively assist veterans who have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual assault, the Secretary may establish local coordinators to provide outreach under the pilot program required by subsection (a).

(2) LOCAL COORDINATOR KNOWLEDGE.—The Secretary shall ensure that each coordinator established under paragraph (1) is knowledgeable about—

(A) the dynamics of intimate partner violence and sexual assault, including safety concerns, legal protections, and the need for the provision of confidential services;

(B) the eligibility of veterans for services and benefits from the Department that are relevant to recovery from intimate partner violence and sexual assault, particularly emergency housing assistance, mental health care, other health care, and disability benefits; and

(C) local community resources addressing intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

(3) LOCAL COORDINATOR ASSISTANCE.—Each coordinator established under paragraph (1) shall assist intimate partner violence shelters and rape crisis centers in providing services to veterans.

(f) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The findings and conclusions of the Secretary with respect to the pilot program.

(B) Such recommendations for continuing or expanding the pilot program as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) INTIMATE PARTNER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “intimate partner” means a person with whom one has a close personal relationship that may be characterized by the partners’ emotional connectedness, regular contact, ongoing physical contact and sexual behavior, identity as a couple, and familiarity and knowledge about each other’s lives.

(B) CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.—In this paragraph, the term “close personal relationships” includes the following:

(i) A relationship between married spouses.

(ii) A relationship between common-law spouses.

(iii) A relationship between civil union spouses.

(iv) A relationship between domestic partners.

(v) A relationship between dating partners.

(vi) A relationship between ongoing sexual partners.

(2) INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE.—The term “intimate partner violence” includes physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression, including coercive tactics by a current or former intimate partner.

SEC. 5305. STUDY AND TASK FORCE ON VETERANS EXPERIENCING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

(a) NATIONAL BASELINE STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall conduct a national baseline study to examine the scope of the problem of intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans and spouses and intimate partners of veterans.

(2) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The study under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) include a literature review of all relevant research on intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans and spouses and intimate partners of veterans;

(B) examine the prevalence of the experience of intimate partner violence among—

(i) women veterans;

(ii) veterans who are minority group members (as defined in section 544 of title 38, United States Code, and including other minority populations as the Secretary determines appropriate);

(iii) urban and rural veterans;

(iv) veterans who are enrolled in a program under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code;

(v) veterans who are in intimate relationships with other veterans; and

(vi) veterans who are described in more than one clause of this subparagraph;

(C) examine the prevalence of the perpetration of intimate partner violence by veterans; and

(D) include recommendations to address the findings of the study.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary completes the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on such study.

(b) TASK FORCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary completes the study under subsection (a), the Secretary, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall establish a national task force (in this section referred to as the "Task Force") to develop a comprehensive national program, including by integrating facilities, services, and benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs into existing networks of community-based intimate partner violence and sexual assault services, to address intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans.

(2) LEADERSHIP.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall lead the Task Force in collaboration with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(c) CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.—In carrying out this section, the Task Force shall consult with—

(1) representatives from veteran service organizations and military service organizations;

(2) representatives from not fewer than three national organizations or State coalitions with demonstrated expertise in intimate partner violence prevention, response, or advocacy; and

(3) representatives from not fewer than three national organizations or State coalitions, particularly those representing underserved and ethnic minority communities, with demonstrated expertise in sexual assault prevention, response, or advocacy.

(d) DUTIES.—The duties of the Task Force shall include the following:

(1) To review existing services and policies of the Department and develop a comprehen-

sive national program to be carried out by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the heads of relevant Federal agencies, to address intimate partner violence and sexual assault prevention, response, and treatment.

(2) To review the feasibility and advisability of establishing an expedited process to secure emergency, temporary benefits, including housing or other benefits, for veterans who are experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

(3) To review and make recommendations regarding the feasibility and advisability of establishing dedicated, temporary housing assistance for veterans experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

(4) To identify any requirements regarding intimate partner violence assistance or sexual assault response and services that are not being met by the Department and make recommendations on how the Department can meet such requirements.

(5) To review and make recommendations regarding the feasibility and advisability of providing direct services or contracting for community-based services for veterans in response to a sexual assault, including through the use of sexual assault nurse examiners, particularly in underserved or remote areas, including services for Native American veterans.

(6) To review the availability of counseling services provided by the Department and through peer network support, and to provide recommendations for the enhancement of such services, to address—

(A) the perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual assault; and

(B) the recovery of veterans, particularly women veterans, from intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

(7) To review and make recommendations to expand services available for veterans at risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than annually thereafter by October 1 of each year, the Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Congress a report on the activities of the Task Force, including any recommendations for legislative or administrative action.

(f) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FACA.—The Task Force shall not be subject to the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN.—The term "Native American veteran" has the meaning given that term in section 3765 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) STATE.—The term "State" has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle D—Data Collection and Reporting

SEC. 5401. REQUIREMENT FOR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS AND SERVICES AND DISAGGREGATION OF SUCH DATA BY GENDER, RACE, AND ETHNICITY.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) collect and analyze data on each program of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides a service or benefit to a veteran, including the program carried out under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code;

(2) disaggregate such data by gender, race, and ethnicity, when the data lends itself to such disaggregation; and

(3) publish the data collected and analyzed under paragraph (1), except for such cases in which the Secretary determines that some portions of the data would undermine the anonymity of a veteran.

SEC. 5402. STUDY ON BARRIERS FOR WOMEN VETERANS TO RECEIPT OF HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a comprehensive study of the barriers to the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs encountered by women who are veterans.

(b) SURVEY.—In conducting the study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) survey women veterans who seek or receive hospital care or medical services provided by the Department as well as women veterans who do not seek or receive such care or services;

(2) administer the survey to a representative sample of women veterans from each Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

(3) ensure that the sample of women veterans surveyed is of sufficient size for the study results to be statistically significant and is a larger sample than that of the study specified in subsection (c)(1).

(c) USE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.—In conducting the study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall build on the work of the studies of the Department titled—

(1) "National Survey of Women Veterans in Fiscal Year 2007–2008"; and

(2) "Study of Barriers for Women Veterans to VA Health Care 2015".

(d) ELEMENTS OF STUDY.—In conducting the study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall conduct research on the effects of the following on the women veterans surveyed in the study:

(1) The barriers associated with seeking mental health care services, including with respect to provider availability, telehealth access, and family, work, and school obligations.

(2) The effect of driving distance or availability of other forms of transportation to the nearest medical facility on access to care.

(3) The effect of access to care from non-Department providers.

(4) The availability of child care.

(5) The satisfaction of such veterans with the provision by the Department of integrated primary care, women's health clinics, or both, including perceptions of quality of care, safety, and comfort.

(6) The understanding and perceived accessibility among such veterans of eligibility requirements for, and the scope of services available under, hospital care and medical services.

(7) The perception of such veterans of personal safety and comfort in inpatient, outpatient, and behavioral health facilities.

(8) The gender sensitivity of health care providers and staff to issues that particularly affect women.

(9) The effectiveness of outreach for health care services available to women veterans.

(10) The location and operating hours of health care facilities that provide services to women veterans.

(11) The perception of such veterans of the motto of the Department.

(12) Such other significant barriers as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(e) DISCHARGE BY CONTRACT.—The Secretary shall enter into a contract with a qualified independent entity or organization to carry out the study and research required under this section.

(f) MANDATORY REVIEW OF DATA BY CERTAIN DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS.—

(1) REVIEW.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure that the head of each division of the Department of Veterans Affairs specified in paragraph (2) reviews the results of the study conducted under this section.

(B) **SUBMITTAL OF FINDINGS.**—The head of each division specified in paragraph (2) shall submit findings with respect to the study under this section to the Under Secretary of the Department with responsibilities relating to health care services for women veterans.

(2) **SPECIFIED DIVISIONS.**—The divisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs specified in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Office of the Under Secretary for Health.

(B) The Office of Women's Health established under section 7310 of title 38, United States Code.

(C) The Center for Women Veterans under section 318 of such title.

(D) The Advisory Committee on Women Veterans established under section 542 of such title.

(g) **REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 30 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study required under this section.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The report under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) the findings of the head of each division of the Department specified under subsection (f)(2); and

(B) recommendations for such administrative and legislative action as the Secretary considers appropriate.

SEC. 5403. STUDY ON FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY OF OFFERING PARENTING STAIR PROGRAM AT ALL MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the feasibility and advisability of expanding the Parenting STAIR program to all medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs and including such program as part of care for military sexual trauma for affected members and former members of the Armed Forces.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall assess—

(1) staffing needed to offer the Parenting STAIR program at all medical centers of the Department;

(2) any additional infrastructure or resources (such as child care during the program) needed for the expansion of the program; and

(3) such other factors relevant to the expansion of the program as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) **REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**—

(1) **INTERIM REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report detailing—

(A) the current number and locations of all facilities of the Department offering the Parenting STAIR program; and

(B) the number of veterans served by such program in the most recent fiscal year or calendar year for which data is available.

(2) **FINAL REPORT.**—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report detailing—

(A) the results of the study conducted under subsection (a);

(B) an update on how many veterans have used the Parenting STAIR program since its development in fiscal year 2017, disaggregated by year, including the loca-

tions in which veterans have used such program; and

(C) a determination on the feasibility and advisability of expanding the Parenting STAIR program to all medical facilities of the Department offering care for military sexual trauma.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **AFFECTED MEMBERS AND FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**—The term “affected members and former members of the Armed Forces” means members and former members of the Armed Forces who are parents and have experienced military sexual trauma.

(2) **MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**—The term “military sexual trauma” has the meaning given such term in section 1164(c) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 5501(a) of this title.

(3) **PARENTING STAIR PROGRAM.**—The term “Parenting STAIR program” means the program of the Department of Veterans Affairs that consists of a five-session, parenting-specific treatment protocol based on skills training in affective and interpersonal regulation (commonly referred to as “STAIR”), which is a cognitive behavioral therapy that has been identified as a promising practice for treating post-traumatic stress disorder, including chronic and complicated forms, among individuals with co-occurring disorders.

Subtitle E—Benefits Matters

SEC. 5501. EVALUATION OF SERVICE-CONNECTED MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) **SPECIALIZED TEAMS TO EVALUATE CLAIMS INVOLVING MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—subchapter VI of chapter 11 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 1164. Specialized teams to evaluate claims involving military sexual trauma

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall establish specialized teams to process claims for compensation for a covered mental health condition based on military sexual trauma experienced by a veteran during active military, naval, or air service.

“(b) **TRAINING.**—The Secretary shall ensure that members of teams established under subsection (a) are trained to identify markers indicating military sexual trauma.

“(c) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘covered mental health condition’ means post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or other mental health diagnosis described in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association that the Secretary determines to be related to military sexual trauma.

“(2) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ means, with respect to a veteran, a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment during active military, naval, or air service.”.

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“1164. Specialized teams to evaluate claims involving military sexual trauma.”.

(b) **ANNUAL REPORTS ON CLAIMS FOR DISABILITIES INCURRED OR AGGRAVATED BY MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**—

(1) **REPORTS REQUIRED.**—Not later than March 1, 2021, and not less frequently than once each year thereafter through 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on covered claims submitted during the previous fiscal year to

identify and track the consistency of decisions across regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The number of covered claims submitted to or considered by the Secretary during the fiscal year covered by the report.

(B) Of the covered claims listed under subparagraph (A), the number and percentage of such claims—

(i) submitted by each sex;

(ii) that were approved, including the number and percentage of such approved claims submitted by each sex;

(iii) that were denied, including the number and percentage of such denied claims submitted by each sex; and

(iv) that were developed and reviewed by a specialized team established under section 1164(a) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(C) Of the covered claims listed under subparagraph (A) that were approved, the number and percentage, disaggregated by sex, of claims assigned to each rating percentage.

(D) Of the covered claims listed under subparagraph (A) that were denied—

(i) the three most common reasons given by the Secretary under section 5104(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, for such denials; and

(ii) the number of denials that were based on the failure of a veteran to report for a medical examination.

(E) The number of covered claims that, as of the end of the fiscal year covered by the report, are pending and, separately, the number of such claims on appeal.

(F) For the fiscal year covered by the report, the average number of days that covered claims take to complete, beginning on the date on which the claim is submitted.

(G) A description of the training that the Secretary provides to employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration, or such contractors or other individuals as the Secretary considers appropriate, specifically with respect to covered claims, including the frequency, length, and content of such training.

(H) Whether all covered claims are subject to second level review until the individual rater of the Veterans Benefits Administration adjudicating such covered claims achieves an accuracy rate of 90 percent on decisions of such covered claims.

(3) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection:

(A) **COVERED CLAIMS.**—The term “covered claims” means claims for disability compensation submitted to the Secretary based on a covered mental health condition alleged to have been incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma.

(B) **COVERED MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION.**—The term “covered mental health condition” has the meaning given such term in section 1164(c) of title 38, United States Code.

(C) **MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**—The term “military sexual trauma” has the meaning given such term in such section.

SEC. 5502. CHOICE OF SEX OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL EXAMINER FOR ASSESSMENT OF CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION RELATING TO DISABILITY RESULTING FROM PHYSICAL ASSAULT OF A SEXUAL NATURE, BATTERY OF A SEXUAL NATURE, OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 5501 of this title, is further amended by inserting after section 1164, as added by section 5501, the following new section:

“§ 1165. Choice of sex of medical examiner for certain disabilities

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure that a veteran who requires a medical examination from a covered medical provider in support of a claim for compensation under this chapter for a mental or physical health condition that resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment may designate the sex of the medical provider who provides such medical examination.

“(b) COVERED MEDICAL PROVIDERS.—For purposes of this section, a covered medical provider is any medical provider who is employed by the Department or is under any contract with the Department to provide a medical examination or a medical opinion when such an examination or opinion is necessary to make a decision on a claim.

“(c) NOTICE.—Before providing any medical examination for a veteran in support for a claim described in subsection (a), the Secretary shall notify the veteran of the veteran’s rights under subsection (a).”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title, as amended by section 5501 of this title, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1164 the following new item:

“1165. Choice of sex of medical examiner for certain disabilities.”.

SEC. 5503. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN CERTAIN REPORT ON DENIED POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER CLAIMS RELATED TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House a report on the progress of the Secretary in implementing the recommendations from the report of the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs entitled “Denied Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Claims Related to Military Sexual Trauma” (17-05248-241).

TITLE VI—REPRESENTATION AND FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION MATTERS

SEC. 6001. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Financial Refuge for Every Elderly Veteran Act of 2020” or the “FREE Veteran Act of 2020”.

SEC. 6002. PLAN TO ADDRESS THE FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF VETERANS RECEIVING PENSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF METHOD FOR SOLICITATION AND COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a method for systematically soliciting and collecting information on complaints received, referrals made, and actions taken by the pension management centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs and any other relevant components of the Department, in cases of potential financial exploitation of individuals receiving pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) PLAN TO ASSESS AND ADDRESS FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop and periodically update a plan—

(A) to regularly assess the information solicited and collected under subsection (a) to identify trends of potential financial exploitation of the individuals described in subsection (a) across the Department; and

(B) to outline actions that the Department can take to improve education and training to address those trends.

(2) SUBMISSION OF PLAN.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter until the date that is six years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit the plan most recently developed or updated under paragraph (1) to—

(A) the Comptroller General of the United States; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 6003. OVERPAYMENTS OF PENSION TO VETERANS RECEIVING PENSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR CLAIMS PROCESSORS.—As the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers necessary, but not less frequently than once every three years until the date that is 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall update guidance and training curriculum for the processors of claims for pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, regarding the evaluation of questionable medical expenses on applications for pension, including by updating such guidance with respect to what constitutes a questionable medical expense and by including examples of such expenses.

(b) IDENTIFICATION AND TRACKING.—The Under Secretary shall develop a method for identifying and tracking the number of individuals who have received overpayments of pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not later than October 31 of each fiscal year beginning thereafter until the date that is four years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes, for the period covered by the report, the following:

(1) The number of individuals who received overpayments of pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The five most common reasons for overpayments described in paragraph (1).

(3) The number of veterans who had to repay overpayments described in paragraph (1).

(4) The number of veterans for whom the Secretary waived a requirement to repay an overpayment described in paragraph (1).

(5) The total dollar amount of overpayments described in paragraph (1).

(6) The total dollar amount of repayments of veterans for overpayments described in paragraph (1).

(7) The average dollar amount of repayments described in paragraph (6).

SEC. 6004. EVALUATION OF ADDITIONAL ACTIONS FOR VERIFYING DIRECT DEPOSIT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY VETERANS ON APPLICATIONS FOR VETERANS PENSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) conduct an evaluation of the feasibility and advisability of requiring the processors of claims for pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, to take additional actions to verify that the direct deposit information provided by an individual on an application for pension is for the appropriate recipient; and

(2) identify such legislative or administrative actions as the Under Secretary considers appropriate to ensure that payments of pension are provided to the correct recipients.

(b) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 240 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the evaluation and identification under subsection (a).

(2) CONTENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The findings of the Under Secretary with respect to the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1).

(B) The actions identified under subsection (a)(2).

(C) A plan for implementing any administrative actions identified under subsection (a)(2).

(D) A rationale for not implementing any actions evaluated under paragraph (1) of subsection (a) but not identified under paragraph (2) of such subsection.

SEC. 6005. ANNUAL REPORT ON EFFORTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ADDRESS THE FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF VETERANS RECEIVING PENSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter until the date that is four years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on efforts to address the financial exploitation of individuals receiving pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each report required by subsection (a) shall include, for the period covered by the report, the following:

(1) The number of individuals who received pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, who have been referred by any component of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Office of Inspector General of the Department as likely or proven victims of financial exploitation.

(2) The number of referrals and reports relating to the financial exploitation of such individuals made by the Department of Veterans Affairs to—

(A) the Consumer Sentinel Network of the Federal Trade Commission; and

(B) the Department of Justice.

(3) A description of the actions taken as a result of such referrals and reports against—

(A) individuals recognized by the Secretary as agents or attorneys under section 5904 of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) individuals not so recognized.

SEC. 6006. NOTICE REGARDING FEES CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH FILING AN APPLICATION FOR VETERANS PENSION.

The Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that every paper or electronic document relating to the receipt of pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, that is available to individuals who apply for such pension, including educational forms about or applications for such pension, includes a notice that the Department does not charge any fee in connection with the filing of an application for such pension.

SEC. 6007. OUTREACH PLAN FOR EDUCATING VULNERABLE VETERANS ABOUT POTENTIAL FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION RELATING TO THE RECEIPT OF PENSION.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN.—The Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall develop, in collaboration with veterans service organizations, an outreach plan for educating vulnerable individuals about potential financial exploitation relating to the receipt of pension

under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) **SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives the plan developed under subsection (a).

(c) **VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “veterans service organization” means an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

TITLE VII—OTHER MATTERS

Subtitle A—Administrative and Other Matters

SEC. 7001. MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROTOCOL FOR VOLUNTEER DRIVERS PARTICIPATING IN PROGRAM OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR VETERANS.

Section 111A(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”; and

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

“(2)(A) Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, the Secretary shall develop and establish a national protocol for the administration of medical examinations for volunteer drivers to participate in the program described in paragraph (1).

“(B) In developing the protocol required by subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall consult with such persons as the Secretary determines have an interest in the program described in paragraph (1).

“(C)(i) The Secretary shall implement the protocol by first conducting a one-year pilot program using the protocol.

“(ii) After conducting the pilot program required by clause (i), the Secretary shall assess the pilot program and make such changes to the protocol as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(iii) After making changes to the protocol under clause (ii), the Secretary shall implement the protocol in phases during the course of one year.”.

SEC. 7002. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRIBAL AND INDIAN AFFAIRS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter III of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 547. Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs

“(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—(1) The Secretary shall establish an advisory committee to provide advice and guidance to the Secretary on matters relating to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native American veterans.

“(2) The advisory committee established under paragraph (1) shall be known as the ‘Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs’ (in this section referred to as the ‘Committee’).

“(3) The Committee shall facilitate, but not supplant, government-to-government consultation between the Department and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

“(4) The Secretary shall consult with Indian tribes or tribal organizations in developing a charter for the Committee.

“(b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—(1) The Committee shall be comprised of 15 voting members selected by the Secretary from among individ-

uals nominated as specified under this subsection.

“(2) In selecting members under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that—

“(A) at least one member of each of the 12 service areas of the Indian Health Service is represented in the membership of the Committee nominated by Indian tribes or tribal organizations;

“(B) at least one member of the Committee represents the Native Hawaiian veteran community nominated by a Native Hawaiian Organization;

“(C) at least one member of the Committee represents urban Indian organizations nominated by a national urban Indian organization; and

“(D) not fewer than half of the members are veterans, unless the Secretary determines that an insufficient number of qualified veterans were nominated under paragraph (1).

“(3) No member of the Committee may be an employee of the Federal Government.

“(c) **TERMS; VACANCIES.**—(1) A member of the Committee shall be appointed for a term of two years.

“(2) The Secretary shall fill a vacancy in the Committee in the same manner as the original appointment within 180 days.

“(d) **MEETINGS.**—(1)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Committee shall meet in-person with the Secretary, or the Secretary’s designee, not less frequently than twice each year and hold monthly conference calls as necessary.

“(B) During a public health emergency (as defined in section 20003 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116-136)), meetings under subparagraph (A) may be conducted virtually.

“(2)(A) Representatives of relevant Federal agencies may attend meetings of the Committee and provide information to the Committee.

“(B) One representative of the Office of Tribal Government Relations of the Department shall attend at each meeting of the Committee.

“(C) Representatives attending meetings under this paragraph shall not be considered voting members of the Committee.

“(D) A representative attending a meeting or providing information under this paragraph may not receive additional compensation for services performed with respect to the Committee.

“(e) **SUBCOMMITTEES.**—(1) The Committee may establish subcommittees.

“(2) The Secretary may, in consultation with the Committee, appoint a member to a subcommittee established under paragraph (1) who is not a member of the Committee.

“(3) Such subcommittees may enhance the function of the Committee, but may not supersede the authority of the Committee or provide direct advice or work products to the Department.

“(f) **DUTIES.**—The duties of the Committee are as follows:

“(1) To advise the Secretary on ways the Department can improve the programs and services of the Department to better serve Native American veterans.

“(2) To identify for the Department evolving issues of relevance to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native American veterans relating to programs and services of the Department.

“(3) To propose clarifications, recommendations, and solutions to address issues raised at tribal, regional, and national levels, especially regarding any tribal consultation reports.

“(4) To provide a forum for Indian tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian organizations, Native Hawaiian organizations, and the Department to discuss issues and pro-

posals for changes to Department regulations, policies, and procedures.

“(5) To identify priorities and provide advice on appropriate strategies for tribal consultation and urban Indian organizations conferring on issues at the tribal, regional, or national levels.

“(6) To ensure that pertinent issues are brought to the attention of Indian tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations in a timely manner, so that feedback can be obtained.

“(7) To encourage the Secretary to work with other Federal agencies and Congress so that Native American veterans are not denied the full benefit of their status as both Native Americans and veterans.

“(8) To highlight contributions of Native American veterans in the Armed Forces.

“(9) To make recommendations on the consultation policy of the Department on tribal matters.

“(10) To support a process to develop an urban Indian organization confer policy to ensure the Secretary confers, to the maximum extent practicable, with urban Indian organizations.

“(11) To conduct other duties as recommended by the Committee.

“(g) **REPORTS.**—(1) Not less frequently than once each year, the Committee shall submit to the Secretary and the appropriate committees of Congress such recommendations as the Committee may have for legislative or administrative action for the upcoming year.

“(2) Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a recommendation under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a written response to the recommendation.

“(3) Not less frequently than once every two years, the Committee shall submit to the Secretary and the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the activities of the Committee during the previous two years.

“(4) The Secretary shall make publicly available on an Internet website of the Department—

“(A) each recommendation the Secretary receives under paragraph (1);

“(B) each response the Secretary submits under paragraph (2); and

“(C) each report the Secretary receives under paragraph (3).

“(h) **COMMITTEE PERSONNEL MATTERS.**—A member of the Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5 while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Committee.

“(i) **FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT EXEMPTION.**—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Committee.

“(j) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘appropriate committees of Congress’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate; and

“(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

“(2) 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).

“(3) The term ‘Native Hawaiian organization’ means any organization that—

“(A) serves the interests of Native Hawaiians;

“(B) has Native Hawaiians in substantive and policymaking positions within the organization;

“(C) has demonstrated experience working with Native Hawaiian veterans; and

“(D) shall include the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

“(4) The term ‘Native American veteran’ has the meaning given such term in section 3765 of this title.

“(5) The term ‘Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ means the Office of Hawaiian Affairs established by the constitution of the State of Hawaii.”

“(6) The term ‘tribal organization’ has the meaning given such term in section 3765 of this title.

“(7) The term ‘urban Indian organization’ has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).”

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 546 the following new item:

“547. Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs.”

(b) **DEADLINE FOR ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the advisory committee required by section 547 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) **DEADLINE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the advisory committee required by such section, the Secretary shall appoint members under subsection (b)(1) of such section.

(d) **INITIAL MEETING.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the advisory committee required by such section, such advisory committee shall hold its first meeting.

(e) **REPORT ON RELATION TO OFFICE OF TRIBAL AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than two years after the date of the first meeting held by the advisory committee required by such section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on whether and to what extent the activities of the advisory committee improve the function of the Office of Tribal and Government Relations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, aid the decisions of the Secretary, and whether and to what extent the activities of the advisory committee duplicate function of the Department performed before the enactment of this Act.

(2) **REVIEW BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—The Secretary shall—

(A) give the advisory committee an opportunity to review the report required by paragraph (1) before submitting the report under such paragraph; and

(B) include in the report submitted under such paragraph such comments as the advisory committee considers appropriate regarding the views of the advisory committee with respect to the report.

SEC. 7003. PREFERENCE FOR OFFERORS EMPLOYING VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 8128 the following new section:

“§ 8129. Preference for offerors employing veterans

“(a) **PREFERENCE.**—(1) In awarding a contract for the procurement of goods or services, the Secretary may give a preference to offerors that employ veterans on a full-time basis.

“(2) The Secretary shall determine such preference based on the percentage of the full-time employees of the offeror who are veterans.

“(b) **ENFORCEMENT PENALTIES FOR MISREPRESENTATION.**—(1) Any offeror that is determined by the Secretary to have willfully and intentionally misrepresented the veteran status of the employees of the offeror for purposes of subsection (a) may be debarred from contracting with the Department for a period of not less than five years.

“(2) If the Secretary carries out a debarment under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

“(A) commence debarment action against the offeror by not later than 30 days after determining that the offeror willfully and intentionally misrepresented the veteran status of the employees of the offeror as described in paragraph (1); and

“(B) complete debarment actions against such offeror by not later than 90 days after such determination.

“(3) The debarment of an offeror under paragraph (1) includes the debarment of all principals in the offeror for a period of not less than five years.”

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 81 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8128 the following new item:

“8129. Preference for offerors employing veterans.”

SEC. 7004. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS TO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD WHO PERFORM STATE ACTIVE DUTY.

Section 4303 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13), by inserting “State active duty for a period of 14 days or more, State active duty in response to a national emergency declared by the President under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), State active duty in response to a major disaster declared by the President under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170),” after “full-time National Guard duty,”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (15) as paragraph (16); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (14) the following new paragraph (15):

“(15) The term ‘State active duty’ means training or other duty, other than inactive duty, performed by a member of the National Guard of a State—

“(A) not under section 502 of title 32 or under title 10;

“(B) in service to the Governor of a State; and

“(C) for which the member is not entitled to pay from the Federal Government.”

SEC. 7005. REPAYMENT OF MISUSED BENEFITS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 6107(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “In any case in which a fiduciary described in paragraph (2)” and inserting “In any case not covered by subsection (a) in which a fiduciary”;

(2) by striking paragraph (2); and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2).

(b) **APPLICATION.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act regarding the misuse of benefits by a fiduciary.

SEC. 7006. EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN TRANSFERS.

Section 7364(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Any amounts so transferred after September 30, 2016, shall be available without regard to fiscal year limitations, notwithstanding section 1535(d) of title 31.”

SEC. 7007. REPORT AND PLANNED ACTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ADDRESS CERTAIN HIGH-RISK AREAS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Comptroller General of the United States, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report outlining the plan the Secretary has developed and the actions the Secretary has taken to address the areas of concern identified by the Comptroller General for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the 2019 High-Risk List of the Government Accountability Office (GAO-19-157SP) regarding—

(1) acquisition management; and

(2) managing risks and improving health care.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report under subsection (a) shall include each of the following:

(1) Root causes of the areas of concern described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(2) Corrective actions and specific steps to address each root cause, including—

(A) the progress of the Secretary in implementing those actions and steps; and

(B) timelines and milestones the Secretary determines feasible to complete each corrective action.

(3) Resources the Secretary determines are necessary to implement corrective actions, including—

(A) funding;

(B) stakeholders;

(C) technology; and

(D) senior officials responsible for implementing the corrective actions and reporting results.

(4) Metrics for assessing progress in addressing the areas of concern described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(5) Key outcomes that demonstrate progress in addressing the areas of concern described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(6) Obstacles to implementation of the plan that the Secretary identifies.

(7) Recommendations of the Secretary regarding legislation or funding the Secretary determines necessary to implement the plan.

(8) Any other information the Secretary determines is relevant to understanding the progress of the Department toward the removal of the areas of concern from the High Risk List.

(c) **ANNUAL UPDATES.**—

(1) **UPDATE REQUIRED.**—Not less than once each year during the implementation period under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall submit to Congress an update regarding implementation of each element of the plan under subsection (b).

(2) **IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD.**—The implementation period described in this paragraph begins on the date on which the Secretary submits the report required under subsection (a) and ends on the earlier of the following dates:

(A) The date on which the Comptroller General removes the last area of concern for the Department from the most recent High-Risk List of the Government Accountability Office.

(B) The date that is 8 years after the date on which the Secretary submits the plan required under subsection (a).

SEC. 7008. ANNUAL REPORT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES PERTAINING TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **ANNUAL REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less than once during each of the subsequent 3 years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and to the Comptroller General of the United States a report on the implementation of priority recommendations of the Comptroller General that pertain to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include, for the period covered by the report, the following:

(1) The progress of the Secretary in implementing all open priority recommendations of the Comptroller General for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) An explanation for each instance where the Secretary has decided not to implement, or has not fully implemented, an open priority recommendation of the Comptroller General for the Department.

(3) A summary of the corrective actions taken and remaining steps the Secretary plans to take to implement open priority recommendations of the Comptroller General.

(c) **SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT CERTAIN REQUIRED REPORTS OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS.**—The report under this section shall not be construed to supplant any report or written statement required under section 720 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 7009. CLARIFICATION OF METHODS USED TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE WITH CERTAIN LIMITATIONS ON SUBCONTRACTING.

Section 8127(k)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “and any other” and inserting “or any other”.

SEC. 7010. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE CERTAIN NOTICE TO PERSONS FILING CLAIMS FOR DAMAGE, INJURY, OR DEATH ON STANDARD FORM 95.

Not later than 90 days after the date on which a person submits to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a claim for damage, injury, or death on Standard Form 95, or any successor form, the Secretary shall provide to such person notice of each of the following:

(1) The benefit of obtaining legal advice concerning such claim.

(2) The employment status of any individual listed on the form.

(3) If the claim involves a contractor that entered into an agreement with the Secretary, the importance of obtaining legal advice as to the statute of limitations regarding the claim in the State in which the claim arose.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to the Chief Financial Officer of Department of Veterans Affairs

SEC. 7101. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(2) **SUBORDINATE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.**—The term “subordinate chief financial officer”—

(A) includes—

(i) the chief financial officer of the Veterans Health Administration, the chief fi-

nancial officer of the Office of Community Care within the Veterans Health Administration, and all chief financial officers of Veterans Integrated Service Networks within the Veterans Health Administration;

(ii) the chief financial officer of the Veterans Benefits Administration and all chief financial officers of organizational subdivisions representing business lines within the Veterans Benefits Administration;

(iii) the chief financial officer of the National Cemetery Administration; and

(iv) the chief financial officer of the Office of Information and Technology; and

(B) does not include the Inspector General.

SEC. 7102. PLANS FOR ADDRESSING MATERIAL WEAKNESSES AND PROVIDING SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY TO CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for each of the three subsequent years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees—

(1) an action plan, including steps, related timelines, costs, progress, status of implementation, and any updates for fully addressing the material weaknesses of the Department discussed in the Management's Discussion and Analysis section of the financial statements of the Department submitted to Congress under section 3515 of title 31, United States Code for the year preceding the year during which the report is submitted; and

(2) a plan outlining the steps the Secretary plans to take to address the recommendations of auditors related to entity-level internal controls and to provide sufficient authority to the Chief Financial Officer of the Department to carry out the requirements of section 902 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 7103. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER ATTESTATION.

Concurrent with the submittal to Congress of the President's budget request under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, for fiscal year 2022 and each of the next three subsequent fiscal years, the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees each of the following:

(1) A certification of the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer for internal financial controls of the Department.

(2) An attestation that the Chief Financial Officer has collaborated sufficiently with the subordinate chief financial officers of the Department to be confident in the financial projections included the budget request and supporting materials.

SEC. 7104. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUBORDINATE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In accordance with the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the recruitment, selection, and training of personnel to carry out agency financial management functions pursuant to section 902(a)(5)(C) of title 31, United States Code, the Chief Financial Officer or the designee of the Chief Financial Officer within the Office of Management of the Department shall—

(1) participate in the interview and selection panels of all subordinate chief financial officers; and

(2) give input into the performance plans and performance evaluations of all subordinate chief financial officers.

(b) **TERMINATION.**—The requirements under subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Subtitle C—Servicemembers Civil Relief

SEC. 7201. CLARIFICATION OF DELIVERY OF NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF LEASES OF PREMISES AND MOTOR VEHICLES FOR PURPOSES OF RELIEF UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 305(c)(2) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3955(c)(2)) is amended—

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

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

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

“(D) by electronic means, including—

“(i) the direct delivery of material to an electronic address designated by the lessor (or the lessor's grantee) or the lessor's agent (or the agent's grantee);

“(ii) the posting of material to a website or other internet or electronic-based information repository to which access has been granted to the lessee, the lessor (or the lessor's grantee), or the lessor's agent (or the agent's grantee); and

“(iii) other electronic means reasonably calculated to ensure actual receipt of the material by the lessor (or the lessor's grantee) or the lessor's agent (or the agent's grantee).”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to delivery of notice of lease terminations on or after the date the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 7202. TECHNICAL CORRECTION REGARDING EXTENSION OF LEASE PROTECTIONS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS UNDER STOP MOVEMENT ORDERS IN RESPONSE TO LOCAL, NATIONAL, OR GLOBAL EMERGENCY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 305(b) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3955(b)), as amended by Public Law 116-158, is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C)(ii), by striking “Secretary of Defense” and inserting “Secretary concerned”; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(C)(ii), by striking “Secretary of Defense” and inserting “Secretary concerned”.

(b) **RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.**—The amendments made by this section shall apply to stop movement orders issued on or after March 1, 2020.

SA 2696. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. TESTER)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7105, to provide flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, 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 “Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2020” or the “FASTER Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 201(qq)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)(1)) is amended by striking “and soybeans” and inserting “soybeans, and sesame”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to any food that is introduced or delivered for introduction into interstate commerce on or after January 1, 2023.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) 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 that includes—

(1) descriptions of ongoing Federal activities related to—

(A) the surveillance and collection of data on the prevalence of food allergies and severity of allergic reactions for specific food or food ingredients, including the identification of any gaps in such activities;

(B) the development of effective food allergy diagnostics;

(C) the prevention of the onset of food allergies;

(D) the reduction of risks related to living with food allergies; and

(E) the development of new therapeutics to prevent, treat, cure, and manage food allergies; and

(2) specific recommendations and strategies to expand, enhance, or improve activities described in paragraph (1), including—

(A) strategies to improve the accuracy of food allergy prevalence data by expanding and intensifying current collection methods, including support for research that includes the identification of biomarkers and tests to validate survey data and the investigation of the use of identified biomarkers and tests in national surveys;

(B) strategies to overcome gaps in surveillance and data collection activities related to food allergies and specific food allergens; and

(C) recommendations for the development and implementation of a regulatory process and framework that would allow for the timely, transparent, and evidence-based modification of the definition of “major food allergen” included in section 201(qq) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)), including with respect to—

(i) the scientific criteria for defining a food or food ingredient as a “major food allergen” pursuant to such process, including recommendations pertaining to evidence of the prevalence and severity of allergic reactions to a food or food ingredient that would be required in order to establish that such food or food ingredient is an allergen of public health concern appropriate for such process; and

(ii) opportunities for stakeholder engagement and comment, as appropriate, in considering any such modification to such definition.

(b) **PUBLICATION.**—The Secretary shall make the report under subsection (a) available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.

SA 2697. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. PETERS) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3418, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to allow the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide capitalization grants to States to establish revolving funds to provide hazard mitigation assistance to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards, and other related environmental harm; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Safe-guarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation Act” or the “STORM Act”.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO ENTITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.

Title II of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 205. GRANTS TO ENTITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.

“(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may enter into agreements with eligible entities to make capitalization grants to such entities for the establishment of hazard mitigation revolving loan funds (referred to in this section as “entity loan funds”) for providing funding assistance to local governments to carry out eligible projects under this section to reduce disaster risks for homeowners, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and communities in order to decrease—

“(A) the loss of life and property;

“(B) the cost of insurance; and

“(C) Federal disaster payments.

“(2) AGREEMENTS.—Any agreement entered into under this section shall require the participating entity to—

“(A) comply with the requirements of this section; and

“(B) use accounting, audit, and fiscal procedures conforming to generally accepted accounting standards.

“(b) APPLICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a capitalization grant under this section, an eligible entity shall submit to the Administrator an application that includes the following:

“(A) Project proposals comprised of local government hazard mitigation projects, on the condition that the entity provides public notice not less than 6 weeks prior to the submission of an application.

“(B) An assessment of recurring major disaster vulnerabilities impacting the entity that demonstrates a risk to life and property.

“(C) A description of how the hazard mitigation plan of the entity has or has not taken the vulnerabilities described in subparagraph (B) into account.

“(D) A description about how the projects described in subparagraph (A) could conform with the hazard mitigation plan of the entity and of the unit of local government.

“(E) A proposal of the systematic and regional approach to achieve resilience in a vulnerable area, including impacts to river basins, river corridors, watersheds, estuaries, bays, coastal regions, micro-basins, micro-watersheds, ecosystems, and areas at risk of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, severe storms, and wildfires, including the wildland-urban interface.

“(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator shall provide technical assistance to eligible entities for applications under this section.

“(c) ENTITY LOAN FUND.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND.—An entity that receives a capitalization grant under this section shall establish an entity loan fund that complies with the requirements of this subsection.

“(2) FUND MANAGEMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), entity loan funds shall—

“(A) be administered by the agency responsible for emergency management; and

“(B) include only—

“(i) funds provided by a capitalization grant under this section;

“(ii) repayments of loans under this section to the entity loan fund; and

“(iii) interest earned on amounts in the entity loan fund.

“(3) ADMINISTRATION.—A participating entity may combine the financial administra-

tion of the entity loan fund of such entity with the financial administration of any other revolving fund established by such entity if the Administrator determines that—

“(A) the capitalization grant, entity share, repayments of loans, and interest earned on amounts in the entity loan fund are accounted for separately from other amounts in the revolving fund; and

“(B) the authority to establish assistance priorities and carry out oversight activities remains in the control of the entity agency responsible for emergency management.

“(4) ENTITY SHARE OF FUNDS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—On or before the date on which a participating entity receives a capitalization grant under this section, the entity shall deposit into the entity loan fund of such entity, an amount equal to not less than 10 percent of the amount of the capitalization grant.

“(B) REDUCED GRANT.—If, with respect to a capitalization grant under this section, a participating entity deposits in the entity loan fund of the entity an amount that is less than 10 percent of the total amount of the capitalization grant that the participating entity would otherwise receive, the Administrator shall reduce the amount of the capitalization grant received by the entity to the amount that is 10 times the amount so deposited.

“(d) APPORTIONMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the Administrator shall apportion funds made available to carry out this section to entities that have entered into an agreement under subsection (a)(2) in amounts as determined by the Administrator.

“(2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—The Administrator shall reserve not more than 2.5 percent of the amount made available to carry out this section for the Federal Emergency Management Agency for—

“(A) administrative costs incurred in carrying out this section;

“(B) providing technical assistance to participating entities under subsection (b)(2); and

“(C) capitalization grants to insular areas under paragraph (4).

“(3) PRIORITY.—In the apportionment of capitalization grants under this subsection, the Administrator shall give priority to entity applications under subsection (b) that—

“(A) propose projects increasing resilience and reducing risk of harm to natural and built infrastructure;

“(B) involve a partnership between two or more eligible entities to carry out a project or similar projects;

“(C) take into account regional impacts of hazards on river basins, river corridors, micro-watersheds, macro-watersheds, estuaries, lakes, bays, and coastal regions and areas at risk of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, severe storms, and wildfires, including the wildland-urban interface; or

“(D) propose projects for the resilience of major economic sectors or critical national infrastructure, including ports, global commodity supply chain assets (located within an entity or within the jurisdiction of local governments, insular areas, and Indian tribal governments), power and water production and distribution centers, and bridges and waterways essential to interstate commerce.

“(4) INSULAR AREAS.—

“(A) APPORTIONMENT.—From any amount remaining of funds reserved under paragraph (2), the Administrator may enter into agreements to provide capitalization grants to insular areas.

“(B) REQUIREMENTS.—An insular area receiving a capitalization grant under this section shall comply with the requirements of

this section as applied to participating entities.

“(e) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROJECTS.—The Administrator may delegate to a participating entity all of the responsibilities for environmental review, decision making, and action pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and other applicable Federal environmental laws including the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.) that would apply to the Administrator were the Administrator to undertake projects under this section as Federal projects so long as the participating entity carries out such responsibilities in the same manner and subject to the same requirements as if the Administrator carried out such responsibilities.

“(f) USE OF FUNDS.—

“(1) TYPES OF ASSISTANCE.—Amounts deposited in an entity loan fund, including loan repayments and interest earned on such amounts, may be used—

“(A) to make loans, on the condition that—

“(i) such loans are made at an interest rate of not more than 1 percent;

“(ii) annual principal and interest payments will commence not later than 1 year after completion of any project and all loans made under this subparagraph will be fully amortized—

“(I) not later than 20 years after the date on which the project is completed; or

“(II) for projects in a low-income geographic area, not later than 30 years after the date on which the project is completed and not longer than the expected design life of the project;

“(iii) the loan recipient of a loan under this subparagraph establishes a dedicated source of revenue for repayment of the loan;

“(iv) the loan recipient of a loan under this subparagraph has a hazard mitigation plan that has been approved by the Administrator; and

“(v) the entity loan fund will be credited with all payments of principal and interest on all loans made under this subparagraph;

“(B) for mitigation efforts, in addition to mitigation planning under section 322 not to exceed 10 percent of the capitalization grants made to the participating entity in a fiscal year;

“(C) for the reasonable costs of administering the fund and conducting activities under this section, except that such amounts shall not exceed \$100,000 per year, 2 percent of the capitalization grants made to the participating entity in a fiscal year, or 1 percent of the value of the entity loan fund, whichever amount is greatest, plus the amount of any fees collected by the entity for such purpose regardless of the source; and

“(D) to earn interest on the entity loan fund.

“(2) PROHIBITION ON DETERMINATION THAT LOAN IS A DUPLICATION.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator may not determine that a loan is a duplication of assistance or programs under this Act.

“(3) PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE.—Except as provided in this subsection, a participating entity may use funds in the entity loan fund to provide financial assistance for projects or activities that mitigate the impacts of natural hazards including—

“(A) drought and prolonged episodes of intense heat;

“(B) severe storms, including hurricanes, tornados, wind storms, cyclones, and severe winter storms;

“(C) wildfires;

“(D) earthquakes;

“(E) flooding, including the construction, repair, or replacement of a non-Federal levee or other flood control structure, provided that the Administrator, in consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers (if appropriate), requires an eligible entity to determine that such levee or structure is designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with sound engineering practices and standards equivalent to the purpose for which such levee or structure is intended;

“(F) shoreline erosion;

“(G) high water levels; and

“(H) storm surges.

“(4) ZONING AND LAND USE PLANNING CHANGES.—A participating entity may use not more than 10 percent of a capitalization grant under this section to enable units of local government to implement zoning and land use planning changes focused on—

“(A) the development and improvement of zoning and land use codes that incentivize and encourage low-impact development, resilient wildland-urban interface land management and development, natural infrastructure, green stormwater management, conservation areas adjacent to floodplains, implementation of watershed or greenway master plans, and reconnection of floodplains;

“(B) the study and creation of agricultural risk compensation districts where there is a desire to remove or set-back levees protecting highly developed agricultural land to mitigate for flooding, allowing agricultural producers to receive compensation for assuming greater flood risk that would alleviate flood exposure to population centers and areas with critical national infrastructure;

“(C) the study and creation of land use incentives that reward developers for greater reliance on low impact development stormwater best management practices, exchange density increases for increased open space and improvement of neighborhood catch basins to mitigate urban flooding, reward developers for including and augmenting natural infrastructure adjacent to and around building projects without reliance on increased sprawl, and reward developers for addressing wildfire ignition; and

“(D) the study and creation of an erosion response plan that accommodates river, lake, forest, plains, and ocean shoreline re-treating or bluff stabilization due to increased flooding and disaster impacts.

“(5) ESTABLISHING AND CARRYING OUT BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT.—A participating entity may use capitalization grants under this section to enable units of local government to establish and carry out the latest published editions of relevant building codes, specifications, and standards for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the building's users against disasters and natural hazards.

“(6) ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL COSTS.—For each fiscal year, a participating entity may use the amount described in paragraph (1)(C) to—

“(A) pay the reasonable costs of administering the programs under this section, including the cost of establishing an entity loan fund; and

“(B) provide technical assistance to recipients of financial assistance from the entity loan fund, on the condition that such technical assistance does not exceed 5 percent of the capitalization grant made to such entity.

“(7) LIMITATION FOR SINGLE PROJECTS.—A participating entity may not provide an amount equal to or more than \$5,000,000 to a single hazard mitigation project.

“(8) REQUIREMENTS.—For fiscal year 2022 and each fiscal year thereafter, the requirements of subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code, shall apply to the construction of projects carried out in whole

or in part with assistance made available by an entity loan fund authorized by this section.

“(g) INTENDED USE PLANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—After providing for public comment and review, and consultation with appropriate government agencies of the State or Indian tribal government, Federal agencies, and interest groups, each participating entity shall annually prepare and submit to the Administrator a plan identifying the intended uses of the entity loan fund.

“(2) CONTENTS OF PLAN.—An entity intended use plan prepared under paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) the integration of entity planning efforts, including entity hazard mitigation plans and other programs and initiatives relating to mitigation of major disasters carried out by such entity;

“(B) an explanation of the mitigation and resiliency benefits the entity intends to achieve by—

“(i) reducing future damage and loss associated with hazards;

“(ii) reducing the number of severe repetitive loss structures and repetitive loss structures in the entity;

“(iii) decreasing the number of insurance claims in the entity from injuries resulting from major disasters or other natural hazards; and

“(iv) increasing the rating under the community rating system under section 1315(b) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4022(b)) for communities in the entity;

“(C) information on the availability of, and application process for, financial assistance from the entity loan fund of such entity;

“(D) the criteria and methods established for the distribution of funds;

“(E) the amount of financial assistance that the entity anticipates apportioning;

“(F) the expected terms of the assistance provided from the entity loan fund; and

“(G) a description of the financial status of the entity loan fund, including short-term and long-term goals for the fund.

“(h) AUDITS, REPORTS, PUBLICATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT.—

“(1) BIENNIAL ENTITY AUDIT AND REPORT.—Beginning not later than the last day of the second fiscal year after the receipt of payments under this section, and biennially thereafter, any participating entity shall—

“(A) conduct an audit of the entity loan fund established under subsection (c); and

“(B) provide to the Administrator a report including—

“(i) the result of any such audit; and

“(ii) a review of the effectiveness of the entity loan fund of the entity with respect to meeting the goals and intended benefits described in the intended use plan submitted by the entity under subsection (g).

“(2) PUBLICATION.—A participating entity shall publish and periodically update information about all projects receiving funding from the entity loan fund of such entity, including—

“(A) the location of the project;

“(B) the type and amount of assistance provided from the entity loan fund;

“(C) the expected funding schedule; and

“(D) the anticipated date of completion of the project.

“(3) OVERSIGHT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, at least every 4 years, conduct reviews and audits as may be determined necessary or appropriate by the Administrator to carry out the objectives of this section and determine the effectiveness of the fund in reducing natural hazard risk.

“(B) GAO REQUIREMENTS.—A participating entity shall conduct audits under paragraph

(1) in accordance with the auditing procedures of the Government Accountability Office, including generally accepted government auditing standards.

“(C) RECOMMENDATIONS BY ADMINISTRATOR.—The Administrator may at any time make recommendations for or require specific changes to an entity loan fund in order to improve the effectiveness of the fund.

“(i) REGULATIONS OR GUIDANCE.—The Administrator shall issue such regulations or guidance as are necessary to—

“(1) ensure that each participating entity uses funds as efficiently as possible;

“(2) reduce waste, fraud, and abuse to the maximum extent possible; and

“(3) require any party that receives funds directly or indirectly under this section, including a participating entity and a recipient of amounts from an entity loan fund, to use procedures with respect to the management of the funds that conform to generally accepted accounting standards.

“(j) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Until such time as the Administrator issues final regulations to implement this section, the Administrator may—

“(1) waive notice and comment rule-making, if the Administrator determines the waiver is necessary to expeditiously implement this section; and

“(2) provide capitalization grants under this section as a pilot program.

“(k) LIABILITY PROTECTIONS.—The Agency shall not be liable for any claim based on the exercise or performance of, or the failure to exercise or perform, a discretionary function or duty by the Agency, or an employee of the Agency in carrying out this section.

“(l) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the first entity loan fund is established under subsection (c), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that examines—

“(1) the appropriateness of regulations and guidance issued by the Administrator for the program, including any oversight of the program;

“(2) a description of the number of the entity loan funds established, the projects funded from such entity loan funds, and the extent to which projects funded by the loan funds adhere to any applicable hazard mitigation plans;

“(3) the effectiveness of the entity loan funds to lower disaster related costs; and

“(4) recommendations for improving the administration of entity loan funds.

“(m) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Administrator’ means the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“(2) AGENCY.—The term ‘Agency’ means the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(A) a State; or

“(B) an Indian tribal government that has received a major disaster declaration during the 5-year period ending on the date of enactment of the STORM Act.

“(4) HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.—The term ‘hazard mitigation plan’ means a mitigation plan submitted under section 322.

“(5) INSULAR AREA.—The term ‘insular area’ means Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

“(6) LOW-INCOME GEOGRAPHIC AREA.—The term ‘low-income geographic area’ means an area described in paragraph (1) or (2) of sec-

tion 301(a) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3161(a)).

“(7) PARTICIPATING ENTITY.—The term ‘participating entity’ means an eligible entity that has entered into an agreement under this section.

“(8) REPETITIVE LOSS STRUCTURE.—The term ‘repetitive loss structure’ has the meaning given the term in section 1370 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4121).

“(9) SEVERE REPETITIVE LOSS STRUCTURE.—The term ‘severe repetitive loss structure’ has the meaning given the term in section 1366(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104c(h)).

“(10) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

“(11) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term ‘wildland-urban interface’ has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

“(n) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2023 to carry out this section.”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I have 7 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 COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 30, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, at 2 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY, PENSIONS, AND FAMILY POLICY

The Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions, and Family Policy of the Committee on Finance is author-

ized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 9:45 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

DEPENDABLE EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING IMPROVEMENTS FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7105 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7105) to provide flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which was reported from the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that the Moran substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2696) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(The amendment is printed in today’s RECORD under “Text of Amendments.”)

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 7105), as amended, was passed.

BANKRUPTCY ADMINISTRATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2020

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4996, introduced earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4996) to ensure funding of the United States trustees, extend temporary bankruptcy judgeships, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. INHOFE. 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. 4996) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4996

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 “Bankruptcy Administration Improvement Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Because of the importance of the goal that the bankruptcy system is self-funded, at no cost to the taxpayer, Congress has closely monitored the funding needs of the bankruptcy system, including by requiring periodic reporting by the Attorney General regarding the United States Trustee System Fund.

(2) Congress has amended the various bankruptcy fees as necessary to ensure that the bankruptcy system remains self-supporting, while also fairly allocating the costs of the system among those who use the system.

(3) Because the bankruptcy system is interconnected, the result has been a system of fees, including filing fees, quarterly fees in chapter 11 cases, and other fees, that together fund the courts, judges, United States trustees, and chapter 7 case trustees necessary for the bankruptcy system to function.

(4) This Act and the amendments made by this Act—

(A) ensure adequate funding of the United States trustees, supports the preservation of existing bankruptcy judgeships that are urgently needed to handle existing and anticipated increases in business and consumer caseloads, and provides long-overdue additional compensation for chapter 7 case trustees whose caseloads include chapter 11 reorganization cases that were converted to chapter 7 liquidation cases; and

(B) confirm the longstanding intention of Congress that quarterly fee requirements remain consistent across all Federal judicial districts.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act and the amendments made by this Act is to further the long-standing goal of Congress of ensuring that the bankruptcy system is self-funded, at no cost to the taxpayer.

SEC. 3. UNITED STATES TRUSTEE SYSTEM FUND; BANKRUPTCY FEES.

(a) DEPOSITS OF CERTAIN FEES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021 THROUGH 2026.—Notwithstanding section 589a(b) of title 28, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2026—

(1) the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title, less the amount specified in subparagraph (2), shall be deposited as specified in subsection (b); and

(2) \$5,400,000 of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

(b) UNITED STATES TRUSTEE SYSTEM FUND.—Section 589a of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f)(1) During each of fiscal years 2021 through 2026 and notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c), the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6), less the amount specified

in paragraph (2), shall be deposited as follows, in the following order:

“(A) First, the amounts specified in the Department of Justice appropriations for that fiscal year, shall be deposited as discretionary offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, pursuant to subsection (a), to remain available until expended.

“(B) Second, the amounts determined annually by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts that are necessary to reimburse the judiciary for the costs of administering payments under section 330(e) of title 11, shall be deposited as mandatory offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, and transferred and deposited into the special fund established under section 1931(a), and notwithstanding subsection (a), shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation.

“(C) Third, the amounts determined annually by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts that are necessary to pay trustee compensation authorized by section 330(e)(2) of title 11, shall be deposited as mandatory offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, and transferred and deposited into the Chapter 7 Trustee Fund established under section 330(e) of title 11 for payment to trustees serving in cases under chapter 7 of title 11 (in addition to the amounts paid under section 330(b) of title 11), in accordance with that section, and notwithstanding subsection (a), shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation.

“(D) Fourth, any remaining amounts shall be deposited as discretionary offsetting collections to the ‘United States Trustee System Fund’, to remain available until expended.

“(2) Notwithstanding subsection (b), for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2026, \$5,400,000 of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.”.

(c) COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS.—Section 330 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e)(1) There is established a fund in the Treasury of the United States, to be known as the ‘Chapter 7 Trustee Fund’, which shall be administered by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

“(2) Deposits into the Chapter 7 Trustee Fund under section 589a(f)(1)(C) of title 28 shall be available until expended for the purposes described in paragraph (3).

“(3) For fiscal years 2021 through 2026, the Chapter 7 Trustee Fund shall be available to pay the trustee serving in a case that is filed under chapter 7 or a case that is converted to a chapter 7 case in the most recent fiscal year (referred to in this subsection as a ‘chapter 7 case’) the amount described in paragraph (4) for the chapter 7 case in which the trustee has rendered services in that fiscal year.

“(4) The amount described in this paragraph shall be the lesser of—

“(A) \$60; or

“(B) a pro rata share, for each chapter 7 case, of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28 and deposited to the United States Trustee System Fund under section 589a(f)(1) of title 28, less the amounts specified in section 589a(f)(1)(A) and (B) of title 28.

“(5) The payment received by a trustee under paragraph (3) shall be paid in addition to the amount paid under subsection (b).

“(6) Not later than September 30, 2021, the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts shall promulgate regulations for the administration of this subsection.”.

(d) BANKRUPTCY FEES.—Section 1930(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (6)(B) and inserting the following:

“(B)(i) During the 5-year period beginning on January 1, 2021, in addition to the filing fee paid to the clerk, a quarterly fee shall be paid to the United States trustee, for deposit in the Treasury, in each open and reopened case under chapter 11 of title 11, other than under subchapter V, for each quarter (including any fraction thereof) until the case is closed, converted, or dismissed, whichever occurs first.

“(ii) The fee shall be the greater of—

“(I) 0.4 percent of disbursements or \$250 for each quarter in which disbursements total less than \$1,000,000; and

“(II) 0.8 percent of disbursements but not more than \$250,000 for each quarter in which disbursements total at least \$1,000,000.

“(iii) The fee shall be payable on the last day of the calendar month following the calendar quarter for which the fee is owed.”; and

(2) in paragraph (7), in the first sentence, by striking “may” and inserting “shall”.

(e) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) EXCEPTIONS.—

(A) COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS.—The amendments made by subsection (c) shall apply to any case filed on or after the date of enactment of this Act—

(i) under chapter 7 of title 11, United States Code; or

(ii)(I) under chapter 11, 12, or 13 of that title; and

(II) converted to a chapter 7 case under that title.

(B) BANKRUPTCY FEES.—The amendments made by subsection (d) shall apply to—

(i) any case pending under chapter 11 of title 11, United States Code, on or after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(ii) quarterly fees payable under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by subsection (d), for disbursements made in any calendar quarter that begins on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES IN CERTAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS.

(a) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized by section 1003(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the district of Delaware and the eastern district of Michigan are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—The 1st and 2d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1003(b)(1) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(B) EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1003(b)(3) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 1003 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(b) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005 AND EXTENDED BY THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012 AND THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the following districts by section 1223(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 2(a) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 1002(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs:

- (A) The district of Delaware.
- (B) The southern district of Florida.
- (C) The district of Maryland.
- (D) The eastern district of Michigan.
- (E) The district of Nevada.
- (F) The eastern district of North Carolina.
- (G) The district of Puerto Rico.
- (H) The eastern district of Virginia.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) SINGLE VACANCIES.—Except as provided in subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), (E), and (F), the 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for each district specified in paragraph (1)—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(B) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—The 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(C) SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.—The 1st and 2d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the southern district of Florida—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(D) DISTRICT OF MARYLAND.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(E) EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN.—The 2d vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(F) DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(a)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 1002 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(c) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005 AND EXTENDED BY THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the following districts by section 1223(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and extended by section 2(a) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs:

- (A) The southern district of Georgia.
- (B) The district of Maryland.
- (C) The district of New Jersey.
- (D) The northern district of New York.
- (E) The district of South Carolina.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) SINGLE VACANCIES.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for each district specified in paragraph (1)—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(B) DISTRICT OF MARYLAND.—The 2d and 3d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(d) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005, THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, AND THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 1223(c) of Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 2(b) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 1002(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the district of Delaware and the district of Puerto Rico are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—The 7th vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(b)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(B) DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO.—The 2d vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico—

(i) occurring 5 years or more after the date established by section 1002(b)(2) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 1223 of Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 1002 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(e) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005 AND THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 1223(c) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 2(b) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the eastern district of Tennessee is extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district occurs.

(2) VACANCY.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Tennessee—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

(d) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2005, THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, AND THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), extended by section 1223(c) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and further extended by section 2(b) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the eastern district of Tennessee is extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district occurs.

(2) VACANCY.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Tennessee—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), section 1223 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note), and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (1).

note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judge referred to in paragraph (1).

(f) TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE AUTHORIZED BY THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 1992 AND EXTENDED BY THE TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS EXTENSION ACT OF 2012.—

(1) EXTENSIONS.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized by section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and extended by section 2(c) of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) for the middle district of North Carolina is extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district occurs.

(2) VACANCY.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the middle district of North Carolina—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), all other provisions of section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) and section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judge referred to in paragraph (1).

SEC. 5. REGULATIONS.

Section 375(h) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking “may” and inserting “shall”.

WHISTLEBLOWER ACT OF 2019

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 2315 and that 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2315) to amend section 4712 of title 41, United States Code, to clarify the inclusion of subcontractors and subgrantees for whistleblower protection.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. INHOFE. 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. 2315) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2315

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 “Whistleblower Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. PROTECTION AGAINST REPRISAL FOR FEDERAL SUBGRANTEE EMPLOYEES.

Section 4712 of title 41, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(G), by striking “or grantee” and inserting “grantee, or subgrantee”;

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “contractor or grantee” and inserting “contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee”;

(3) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “contractor or grantee” each place it appears and inserting “contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee”; and

(4) in subsection (d), by striking “and grantees” and inserting “grantees, and subgrantees”.

SAFEGUARDING TOMORROW THROUGH ONGOING RISK MITIGATION ACT OF 2020

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 511, S. 3418.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3418) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to allow the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide capitalization grants to States to establish revolving funds to provide hazard mitigation assistance to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards, and other related environmental harm.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs with an amendment as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italics.)

S. 3418

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 “Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation Act of 2020” or the “STORM Act”.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO ENTITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.

Title II of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 205. GRANTS TO ENTITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.

“(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may enter into agreements with eligible entities to make capitalization grants to such entities for the establishment of hazard mitigation revolving loan funds (referred to in this section as ‘entity loan funds’) for providing funding assistance to local governments to carry out eligible projects under this section to reduce disaster risk in order to decrease—

“(A) the loss of life and property;

“(B) the cost of insurance; and

“(C) Federal disaster payments.

“(2) AGREEMENTS.—Any agreement entered into under this section shall require the participating entity to—

“(A) comply with the requirements of this section; and

“(B) use accounting, audit, and fiscal procedures conforming to generally accepted accounting standards.

“(b) APPLICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a capitalization grant under this section, an eligible entity shall submit to the Administrator an application that includes the following:

“(A) Project proposals comprised of local government hazard mitigation projects, on the condition that the entity provides public notice not less than 6 weeks prior to the submission of an application.

“(B) An assessment of recurring major disaster vulnerabilities impacting the entity that demonstrates a risk to life and property.

“(C) A description of how the hazard mitigation plan of the entity has or has not taken the vulnerabilities described in subparagraph (B) into account.

“(D) A description about how the projects described in subparagraph (A) could conform with the hazard mitigation plan of the entity and of the unit of local government.

“(E) A proposal of the systematic and regional approach to achieve resilience in a vulnerable area, including impacts to river basins, river corridors, watersheds, estuaries, bays, coastal regions, micro-basins, micro-watersheds, ecosystems, and areas at risk of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, and wildfires.

“(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator shall provide technical assistance to eligible entities for applications under this section.

“(c) ENTITY LOAN FUND.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND.—An entity that receives a capitalization grant under this section shall establish an entity loan fund that complies with the requirements of this subsection.

“(2) FUND MANAGEMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), entity loan funds shall—

“(A) be administered by the agency responsible for emergency management; and

“(B) include only—

“(i) funds provided by a capitalization grant under this section;

“(ii) repayments of loans under this section to the entity loan fund; and

“(iii) interest earned on amounts in the entity loan fund.

“(3) ADMINISTRATION.—A participating entity may combine the financial administration of the entity loan fund of such entity with the financial administration of any other revolving fund established by such entity if the Administrator determines that—

“(A) the capitalization grant, entity share, repayments of loans, and interest earned on amounts in the entity loan fund are accounted for separately from other amounts in the revolving fund; and

“(B) the authority to establish assistance priorities and carry out oversight activities remains in the control of the entity agency responsible for emergency management.

“(4) ENTITY SHARE OF FUNDS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—On or before the date on which a participating entity receives a capitalization grant under this section, the entity shall deposit into the entity loan fund of such entity, an amount equal to not less than 10 percent of the amount of the capitalization grant.

“(B) REDUCED GRANT.—If, with respect to a capitalization grant under this section, a participating entity deposits in the entity loan fund of the entity an amount that is less than 10 percent of the total amount of the capitalization grant that the participating entity would otherwise receive, the Administrator shall reduce the amount of

the capitalization grant received by the entity to the amount that is 10 times the amount so deposited.

“(d) APPORTIONMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the Administrator shall apportion funds made available to carry out this section to entities that have entered into an agreement under subsection (a)(2) in amounts as determined by the Administrator.

“(2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—The Administrator shall reserve not more than 2.5 percent of the amount made available to carry out this section for the [Federal Emergency Management] Agency for—

“(A) administrative costs incurred in carrying out this section;

“(B) providing technical assistance to participating entities under subsection (b)(2); and

“(C) capitalization grants to insular areas under paragraph (4).

“(3) PRIORITY.—In the apportionment of capitalization grants under this subsection, the Administrator shall give priority to entity applications under subsection (b) that—

“(A) propose projects increasing resilience and reducing risk of harm to natural and built infrastructure;

“(B) involve a partnership between two or more eligible entities to carry out a project or similar projects;

“(C) take into account regional impacts of hazards on river basins, river corridors, micro-watersheds, macro-watersheds, estuaries, lakes, bays, and coastal regions and areas at risk of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, and wildfires; or

“(D) propose projects for the resilience of major economic sectors or critical national infrastructure, including ports, global commodity supply chain assets (located within an entity or within the jurisdiction of local governments, insular areas, and [tribal] Tribal governments), power and water production and distribution centers, and bridges and waterways essential to interstate commerce.

“(4) INSULAR AREAS.—

“(A) APPORTIONMENT.—From any amount remaining of funds reserved under paragraph (2), the Administrator may enter into agreements to provide capitalization grants to insular areas.

“(B) REQUIREMENTS.—An insular area receiving a capitalization grant under this section shall comply with the requirements of this section as applied to participating entities.

“(e) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROJECTS.—The Administrator may delegate to a participating entity all of the responsibilities for environmental review, decision making, and action pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and other applicable Federal environmental laws including the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 [(16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)] (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.) that would apply to the Administrator were the Administrator to undertake projects under this section as Federal projects so long as the participating entity [carry] carries out such responsibilities in the same manner and subject to the same requirements as if the Administrator carried out such responsibilities.

“(f) USE OF FUNDS.—

“(1) TYPES OF ASSISTANCE.—Amounts deposited in an entity loan fund, including loan repayments and interest earned on such amounts, may be used—

“(A) to make loans, on the condition that—

“(i) such loans are made at an interest rate of not more than 1 percent;

“(ii) annual principal and interest payments will commence not later than 1 year after completion of any project and all loans made under this subparagraph will be fully amortized—

“(I) not later than 20 years after the date on which the project is completed; or

“(II) for projects in a low-income geographic area, not later than 30 years after the date on which the project is completed and not longer than the expected design life of the project;

“(iii) the loan recipient of a loan under this subparagraph establishes a dedicated source of revenue for repayment of the loan;

“(iv) the loan recipient of a loan under this subparagraph has a hazard mitigation plan that has been approved by the Administrator; and

“(v) the entity loan fund will be credited with all payments of principal and interest on all loans made under this subparagraph;

“(B) for mitigation efforts, in addition to mitigation planning under section 322 not to exceed 10 percent of the capitalization grants made to the participating entity in a fiscal year;

“(C) for the reasonable costs of administering the fund and conducting activities under this section, except that such amounts shall not exceed \$100,000 per year, 2 percent of the capitalization grants made to the participating entity in a fiscal year, or 1 percent of the value of the entity loan fund, whichever amount is greatest, plus the amount of any fees collected by the entity for such purpose regardless of the source; and

“(D) to earn interest on the entity loan fund.

“(2) PROHIBITION ON DETERMINATION THAT LOAN IS A DUPLICATION.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator may not determine that a loan is a duplication of assistance or programs under this Act.

“(3) PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE.—Except as provided in this subsection, a participating entity may use funds in the entity loan fund to provide financial assistance for projects or activities that mitigate the impacts of natural hazards including—

“(A) drought and prolonged episodes of intense heat;

“(B) severe storms, including hurricanes, tornados, wind storms, cyclones, and severe winter storms;

“(C) wildfires;

“(D) earthquakes;

“(E) flooding;

“(F) shoreline erosion;

“(G) high water levels; and

“(H) storm surges.

“(4) ZONING AND LAND USE PLANNING CHANGES.—A participating entity may use not more than 10 percent of a capitalization grant under this section to enable units of local government to implement zoning and land use planning changes focused on—

“(A) the development and improvement of zoning and land use codes that incentivize and encourage low-impact development, resilient wildland-urban interface land management and development, natural infrastructure, green stormwater management, conservation areas adjacent to floodplains, implementation of watershed or greenway master plans, and reconnection of floodplains;

“(B) the study and creation of agricultural risk compensation districts where there is a desire to remove or set-back levees protecting highly developed agricultural land to mitigate for flooding, allowing agricultural producers to receive compensation for assuming greater flood risk that would alleviate flood exposure to population [s] centers and areas with critical national infrastructure;

“(C) the study and creation of land use incentives that reward developers for greater reliance on low impact development stormwater best management practices, exchange density increases for increased open space and improvement of neighborhood catch basins to mitigate urban flooding, reward developers for including and augmenting natural infrastructure adjacent to and around building projects without reliance on increased sprawl, and reward developers for addressing wildfire ignition; and

“(D) the study and creation of an erosion response plan that accommodates river, lake, forest, plains, and ocean shoreline retreating or bluff stabilization due to increased flooding and disaster impacts.

“(5) ESTABLISHING AND CARRYING OUT BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT.—A participating entity may use capitalization grants under this section to enable units of local government to establish and carry out the latest published editions of relevant building codes, specifications, and standards for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the building [s] users against disasters and natural hazards.

“(6) ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL COSTS.—For each fiscal year, a participating entity may use the amount described in paragraph (1)(C) to—

“(A) pay the reasonable costs of administering the programs under this section, including the cost of establishing an entity loan fund; and

“(B) provide technical assistance to recipients of financial assistance from the entity loan fund, on the condition that such technical assistance does not exceed 5 percent of the capitalization grant made to such entity.

“(7) LIMITATION FOR SINGLE PROJECTS.—A participating entity may not provide an amount equal to or more than \$5,000,000 to a single hazard mitigation project.

“(g) INTENDED USE PLANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—After providing for public comment and review, and consultation with appropriate government agencies of the State or Indian Tribe, Federal agencies, and interest groups, each participating entity shall annually prepare and submit to the Administrator a plan identifying the intended uses of the entity loan fund.

“(2) CONTENTS OF PLAN.—An entity intended use plan prepared under paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) the integration of entity planning efforts, including entity hazard mitigation plans and other programs and initiatives relating to mitigation of major disasters carried out by such entity;

“(B) an explanation of the mitigation and resiliency benefits the entity intends to achieve by—

“(i) reducing future damage and loss associated with hazards;

“(ii) reducing the number of severe repetitive loss structures and repetitive loss structures in the entity;

“(iii) decreasing the number of insurance claims in the entity from injuries resulting from major disasters or other natural hazards; and

“(iv) increasing the rating under the community rating system under section 1315(b) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4022(b)) for communities in the entity;

“(C) information on the availability of, and application process for, financial assistance from the entity loan fund of such entity;

“(D) the criteria and methods established for the distribution of funds;

“(E) the amount of financial assistance that the entity anticipates apportioning;

“(F) the expected terms of the assistance provided from the entity loan fund; and

“(G) a description of the financial status of the entity loan fund, including short-term and long-term goals for the fund.

“(h) AUDITS, REPORTS, PUBLICATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT.—

“(1) BIENNIAL ENTITY AUDIT AND REPORT.—Beginning not later than the last day of the second fiscal year after the receipt of payments under this section, and biennially thereafter, any participating entity shall—

“(A) conduct an audit of [such] the entity loan fund established under subsection [(b)] (c); and

“(B) provide to the Administrator a report including—

“(i) the result of any such audit; and

“(ii) a review of the effectiveness of the entity loan fund of the entity with respect to meeting the goals and intended benefits described in the intended use plan submitted by the entity under subsection [(f)] (g).

“(2) PUBLICATION.—A participating entity shall publish and periodically update information about all projects receiving funding from the entity loan fund of such entity, including—

“(A) the location of the project;

“(B) the type and amount of assistance provided from the entity loan fund;

“(C) the expected funding schedule; and

“(D) the anticipated date of completion of the project.

“(3) OVERSIGHT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, at least every 4 years, conduct reviews and audits as may be determined necessary or appropriate by the Administrator to carry out the objectives of this section and determine the effectiveness of the fund in reducing natural hazard risk.

“(B) GAO REQUIREMENTS.—[The] A participating entity shall conduct audits under paragraph (1) in accordance with the auditing procedures of the Government Accountability Office, including generally accepted government auditing standards.

“(C) RECOMMENDATIONS BY ADMINISTRATOR.—The Administrator may at any time make recommendations for or require specific changes to an entity loan fund in order to improve the effectiveness of the fund.

“(i) REGULATIONS OR GUIDANCE.—The Administrator shall issue such regulations or guidance as are necessary to—

“(1) ensure that each participating entity uses funds as efficiently as possible;

“(2) reduce waste, fraud, and abuse to the maximum extent possible; and

“(3) require any party that receives funds directly or indirectly under this section, including a participating entity and a recipient of amounts from an entity loan fund, to use procedures with respect to the management of the funds that conform to generally accepted accounting standards.

“(j) LIABILITY PROTECTIONS.—The [Federal Emergency Management] Agency shall not be liable for any claim based on the exercise or performance of, or the failure to exercise or perform, a discretionary function or duty by the Agency, or an employee of the Agency in carrying out this section.

“(k) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Administrator’ means the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“(2) AGENCY.—The term ‘Agency’ means the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(A) a State; or

“(B) an Indian [tribal] Tribal government that has received a major disaster declaration during the 5-year period ending on the date of enactment of the STORM Act.

“(4) HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.—The term ‘hazard mitigation plan’ means a mitigation plan submitted under section 322.

“(5) INSULAR AREA.—The term ‘insular area’ means Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

“(6) LOW-INCOME GEOGRAPHIC AREA.—The term ‘low-income geographic area’ means an area described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 301(a) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3161(a)).

“(7) PARTICIPATING ENTITY.—The term ‘participating entity’ means an eligible entity that has entered into an agreement under this section.

“(8) REPETITIVE LOSS STRUCTURE.—The term ‘repetitive loss structure’ has the meaning given the term in section 1370 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4121).

“(9) SEVERE REPETITIVE LOSS STRUCTURE.—The term ‘severe repetitive loss structure’ has the meaning given the term in section 1366(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104c(h)).

“(10) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

“(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2023 to carry out this section.”

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments be withdrawn, the Peters substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; 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 amendments were withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 2697), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(The amendment is printed in today’s RECORD under “Text of Amendments.”)

The bill (S. 3418), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, December 10; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:02 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 10, 2020, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 9, 2020:

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

ALLEN DICKERSON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 30, 2025.

SHANA M. BROUSSARD, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 30, 2023.

SEAN J. COOKSEY, OF MISSOURI, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 30, 2021.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AUSTIN SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I am not recorded on the following votes because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on Roll Call No. 228 on passage of H.R. 7995, I would have voted YEA; on Roll Call No. 229 on motion to adjourn, I would have voted YEA; on Roll Call No. 230 on ordering the previous question for H. Res. 1244, I would have voted NAY; on Roll Call No. 231 on agreeing to the resolution for H. Res. 1244, I would have voted NAY; on Roll Call No. 232 on passage of H.R. 1380, I would have voted NAY; on Roll Call No. 233 on passage of S. 2981, I would have voted NAY; on Roll Call No. 234 on motion to recommit with instructions for H.R. 3884, I would have voted YEA; and on Roll Call No. 235 on passage of H.R. 3884, I would have voted NAY.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL GIFT SHOP TAX ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to introduce the Federal Gift Shop Tax Act, which would allow state and local governments to impose a sales tax on purchases at gift shops on federal property. These governments would be able to generate millions of dollars in new revenue at a time when they are struggling to meet their budgets because of the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

When the federal government engages in activity that is not inherently governmental, such as operating a gift shop, there is no reason to exempt customer purchases from a sales tax. The items sold at federal gift shops, such as jewelry, apparel, accessories, games, books and decor, would be subject to sales tax if sold on private property. Customers are often unaware of this sales tax exemption when shopping at gift shops on federal property, so the introduction of a sales tax is unlikely to have a significant impact on gift shop sales. It would, however, create a valuable revenue stream for struggling governments. In addition, state and local governments often provide uncompensated services to federal property, such as fire service, and allowing them to impose a sales tax on gift shops would allow them to recoup some of those costs. This bill is of particular importance to the District of Columbia, as it is home to a number of gift shops on federal property, such as at the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

State and local governments have taken the lead in combating the pandemic, meeting the moment with expanded services and support even as they lose significant revenue. This bill would give these governments an opportunity to make up a portion of their budget shortfalls by creating this new revenue stream.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE PRESIDENT DR. SHIRLEY A. REED

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor South Texas College Founding President Dr. Shirley Reed. Dr. Reed has retired after more than 26 years serving as the founding President of South Texas College.

I first met Dr. Shirley Reed in the middle of a dusty field in Rio Grande City for the groundbreaking of South Texas College's Stan County campus. Even though the wind was raising the dust and getting into our eyes, both of us were excited about the opportunities this new campus would bring for students and our community. Dr. Reed invited me to speak at this groundbreaking ceremony because as Chairman of the Education Subcommittee on Appropriations in the Texas State Legislature, I secured funding for fast-growing colleges throughout Texas, including South Texas College. Since then, we have been working together to fund projects that advance access to quality education for the people of South Texas.

South Texas College was founded back in 1993 and Dr. Reed was selected as its founding President. At that time, it was known as South Texas Community College and had about 1,000 students enrolled. However, through her steady leadership it grew into a multi-campus college with an enrollment of just under 30,000 students. It is also recognized as the only community college in the State of Texas to offer 5 baccalaureate degrees. This was all accomplished despite the considerable doubt and obstacles that she faced when she was working towards her vision for the school. Now, she is a source of inspiration and a reminder of what can be accomplished through hard work and dedication.

I want to congratulate Dr. Reed on her tenure at South Texas College. Her passion, hard work, and leadership has created a revered education institution, driving regional and economic prosperity in the region. As we move forward, let us take the time to appreciate President Reed and all the educators who dedicate their lives to preparing the next generation for their futures. However, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the career and service of Dr. Reed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I was unable to vote on December 7th and 8th due to not being in D.C. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: YES on Roll Call No. 236; YES on Roll Call No. 237; NO on Roll Call No. 238, and YES on Roll Call No. 239.

TRIBUTE TO DR. VICTOR A. TRIANFO

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. JORDAN. Madam Speaker, I am honored to commend to the House the service of Victor A. Trianfo, Jr., D.O. Dr. Trianfo is retiring as Chief Medical Officer of Memorial Health in Marysville, Ohio, after more than two decades with that organization.

Dr. Trianfo's time at Memorial Health began in 1999. For the last ten years, he has served in various administrative roles there, including as Vice President of Medical Affairs and Quality. He took on CMO responsibilities in 2013, helping to oversee the medical staff, guide case management and home health, and lead important philanthropy programs that have allowed the system to grow with the needs of the area.

Dr. Trianfo is widely praised as Memorial Health's biggest advocate, spearheading a partnership with The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center to improve the delivery of cardiac care to Union County residents. His work to coordinate coronavirus response efforts with the Union County Health Department is a model to health care leaders everywhere.

Dr. Trianfo earned his medical degree at Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine, having previously earned a nursing degree and working as a travel nurse, a flight and trauma nurse, and a prison nurse. He was chief resident of family medicine at The Ohio State University, where he also served as Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Residency Director. He and his wife, Susan, are the parents of three adult children.

On behalf of the people of Ohio's Fourth Congressional District, I am proud to join in the accolades to Dr. Trianfo for his 43 years of fine service to the medical profession. We wish him and his family every success as they move to a new chapter in their lives.

• 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.

IN HONOR OF ROD HSIAO

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rod Hsiao as he leaves the San Mateo County Board of Education after 14 years of service to the public. Rod is an outstanding public servant and he will be missed by those who follow his work on the board.

Rod Hsiao strongly supports inclusivity. While working in Washington, D.C., he co-founded CAPAL, a 31-year-old nonprofit for students interested in public policy. He is the founder of nonprofit InPlay which combats the loss of educational progress that occurs amongst children during the summer break. InPlay provides a single point where parents can go to sign up children for free or low-cost summer education and recreational activities. He worked with the U.S. Small Business Administration's Council on Underserved Communities and has served on the boards of various nonprofits. He was the co-founder of a local group encouraging Asian and Pacific Islanders to participate in elective office.

The county board of education hears appeals from parents denied inter-district transfers by their district of residence. These are emotional moments when parents are hoping to have their children attend a different school. Rod asks probing questions to determine if there is any legal rationale for the transfer to be granted. He looks to the best interests of students and works hard to balance the interests of the home district with the student's needs.

Granting a charter to a proposed charter school is one of the more fraught activities of the county board of education. The issue only arises when the district in which the school is proposed to be established has denied the application. Again, Rod seeks to improve public education through many avenues, including charter schools. These choices sometimes generate friction with one or more vocal groups, but he tries to ensure that the underserved communities of San Mateo County have access to the best possible education.

One example of ensuring access to high quality education is the countywide program known as The Big Lift. It is an initiative that grew out of a group in which Rod participated. The goal is to ensure that San Mateo County students are proficient in reading by the third grade. Rod served on the Peninsula Partnership Leadership Council and worked with its successor agency as part of a team to design and launch The Big Lift. Although the pandemic has created obstacles, the program remains strong.

Jones Gulch is the beloved outdoor education program offered by the San Mateo County Office of Education, operating for generations. It's been said that, in some instances, students arrive with their grandmothers who once went to Jones Gulch back when the grandmother was a middle school student. The camp is owned by the YMCA and operated in cooperation with the County Office of Education. In recent years, Rod is credited with maintaining the relationship and with strengthening the program by finding ways to do camp upgrades after decades of use. He has pushed hard to build housing at the site so that staff can fulfill their duties with-

out having to sometimes sleep on the floor of the camp office.

Rod is a graduate of Oberlin College with a BA in Economics, and holds a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard. Aside from his achievements in education, he has also consulted to global companies and founded or worked for nonprofits that promote entrepreneurship and inclusivity.

After nearly a decade and a half in a position of educational leadership, Rod will now be able to spend more time with his wife, Linda, and sons Anthony and Timothy. He has burned the midnight oil on many occasions, and they will likely welcome him home on a more regular schedule. However, I know that Rod Hsiao will also remain active in public affairs in San Mateo County. An advocate is relentless by nature whether or not in elective office. I expect that Rod will remain engaged in creating educational opportunity and in encouraging participation by all segments of San Mateo County. We thank him for years of effort dedicated to building an America of which we may all be proud.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF MATTHEW J. BUNKER

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. STEIL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the life and service of Matthew J. Bunker. Matthew grew up in Delavan, Wisconsin and attended Delavan Christian School and Faith Christian School before receiving an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

From an early age, Matthew knew that he wanted to serve America by joining the military. Matthew's dedication and talents were recognized when my predecessor, Congressman Paul Ryan, awarded Matthew an appointment to attend the United States Military Academy. After graduating from West Point, Matthew served with the Army's 1st Cavalry as a Recon Scout at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington.

After his honorable service in the Army, Matthew pursued his lifelong dream of becoming an explorer. Matthew loved the outdoors and adventure. He scaled mountains in the Pacific Northwest, hiked, mountain biked, and photographed those moments along the way.

In addition to being an avid outdoorsman, Matthew was a man of strong faith and moral conviction. Wherever his adventures took him, he kept his family and God in mind. His father said that Matthew only loved two things above the outdoors: his family and God.

Matthew Bunker passed away Friday, June 26, 2020 while descending Mount Rainier on a backcountry hike and ski descent. He was 28 years old. He was known for being smart, caring, having a great sense of humor, and for being a talented photographer, painter, and writer.

My prayers are with his family, especially his mother Carolyn and his father Joe, who is a member of the First Congressional District's Service Academy Nomination Board. May we remember Matthew and his service to our country and to others. May his adventurous spirit, strong faith, and moral conviction be an inspiration to us all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I was unfortunately prevented from traveling and unable to make votes on December 8, 2020. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 6395 and H.R. 8354.

RECOGNIZING WARREN G.
GRAMMER OF POMONA, ILLINOIS

HON. MIKE BOST

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Warren G. Grammer of Pomona, Illinois, in celebration of his upcoming 100th birthday. A World War II veteran and longtime public servant, Warren is a true American patriot and a role model to many Illinoisans.

Warren was born on December 22, 1920. In 1943, Warren was drafted into the U.S. Army and served in the 45th Infantry as a rifle combat infantryman and later as a military policeman. During his service, he took part in eight different battles and was awarded the Silver Battle Star and the Bronze Battle Star. His proudest accomplishment, however, was participating in his division's liberation of the concentration camp in Dachau, Germany. When he was honorably discharged in September 1945, Warren returned home to work for the Illinois State Police as a trooper before working as an officer in a juvenile detention center. Retiring as a Jackson County deputy, Warren left a legacy of public service and public safety.

With a dedication to community and country, Warren is a truly part of America's Greatest Generation. His longevity is worthy of recognition, but the work he accomplished in those years is even more important.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Warren Grammer for his incredible milestone. On behalf of Southern Illinois, happy birthday.

RECOGNIZING UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ROBERTO J. SANTOS

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and service of United Independent School District Superintendent Roberto J. Santos. Mr. Santos will retire after more than 38 years serving the United Independent School District.

Mr. Santos is an individual who committed his life and career to the betterment of his community. Throughout his career in the field of education, he showed a steadfast dedication to every student he served. He also showed strong leadership in how he managed

one of the largest school districts in the State of Texas. During his tenure as Superintendent, United ISD earned an "A" rating by the Texas Education Agency two years in a row. In addition, and more importantly, Mr. Santos earned the respect and trust of his colleagues and the many people he helped during his tenure.

Mr. Santos's success as superintendent undoubtedly comes from the experience he gained serving in various roles for United ISD, including: Associate Superintendent for Student Support Services, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Director for Human Resources, and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. The skills he acquired through these different positions enabled him to have the tools he needed for when he eventually became superintendent in 2005.

Over the course of his many years in public education, Mr. Santos attained numerous awards and recognitions. He is the recipient of the "Unsung Heroes Award" by the Laredo Next Generation Rotary Club; Future of Texas Award; Laredo Diploma Plus Foundation Leadership Award; Imaginarium "Image Award"; Latin American International Hall of Fame; Border Olympics Honorary Director; Martin High School Tiger Legend; LULAC Council No. 12 Tejano Achiever; Gateway to Mexico All-Sports Clinic Hall of Honor; American Cancer Society Relay for Life Honorary Chairman and March of Dimes Honorary Chairman.

I want to congratulate Mr. Santos on his service to the United Independent School District. His compassion, hard work, and leadership has molded an essential institution for the community, driving local economic and academic prosperity in Laredo. As we move forward, let us take the time to appreciate Mr. Santos and all the educators who dedicate their lives to preparing the next generation for becoming valuable members of society. However, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the career and service of Superintendent Roberto J. Santos.

ROScoe D. CUNNINGHAM

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to remember Roscoe D. Cunningham—a remarkably accomplished man who made an unforgettable impact in Lawrence County, Illinois in his 97 years.

Roscoe was born on September 15, 1923 to Roscoe and Bessie Cooper Cunningham. He graduated from Sumner High School in 1941, a place which instilled his love of learning and ability to quote poetry. He, then, attended the University of Illinois, but put a halt on his degree to serve in World War II European Operations. He proudly served in the United States Army, Rainbow Division 4th Operations as a forward Observer with the artillery division where he was involved with the aeronautical observation of the dropping of bombs on enemy locations. In 1946, Roscoe was honor-

ably discharged from active duty with the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

Returning to U of I, Roscoe earned a JD from the School of Law and was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1948. He practiced law in Lawrence County for over 72 years. Roscoe proved to be a strong community leader, dedicating his life to bettering his community in Lawrence County. He was considered one of the county's most vocal advocates and, in 2018, was awarded the Key to the City by Lawrenceville. He also participated extensively in state and national politics, serving as the States Attorney for four terms, the Illinois State Legislature for four terms, and Delegate to the Republican National Convention for three sessions. As an Illinois State Representative for the 54th District, Roscoe also proved to be a vocal advocate for his district. It is noted that he spoke eloquently from the House Floor and he could capture a room's attention. Roscoe was also involved in more than 20 election campaigns throughout the years and he enjoyed meeting with and helping constituents.

Roscoe married Kathryn Suzanne Cunningham on May 1, 1954. They shared 64 years of marriage and raised five children. Roscoe was frequently seen riding bikes with his children and/or grandchildren. At 87, he continued to bike from Sumner to Olney in support of the Special Olympics.

Striving to better his community, Roscoe prioritized community service. He was especially proud of establishing and advancing the Cunningham's Golden Age Club No. 1. His favorite Bible verse was Luke 9:62 which reads, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." These words inspired Roscoe to re-establish the hometown newspaper in his later years. The sections he created have led to The Sumner Press's legacy as the longest running, locally owned newspaper in Southern Illinois. Roscoe was an active member at First Christian Church for 66 years. He recognized the importance of Sunday School and spent many years teaching Sunday School to participate in the education of young students in their faith. He was a member of many community organizations, including the Lawrence County Shrine Club, Lawrence County Republicans, and a lifetime member of the V.F.W. Post 2244, to name but a few among his expansive list of which he was a member.

Madam Speaker, I take this time to recognize a true agent of change in Lawrence County. Lawrence County will surely miss him, but they are left with his incomparable legacy.

INTRODUCTION OF THE OUR
HOMES OUR VOTES ACT

HON. JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Our Homes Our Votes Act along with my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mary Gay Scanlon. This bill will help close the voter turnout gap between rich and poor by making it easier for eligible tenants in federally subsidized housing to register to vote.

People have fought and died for the right to vote in this country, but many still face barriers

to voting. Tenants in federally subsidized housing already have their residence and identity verified by public agencies, and this bill will allow them to register to vote as they sign their lease without duplicating information or finding additional paperwork to fill out.

The best way to confront this country's history of voter suppression is to remove barriers to voting that exist today. Eligible voters in working class districts like mine vote at lower rates than wealthier voters, and that discrepancy undermines our democracy. This bill is a step toward fixing that, and I urge this body to advance it.

ALS DISABILITY INSURANCE
ACCESS ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 578, the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act. I'm proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation that enjoys overwhelming bipartisan support in the Congress.

This bill ends the five-month waiting period for people with ALS to access Social Security Disability. For some in the country, a five-month wait would not be a great burden, but for those with ALS, which is fatal, many die waiting, never receiving the benefits they earned by paying into Social Security.

ALS is an aggressive neurodegenerative disease that robs people of their muscle movement, their employment, and their lives in a brief time following diagnosis. By ending the harmful waiting period, this bill will allow Americans who face an ALS diagnosis to immediately receive the Social Security benefits they've earned and deserve.

I salute my friend and colleague, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE for authoring this important legislation and I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill and for the President to immediately sign it into law.

TRIBUTE TO UNION COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CHARLES HALL
AND STEVE STOLTE

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. JORDAN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to pay tribute to Union County Commissioners Charles Hall and Steve Stolte, who will retire at the end of 2020 after many years of outstanding service to the people of Union County.

A lifelong resident of Leesburg Township, Charles Hall has been a county commissioner since 2005 and currently serves as Vice President of the Board. He studied business at Northern Illinois University and Butler University, later joining his brother in machinery sales in Marysville. Charles and his wife of more than fifty years, Peggy, are the parents of three, the grandparents of nine, and the great-grandparents of two. They are members of Richwood United Methodist Church.

Steve Stolte, President of the Board, was appointed to fill an unexpired term in 2011 and has served as a commissioner ever since. A graduate of The Ohio State University, Steve was Union County Engineer for nearly a quarter-century and Marysville City Engineer prior to that. He was named Ohio County Engineer of the Year in 1996 and received the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's William H. Anderson Excellence in Public Service Award in 2019.

Madam Speaker, the people of Union County will gather for an open house on December 17 to celebrate Charles's and Steve's retirement. On behalf of the people of Ohio's Fourth Congressional District, I am proud to join in the accolades to them for their devotion to public service. We wish them and their families every success as they move to a new chapter in their lives.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6395,
WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY
NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Conference Report on H.R. 6395, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

I'd like to thank my colleague, Chairman ADAM SMITH, for his consistent efforts to include key House provisions in this year's NDAA conference report. I was very pleased that the provisions which the Congressional Black Caucus led that calls for the renaming of Confederate military bases made it into the final bill. There is a dangerous and hurtful legacy of white supremacy in this country, and there is no place for the memorialization of the historical figures that perpetuated it, especially on our military bases. I'm pleased that the CBC and House Democrats successfully kept this important provision in the final text of the bill.

However, the FY 21 NDAA continues our legacy of wasteful military spending and investing in war rather than peace. This legislation provides \$732 billion in discretionary spending, nearly the exact same number as last year's number, which was the largest number ever authorized.

Especially as we fight back a catastrophic pandemic and public health crisis, Congress should not be rewarding the Pentagon with a massive spending increase. I cannot support a bill that funds the Pentagon at a level far beyond what is necessary for our national defense, turning our backs on the serious human need we face today.

For these reasons, I am unable to support the NDAA conference report and will vote no.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SHAWN
FARRITOR

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the life of Shawn Farritor. Shawn was born in June 1967 with a birth defect called transposition of the great arteries, meaning the two main arteries leaving his heart were reversed. Shawn overcame these challenges to become an attorney and published author, and it inspired him to spend his life helping others. Shawn received a double lung and heart transplant in December 2019 and spent a year fighting to recover before leaving us in September 2020. He was born and raised in Ravenna, Nebraska, and spent his professional career in Grand Island and Hastings.

Spending his professional career providing legal support to those who needed it most, Shawn made a big effort to learn the language and culture of those he served and was known as someone who "would actually listen." He was a literacy council volunteer, United Way professional partner, and served on the Friendship House board of directors as Vice President. He was also an active supporter of survivors of the transposition procedure he underwent. For his contributions to communities in the Third District, Shawn is an honorable mention recipient of the 2020 Innovation and Adaptation Recognition.

Shawn is missed by all especially his wife, stepson, and family. He was beloved by all for his big heart and passion for helping others. We are grateful for Shawn and proud of everything he has done for many Nebraskans.

RECOGNIZING UNIVERSAL CITY
POLICE CHIEF GARY SPEER

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and service of Universal City Police Chief Gary Speer. Chief Speer has retired after 40 years in law enforcement and 36 years of service with the Universal City Police Department.

Chief Speer is an individual who consistently displayed the utmost commitment to his community. He began his career in law enforcement in 1981 as a reserve officer for Bexar County Precinct 3. He eventually served in a few different departments before joining the Universal City Police Department as a patrolman in 1984. Over time he steadily rose through the ranks. He achieved the rank of Sergeant in 1989, Lieutenant in 1997, Assistant Chief in 2001, and soon earned the position of Chief in 2007. During this time, he was also honored with several awards including Police Officer of the Year by the Lions Club and Police Officer of the Year for the State of Texas by the American Legion.

I have worked with Chief Speer over the years and witnessed first-hand the essential work he has done to keep his community safe. He cared deeply about the people he served

and consistently showed what it means to put the well-being of others first. The dedication that he has shown to us all should be a constant reminder of how we should be in our daily lives. This devotion to others is also consistent with the history of his family. Chief Speer's Grandfather, father, and brother all served their communities as members of law enforcement.

In addition to the hard work and dedication he showed as a member of the law enforcement community, he is also an active member of his community. He is a member of Shriners International, the San Antonio Livestock Exposition and its Scramble Committee, the Texas Police Association, and the Texas Police Chiefs Association. But most importantly, he is a devoted father and grandfather.

As we move forward, let us take the time to appreciate the service of heroes like Chief Speer and all the individuals who risk their lives each day to keep us safe. However, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the career and service of Chief Speer.

HBCU PROPELLING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF RESULTS FOR STUDENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus and an original co-sponsor, I rise in support of the bipartisan S. 461, the "HBCU Propelling Agency Relationships Towards a New Era of Results for Students Act" (HBCU PARTNERS Act), which will strengthen partnerships between federal agencies and the country's more than 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The HBCU PARTNERS Act requires federal agencies with relevant grants and programs to undertake annual planning and coordinate their efforts to support and expand HBCU participation in those programs.

The bill strengthens the rigor and transparency requirements of existing law by requiring that agencies track their progress toward past goals and share their plans with Congress.

In addition, it codifies the White House Board of Advisors on HBCUs, ensuring an ongoing avenue for the institutions' priorities and policy concerns to be raised.

As a strong proponent of the preservation of our nation's HBCU's and MSI's, I support this bill because our students deserve to receive an outstanding education and have access to equal resources, regardless of the institution they choose to attend.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that one of the greatest HBCUs in the country, Texas Southern University, is located in my congressional district.

Texas Southern University has a rich history with nine academic units, 1,000 dedicated staff members, and over 9,200 esteemed students.

Like most of my HBCU Caucus colleagues, I have worked closely with my local HBCU to provide funding and resources needed to enable them to fulfill their mission of educating the next generation of social engineers and conducting research programs addressing issues of major concern to the African American community.

As Chair of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection in the 111th Congress, I authored the legislation to establish a Transportation Security Center of Excellence at TSU and worked to help TSU secure \$1.2 million in funding over four years from the Department of Homeland Security for this Center of Excellence.

One of my proudest accomplishments as a member of Congress is my success in working with federal officials in the Clinton Administration to settle the lawsuit against TSU that had been pending for more than 23 years.

I was proud to spearhead the initiative that brought more than \$13 million in financial aid relief for the students and campus of Texas Southern University.

I also worked with TSU administrators to initiate digital archive projects to preserve the records of two of its most distinguished alumni, the legendary Barbara Jordan and Mickey Leland, both of whom preceded me as the Member of Congress for the Eighteenth Congressional District of Texas.

I was pleased to facilitate a partnership between Comcast and TSU's School of Communication to provide scholarships and internships to TSU students and in-kind marketing services to the university.

I also worked to secure funding needed to establish the Center for Transportation, Training and Research in the TSU College of Science, Engineering, and Technology.

Mr. Speaker, HBCU's have played a critical role in American history.

As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated: "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."

HBCUs do not just educate—HBCUs have and will continue to fill an important role in education opportunity and engagement for millions of young people from diverse backgrounds.

As leaders of this country, the success and expansion of HBCUs and minority-serving institutions falls on our shoulders and we must act swiftly to ensure that these institutions are protected.

In an effort to maintain the legacy and educational quality of our historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions, we must act urgently to ensure the proper relationships are established between all of these institutions and the Department of Homeland Security.

I ask all members to join me in voting for S. 461, the "HBCU Propelling Agency Relationships Towards a New Era of Results for Students Act."

IN HONOR OF AZALEA CHARITIES,
INCORPORATED

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Azalea Charities Incorporated, an all volunteer charitable organization located in the First District with a dual mission of providing support to Aid to Wounded Warriors and youth and special need projects. Over the last 22 years Azalea Charities Inc., has provided over 5 million dollars of support to these two mission areas, not only here in the First District, but across the nation as well as internationally. The motto of Azalea Charities is Working Together-Giving Together.

Azalea Charities' commitment to the ideals that America stands for, their good citizenship, self-sacrifice and longevity of service are a testament to all that is best about our country. From raising funds by partnering with local corporations and businesses to participating in events such as the Marine Corps Marathon and conducting their hallmark Pro Am Azalea Classic Invitational golf tournament, Azalea Charities dedication to service is to be commended.

After two decades, Azalea Charities Inc. is bringing their charitable era to an end.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I ask that you rise with me in honoring the men and women of Azalea Charities for their service to community over these past 22 years of dedicated selfless service to the citizens of our great country.

IN HONOR OF RICH GARBARINO

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize my dear friend and colleague Rich Garbarino: retiring from the city council of South San Francisco after 18 years and after a total of 38 years of service to the people of South San Francisco. Rich has been a steady voice of progress and leadership in the city.

Councilmember Garbarino sat on the parks commission for 18 years which resulted in new parks being developed throughout the city including Summit, Orange and Cypress parks that were constructed or thoroughly renovated.

Initial work on Centennial Way, a lengthy trail built to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the city, began while Rich was a commissioner. Construction concluded years later after he joined the council. He was an enthusiastic advocate over all these years. Trail construction costs were entirely defrayed through donations.

When Rich began in public service, the east side of the city consisted of giant, abandoned steel mills worthy of any devastated war zone. As he completes his service, South San Francisco has become the biotechnology capital of the world. The steel mills were long ago swept aside to be replaced by Genentech's sprawling campuses of billions of dollars of investment and those of many other companies. One is presently researching the aging proc-

ess with the hope of defeating it, while another is tackling sickle cell anemia. A third grows specialized mosquitoes aimed at stopping the spread of Dengue fever. A fourth is farming inside a warehouse using vertical fields, robots and artificial intelligence to produce vegetables that are so tasty they fly off the shelves at supermarkets. Rich Garbarino and his colleagues encouraged tens of billions of dollars in investment in the east side through their welcoming messages to the biotechnology industry. This was transformational.

During his time in office, Rich worked hard in our State Capitol to represent other cities through the League of California Cities. He explained the need for local control over zoning and has long supported housing along the transit corridors of South San Francisco. Hundreds of apartments and condominiums have been created in just the past few years, most located along the rail and bus lines that lace South San Francisco.

He was a big supporter of Measure W, a 1/2 cent sales tax approved by voters. As these industries and housing spring up in South San Francisco, the need for more police and a new municipal center featuring a police station and library became apparent. It's paid for in part by Measure W.

Over just the past 20 years, Rich Garbarino took on nearly 40 different community service commitments including serving on the public safety policy committee, President of the League of California Cities, a member of ad hoc committees on gun control and gang violence, president of his neighborhood homeowner's association, and serving as an advisor to the president of San Francisco State University. Some respond to a call for volunteers as if a recent shoulder separation prevented them from raising their hand. Rich has persistent muscle spasms that compel his hand to fly upward.

Rich and his wife Elaine have three children, Gina, Rich Jr. and Andrea, and eight grandchildren. He is a quintessential family man, a great father and grandfather. This is also how he views his city. In Rich's eyes, every resident of South San Francisco is part of a big family, and their needs are his passion.

Some men see a city and mourn what has passed. Rich Garbarino sees his city and wonders about all that will someday come to pass. He's proud that the cure to cancer will likely be discovered in South San Francisco. He marvels that housing now being built is just the start of what's planned. He knows the downtown is on the cusp of a revival and that residents will grow safer in the future as they work towards their common good.

Madam Speaker, while the city's residents will no longer have Rich Garbarino to watch over their best interests, they have the path that he helped lay down to carry them into the future. Godspeed to the pathbreakers, and to their leader in chief, Rich Garbarino, a man who devoted his years in office to create a tomorrow for all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GUY RESCHENTHALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I was absent from the House on December 7

and 8, 2020. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 236; YEA on Roll Call No. 237; YEA on Roll Call No. 238; and YEA on Roll Call No. 239.

RECOGNIZING THE 193RD SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the outstanding Airmen of the 193rd Special Operations Wing, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, for earning the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award—for the 19th time. This highly prestigious award recognizes the Wing's exceptionally meritorious service from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019.

During this period, this one-of-a-kind unit deployed more than 400 Service Members globally across 20 nations, filling numerous Reserve Component Posture taskings and missions. The specialized EC-130J Commando Solo aircraft flew 115 combat missions and executed 1,009 broadcast hours, meeting all Central Command requirements while achieving an overall 1,463 sorties and 3,924 flight hours.

During the same period, the Wing also distinguished itself by deploying its world-class Airmen from their Engineering Installation, Red Horse, Security Forces, Air Operations Center, Communications, Air Support Operations and Medical units who expertly supported overseas contingency missions. Collectively, the Wing supported counter-terrorism/counter-narcotics operations as well as named Operations Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel, Spartan Shield, Atlantic Resolve, and Resolute Support, altogether advancing our military's effectiveness on the battlefield while protecting our Nation and our American way of life.

The Airmen of the 193rd Special Operations Wing consistently demonstrate excellence in their training and operations across our Nation and around the world. On behalf of the 10th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, we're honored to be the home of such a distinguished unit, and I commend the Wing for earning the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award—again. I extend my heartfelt thanks to them for their hard work, tireless dedication and steadfast service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I am not recorded for roll call vote No. 239 on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have

voted Yea on H.R. 8354, Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative Act.

This bill would create the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative within the Justice Department. As a United States Marine, I am strongly committed to providing for our national defense and taking care of the men and women who sacrificed everything for our freedom.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF MARIO R. JORGE, P.E., SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT ENGINEER

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Mr. Mario R. Jorge. Mr. Jorge is retiring after serving the Texas Department of Transportation for more than 36 years.

Mr. Jorge, at the age of 12, immigrated with his family from Cuba to the United States in 1974. While it was a challenging process for him and his family, they knew they were on the right path for a better future. Among the many difficulties he personally faced, Mr. Jorge started his education in the 7th grade without being able to speak a word of English. However, with hard work and diligence he was able to overcome this obstacle. He also found that he was particularly talented in the field of mathematics. Utilizing his skill in mathematics, Mr. Jorge went on to earn a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas as well as a professional engineer's license.

Mr. Jorge began his career with TxDOT as a member of the survey crew and as a construction inspector for the Pharr District in 1983. In 1984, he was employed at the Dallas District where he worked in construction inspection and roadway design. He then transferred to the Pharr District in 1985 where he worked for several years and received the TxDOT Design Award for the US 83/281 interchange project in Pharr, before being promoted to Area Engineer in 1993. However, through his continued hard work he was eventually promoted to District Engineer for the Pharr District in 2002. It was under his leadership and guidance that the district completed the expansion and designation of over 100 miles of interstate system on I-2 and US 69, as well as several international projects. Nonetheless, after many years of service with the Pharr District, he soon became the District Engineer for the San Antonio District in 2013. In San Antonio, Mr. Jorge led the district with an even larger project delivery portfolio which included expansions on US 281, I-10 West and East, 1-35 NEX, and LP 1604 North and South, an energy sector project delivery program, and countless other initiatives with local partners and stakeholders.

I have worked with Mr. Jorge for many years and witnessed first-hand his dedication to his work. A trait that he learned from his parents, who risked their lives and worked hard to realize the American dream. I also want to recognize him for being a strong lead-

er who made sure to always treat his colleagues with respect and care. A characteristic that allowed him to be successful in all of his endeavors.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Mr. Jorge on an outstanding career and wish him all the best in his next chapter of life. I also wish the best to his wife, Elsa, as well as his three sons and the rest of his family.

CONGRATULATING THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS

HON. MIKE BOST

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois in receiving the prestigious Abilene Trophy for its support of the men and women who serve at Southern Illinois' Scott Air Force Base.

Established in 1999, the Abilene Trophy is awarded every year in recognition of the best community support for an Air Force Base. This year, the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois was selected in part because of the growing Scott Patriot Program, which allows servicemembers to identify businesses, communities, and organizations that are designated as "military friendly." The partnership between the Leadership Council and Scott Air Force Base in the STEM and cybersecurity outreach programs provides local servicemembers and the surrounding community the opportunity to work together and energize the regional economy.

The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois and Scott Air Force Base play a vital role in our nation's military readiness. As Southwestern Illinois' largest employer, Scott Air Force Base is a nationally-respected military installation. We couldn't be happier to have organizations like the Leadership Council supporting their mission.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois and Scott Air Force Base for this incredible partnership. On behalf of Illinois' 12th Congressional District, congratulations!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I was notified that I was exposed to COVID-19 and am following quarantine guidelines set by the CDC.

Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on Roll Call No. 233 (S. 2981)—NAY; on Roll Call No. 234 (MTR for H.R. 3884)—YEA; on Roll Call No. 235 (H.R. 3884)—NAY; on Roll Call No. 236 (H. Res. 512)—YEA; on Roll Call No. 237 (S. 461)—YEA; on Roll Call No. 238 (H.R. 6395)—YEA; and on Roll Call No. 239 (H.R. 8354)—YEA.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAROL CONNOLLY, POET LAUREATE OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of an extraordinary woman, Carol Connolly, Poet Laureate of Saint Paul, Minnesota. Carol passed away on November 23rd at the age of 85.

Carol lived her entire life to the fullest in her beloved hometown of Saint Paul, and there was no greater joy than her family, raising 7 children and nurturing 15 grandchildren and great grandchildren. In addition to being the heart of a large, loving family, she was active as a catalyst, connector and collaborator for her dynamic community. One of her dear friends aptly observed that “all roads to and from Saint Paul lead through Carol Connolly.” Inspired by the peace and civil rights movements, she was busy throughout her life volunteering for countless organizations, causes and candidates, not to mention running for political office herself. She truly became the change for good that she wanted to see in the world.

Her artistic side shined just as bright, writing and publishing countless poems, plays and columns—and mentoring new writers along the way. At the 2006 ceremony where she was named Poet Laureate, she read one of her poems that captures the essence of this great American city where “neighborhoods are the foundation of our freedom, “ a place where, regardless of background, neighbors care for neighbors and the greatest strength is found in coming together: “A storm thunders along the river as it roams through the city, home to some of us for 2,000 years. Home to others of us who left our native lands to escape famine, or war, or worse, and we are all immigrants.”

Carol's boundless generosity and care for others touched the lives of so many—from her family and friends to strangers. Through her poetry, humor, advocacy and contagious enthusiasm and support for the arts and art makers in our community, she was determined to make the world a better place, and she did. Above all, she was a devoted and beloved mother and grandmother, sister and aunt. It was always clear how deeply she valued the lives of people around her.

It was an honor to call Carol a friend and a neighbor for many years. Her selfless encouragement of others, especially of writers and women running for office, continues to inspire me and so many others throughout our community.

Madam Speaker, please join me in celebrating the outstanding life of Carol Connolly, Poet Laureate of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6395, WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address section 1242 of William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021, Clarification and Expansion of Sanctions relating to Construction of Nord Stream 2 or TurkStream Projects.

On July 20th of this year during House consideration of this bill, I rose in opposition to the amendment that added this provision to the NDAA, which targeted the Nord Stream 2 project with additional sanctions. I was concerned that these sanctions would target the wrong entities. Rather than deterring Russia and Putin, I was worried that it would be used to target European or American companies.

Fortunately, through the conference process, in which I was a conferee as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we were able to improve on the language that passed the initial House and Senate bills. The conferees decided to include an exception for certain governments and governmental entities. This change was an important and appropriate fix to ensure our allies and partners would not be targeted by sanctions under this provision.

As a conferee on this provision, I want to make clear that the term “government” means any level of government in those countries, including local and municipal governmental entities or authorities, and the term “business enterprise” does not include any entity that performs any public functions or otherwise has any public responsibilities.

I also want to commend my fellow conferees for agreeing to expand and include new language requiring, before the imposition of any sanctions pursuant to this provision, consultations by the Secretary of State with the governments of Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and member countries of the European Union. It is imperative that these consultations are true exchanges of views with the governments described, including EU member countries and institutions, conducted well before any sanctions would be imposed. The consultations must be deliberative and meaningful, and should take place at the Foreign Minister level or higher. Simple notification of a determination to proceed with the imposition of sanctions is not a consultation and would not fulfil the requirements of section 1242.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to my House and Senate colleagues for working with me to make sure this extremely difficult issue is handled with precision. In this revised provision, I think we got much closer to that goal.

BENEFICIARY ENROLLMENT NOTIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2020

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2477, BENES Act of 2020, which has been amended to include H.R. 5534, the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act. I advanced both bipartisan bills through my Health Subcommittee and I'm proud to support them on the Floor today.

The BENES Act introduced updates the Part B enrollment process for the first time in 50 years. It requires Medicare to notify people nearing eligibility about their rights and responsibilities, protecting beneficiaries from a lifetime of financial penalties for failure to enroll promptly.

While most beneficiaries are still automatically enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B at age 65 because they're receiving Social Security benefits, a growing number of Americans are not.

In 2016, only 60 percent of Medicare-eligible 65-year-olds were taking Social Security, compared to 92 percent in 2002.

The federal government provides virtually no notification to people who are nearing Medicare eligibility about their responsibilities, including if they must actively enroll.

If you do not enroll in Part B at age 65, then you are required to pay a Part B Late Enrollment Penalty that accrues at 10 percent of the current Part B premium for every year a person should have been—but was not—enrolled in Part B.

The BENES Act requires the federal government to notify people nearing Medicare eligibility about their rights and responsibilities.

The BENES Act also allows coverage to begin more quickly post-enrollment, with Medicare coverage beginning on the first of the month or the first of the following month when a person enrolls.

The BENES Act has been championed by the Medicare Rights Center and over 70 other organizations dedicated to helping Medicare beneficiaries. I'm proud that the House is finally taking this much needed vote and I look forward to this important bill being passed by the Senate and signed into law.

As part of this bill, the House will also pass the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act, championed by Representatives KIND and BURGESS for many years. I'm proud to be an original sponsor of this commonsense policy that will save money and, more importantly, lives.

Today, while Medicare covers a lifetime of dialysis, but kidney transplant recipients currently lose their Medicare coverage 36 months after transplant. Without Medicare coverage for needed immunosuppressive drugs, transplant patients risk losing their new kidney. This legislation closes that gap by continuing coverage for kidney transplant recipients which a nonpartisan HHS analysis found would save 375 kidney transplants each year.

Like the BENES Act, advocates have been fighting for this immunosuppressive coverage

for years. I thank the members of the Honor the Gift coalition for their dedication to helping kidney transplant recipients stay healthy and well, and I urge my colleagues to support these commonsense bills to improve the Medicare program for seniors and kidney patients.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, while proxy voting for other members on the floor, I failed to cast my own vote on H.R. 8354—Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative Act of 2020. Had I voted, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 239.

HONORING MAURICE R. "HANK" GREENBERG

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge patriots who have fought to secure and strengthen the cherished liberties that every American citizen holds dear. Maurice R. "Hank" Greenberg is one of those patriots who has devoted his life to embracing and advancing the American spirit.

Hank's father died when Hank was six years old. The family moved to upstate New York to a dairy farm where a very long and back breaking day's work was a common reality. Like so many others, he and his family were barely scraping by. Soon, America was at war.

At 17, Hank left high school, enlisted in the Army and was attached to the 5th Ranger Battalion which stormed the beaches of Normandy. Later, Hank was a member of the forces that liberated the concentration camp at Dachau. Hank remained in the U.S. Army Reserves as a first Lieutenant. When the Korean War broke out, Hank returned to service, rising to the rank of Captain. For his extraordinary military service and sacrifice in the European Theater and Korea, Hank was awarded the Bronze Star and the Award for Meritorious Unit Commendation. He was also bestowed with the prestigious Commandeur of the French Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur.

Between his years of military service, Hank finished high school, college and then law school. He credits the G.I. Bill with the opportunities he has had in his life. "It helped me build AIG (American International Group)" he said, which, under his leadership, became the largest insurance company in the world. Hank is currently chairman and Chief Executive Officer of C.V. Starr, a diversified financial services firm.

Hank's service in our Armed Forces warrants our gratitude. His years as an American and international corporate leader, a visionary of globalization, an innovator, and philanthropist who has changed lives for the better in the United States and around the world are equally stellar and illustrious. And, at the age of 95, Hank is as involved as ever.

Hank is the Honorary Vice Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations and Vice Chairman of The National Committee on United States-China Relations. He is the past Chairman and Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Personally, and as Chairman of the Starr Foundation, one of the largest private foundations in the United States, Hank oversees disbursement of major financial support to institutions worldwide. I have personally seen the transformational change he has made in the lives of thousands of older adults at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, a nationally renowned center for the aging, which I have had the great honor to represent for my 32-year term. In acknowledgment of Hank's longstanding support, the Hebrew Home has named its campus the Maurice R. and Corinne P. Greenberg Campus.

Let us acknowledge the extraordinary accomplishments of a great American and veteran, a champion of freedom, a patriot, a man who has been able to unite countries and human beings for the betterment of our greater good.

IN HONOR OF KARYL MATSUMOTO

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Karyl Matsumoto as she completes her remarkable service on the South San Francisco city council. She served a record 23 years, including four terms as Mayor. When you do the math, Karyl has been on the council for nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of her years as a resident of South San Francisco. One has to ask if she ever had a moment to simply take a leisurely walk along the bayfront.

South San Francisco has changed remarkably since Karyl joined the council. Its population grew by 10,000 to a total of 68,000. In the Oyster Point area, biotechnology powerhouse Genentech and sister companies are rapidly replacing traditional uses such as warehouses, food factories, airline-related businesses and transportation enterprises. The Caltrain station is moving and apartments are being constructed by the hundreds within walking distance of this location and the city's BART station. The city has also become more diverse, with approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of its residents being of either Asian or Latino descent.

Karyl has contributed to many of these changes. For example, she has served for over a decade on boards of the county's transportation authority and Samtrans, the provider of bus services and management of the local train service. In South San Francisco, she strongly advocated for moving the train station. Her years as a Samtrans director are among her proudest achievements. She sought to build the bus service into one that takes care of San Mateo County's wage earners, while also adapting the system to offer new express service, such as the pre-COVID line from Foster City to San Francisco.

It costs a lot to live in San Mateo County. Average rent in South San Francisco is \$3,000 per month. Karyl Matsumoto realized that it was impossible for many to survive if they had to earn \$120,000 per year or more just to pay rent and avoid debt. She was the

first on her council to propose an increase of the minimum wage to \$15 per hour starting January 1, 2021, and her colleagues adopted that proposal. She also championed affordable housing and balancing jobs with housing in order to protect lower-income residents.

During the course of her multi-decade-long public service career, Karyl Matsumoto has served on over 30 community groups and boards of nonprofits. Examples include the Peninsula Family YMCA, the San Mateo County Japanese American Citizens League, the Skyline College President's Council Advisory Board, and the United Way Community Impact Committee. She also founded the city's youth commission.

She worked for our esteemed colleague Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO when Congresswoman ESHOO served on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, and for former State Senator Quentin Kopp. She co-founded the South San Francisco Community Outreach Program to bring together residents, businesses and advocacy groups on behalf of seniors, residents with special needs and other vulnerable residents.

As a councilwoman, Karyl Matsumoto was fiscally conservative and supported building the city's tax base to provide funds for such largescale community efforts as the new 911 and police operations center. She also serves as one of two liaisons with the school district and on the Caltrain Modernization committee, keeping an eye on the progress of a \$2 billion electrification project for our regional train system.

As she makes her case to colleagues, Karyl is known for saying, "Ergo," and if she forgets someone's name while making a point you might hear her say "Whosewhatis" as a placeholder. These endearing mannerisms signal that a significant point is about to be made because Karyl doesn't let anything—even a momentary mind freeze—get in the way of the public's interest.

Madam Speaker, I can say without fear of contradiction that Karyl Matsumoto has made a tremendous difference in South San Francisco and throughout the county. We know her as an eager public servant who has a vast knowledge of the history of her city and of public policy. When she leaves, decades of perspective will go with her. All of us in the community thank her for a job well done and hope she can relax and leave the hard work of civic policymaking to others. After decades at the wheel, Karyl is getting off the bus. Her final stop, a stop called "success," is just beyond the bus door.

RECOGNIZING WILSON COUNTY SHERIFF JOE D. TACKITT, JR.

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Sheriff Joe D. Tackitt, Jr. after 28 years of dedication and service to Wilson County, Texas.

Sheriff Tackitt was elected in 1992 and over the course of his career, he worked tirelessly to keep his community safe. Through his hard work and efforts, he helped bring the Criminal Justice Center to Wilson County and improved

communications across the sheriff's office while saving taxpayer money. He also increased the number of full-time deputies on patrol to 25 and secured a nearly \$7 million budget. In addition, he created the Sheriff Santa Program to help families in need during the holidays.

I have worked with my friend Sheriff Tackitt for several years and witnessed first-hand the important work he has done for his community. We must never forget his leadership during the tragedy at Sutherland Springs Church in 2017 and how much he cared for his community as a third-generation native of Wilson County. The dedication that he showed to others should be a constant reminder of how we should be in our daily lives.

For his leadership and service, Sheriff Tackitt has received several awards. In 2018, his office was presented with the EMS Telecommunicator Award by the Texas Department of State Health Services for outstanding achievement. In addition, the Sheriffs' Association of Texas recognized Sheriff Tackitt and his staff in 2019 for the outstanding support they provided for the 141st Annual Training Conference and Expo.

In addition to his hard work as sheriff, he is active in his community as a member of the Sheriff's Association of Texas, the Floresville Lions Club, and the Texas Jail Association. Along with his involvement in the community, he also served as a member of the Texas Air National Guard and is a devoted family man.

As we move forward, let us take the time to appreciate the service of heroes like Sheriff Tackitt and all the individuals who risk their lives each day to keep us safe. However, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the career and service of Sheriff Tackitt.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. McCAUL. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 239.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. DeFAZIO. Madam Speaker, on December 8, 2020, I was unavoidably detained due to traffic congestion and missed the following vote: on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, H.R. 8354, the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative Act of 2020. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 6395 WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. DeFAZIO. Madam Speaker, yesterday I voted in support of the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 6395, the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. Make no mistake: I have opposed NDAA legislation in previous years, and I still have concerns about a number of provisions included in this year's legislation, but this year's conference legislation also contains numerous policy priorities that I strongly support.

As with the initial House-passed NDAA, this legislation grants our men and women in uniform a well-deserved pay raise of 3 percent. This is the very least we can do for those who continue to make extraordinary sacrifices for our country.

As Chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I fought to successfully include vital provisions important to Oregon coastal communities. This includes the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020, legislation to authorize funds for, reinforce, and support the United States Coast Guard. I am also pleased that the conferees retained important provisions to reauthorize U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) programs, and for the first time provided MARAD with authority to provide financial assistance to the U.S. Maritime Transportation System in the event of a national emergency or disaster such as the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

Given the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's jurisdiction over the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), I am proud that this legislation makes a long-overdue correction to ensure that the more than 45,000 FAA employees, as well as VA and other federal civilian employees who were inexcusably left out of last year's NDAA, receive twelve weeks of paid parental leave.

I am also proud that the Conference Report includes long-overdue benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Specifically, the legislation adds Parkinsonism, bladder cancer, and hypothyroidism to the list of diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents. This will ensure that tens of thousands of veterans with these diseases get the benefits they deserve.

While Congress must do much more to achieve racial justice in this country, I strongly support conferees' retention of language requiring the Department of Defense (DOD) to remove all names, symbols, displays, monuments, and more that honor Confederate individuals on DOD property. This demonstrates a strong bipartisan rebuke of President Trump's inexplicable threat to veto the NDAA if this long-overdue provision is included. I also support the bill's addition of needed diversity requirements for DOD military and civilian personnel, as well as provisions to curtail transfer of various military-grade equipment to law enforcement agencies. In addition, I am a strong supporter of this bill's requirement that federal

law enforcement officers, active duty military, and National Guard members deployed in response to public protests visibly display their name and agency on their uniform. This requirement is especially crucial given Trump's appalling use of unidentifiable federal agents and unmarked vehicles to detain peaceful protesters in Portland, Oregon.

I am pleased the conference legislation refuses to authorize funding for President Trump's dangerous and unnecessary proposals to initiate new nuclear weapons testing. I also support the bill's inclusion of funding for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on maritime carriers. Additionally, I support the Conference Report's provisions to strengthen the federal government's ability to combat money laundering and counter financing for terrorism.

The Conference Report also takes steps to counter China's increasingly malign influence. This includes mandating a whole-of-government strategy to deter China's industrial espionage and theft of intellectual property, as well as China's large-scale theft of personal information. It also establishes a plan to make the DOD less dependent on Chinese manufacturing, and it pushes back against China's appalling human rights abuses. While these are good first steps, I believe Congress can and should do more to combat China, including standing up against China's trade abuses.

The legislation also establishes guardrails that prohibit the Secretary of Defense from reducing the civilian workforce unless and until the DOD first assesses the impact of such reductions. This will help protect against President Trump's ridiculous attacks—and potential future attacks—on civilian federal employees.

This legislation includes hundreds-of-millions in funding for the construction of additional housing and barracks for training and enlisted personnel, as well as for oversight and improvement of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) program. The NDAA Conference Report also continues Congress's work to address the military's culture of sexual misconduct by including provisions to enhance the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual trauma.

While I strongly support many provisions in this year's NDAA, I believe this legislation should have included additional provisions to rein in our bloated and wasteful defense spending, take back Congress's constitutional war powers authority, and more.

I believe this legislation could have made responsible cuts to our defense budget without jeopardizing the safety of our troops or undermining our national security. For years, Congress has continued to increase the Pentagon's budget despite overwhelming evidence of its waste and abuse of taxpayer money. That's why I supported an amendment to responsibly reduce the Pentagon budget while retaining exceptions to protect service members, civilian employees, and the vital Defense Health Program from this reduction. Frustratingly, this amendment failed to pass.

In particular, I have always opposed the DOD's Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account, a fiscally irresponsible fund that is not counted in the budget, recklessly adds to our mounting debt, and has no congressional oversight. OCO is a Pentagon slush fund that gives a blank check to fund endless wars that Congress hasn't authorized. I will continue fighting to finally eliminate this irresponsible fund.

I have long supported a financial audit of the Pentagon. Unlike every other federal agency, the DOD has yet to pass a financial audit. For three years in a row, the Pentagon has spectacularly failed full audits, which have highlighted numerous examples of waste and abuse. It is ridiculous to provide the Pentagon a massive spending increase—as this bill does—when the Pentagon cannot even account for how it spends taxpayer money. That's why I offered an amendment to require and incentivize each DOD component to pass an audit by FY25. Unfortunately, my amendment did not receive a vote.

I believe this legislation should have included more provisions to take back Congress's constitutional war powers authority. I am disappointed that conferees stripped out House-passed provisions that would have prohibited use of DOD funds to provide support to Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen and prohibit unauthorized participation of the U.S. military in hostilities in Yemen. I also believe this legislation should have prevented the President from using unauthorized force in Iran, repealed the long-outdated 2001 and 2002 authorizations for the use of military force (AUMFs), and prohibited funding for the deployment of dangerous low-yield nuclear weapons.

I am also disappointed that other provisions which I support were not included in the Conference Report. This includes provisions to amend the Insurrection Act to provide Congress more transparency when a President deploys active duty military within the United States during civil unrest, utilize full Defense Production Act authorities to finally meet our country's COVID-19 medical supply needs, block the Trump administration's cruel ban on transgender individuals serving in the military, finally close down the unnecessary and unconstitutional Guantanamo Bay prison facility, provide immediate student loan relief to the over 200,000 servicemembers who have privately held debt, and include my amendment to abolish the military draft. While the Conference Report does take steps to help address PFAS and PFOA contamination on military installations, I believe this legislation should have done much more to address the

public health threat that this contamination poses to our military members and Americans living near installations.

The bottom line is that fiscal responsibility and accountability at the DOD would allow for taxpayer funds to be better spent supporting the needs of our troops, meeting our obligations to veterans, and ensuring our legitimate defense needs are prioritized while also bolstering long-underfunded domestic priorities.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2020 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

DECEMBER 15

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection

To hold hearings to examine the impact of COVID-19 on the live event entertainment industry.

SR-253

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity

To receive a closed briefing on Department of Defense cyber operations.

SVC-217

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet

To hold hearings to examine expanding American entrepreneurship outside traditional hubs.

SR-253

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Intellectual Property

To hold hearings to examine the role of private agreements and existing technology in curbing online piracy.

SD-106

DECEMBER 16

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Economic Policy

To hold hearings to examine the United States and China, focusing on winning the economic competition.

WEBEX

10 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine irregularities in the 2020 election.

SD-342/WEBEX

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.

SH-216

2 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration

To hold hearings to examine Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement through United States refugee policy.

SD-G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Finance

Subcommittee on Health Care

To hold hearings to examine the Alzheimer's crisis, focusing on testing and treatment pipelines and fiscal implications.

WEBEX

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7289–S7377

Measures Introduced: Fourteen bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 4983–4996, and S. Res. 798. **Page S7327**

Measures Reported:

S. 2891, to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish Tribal Wildlife Corridors. (S. Rept. No. 116–305)

S. 4556, to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Indian Health Service, to acquire private land to facilitate access to the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center in Hemet, California. (S. Rept. No. 116–306)

S. 790, to clarify certain provisions of Public Law 103–116, the Catawba Indian Tribe of South Carolina Land Claims Settlement Act of 1993, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 116–307)

S. 2165, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 116–308)

S. 3044, to amend the American's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 to expand the Indian reservation drinking water program, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 116–309) **Page S7327**

Measures Passed:

Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of S. 3451, to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7292–93**

Thune (for Scott (SC)/Murphy) Amendment No. 2695, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7292**

DELIVER Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7105, to provide flexibility for the Secretary of Vet-

erans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S7372**

Inhofe (for Moran/Tester) Amendment No. 2696, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7372**

Bankruptcy Administration Improvement Act: Senate passed S. 4996, to ensure funding of the United States trustees, extend temporary bankruptcy judgeships. **Pages S7372–75**

Whistleblower Act: Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 2315, to amend section 4712 of title 41, United States Code, to clarify the inclusion of subcontractors and subgrantees for whistleblower protection, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7375**

STORM Act: Senate passed S. 3418, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to allow the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide capitalization grants to States to establish revolving funds to provide hazard mitigation assistance to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards, and other related environmental harm, after withdrawing the committee amendments, and agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7375–77**

Inhofe (for Peters) Amendment No. 2697, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7377**

Measures Considered:

Foreign Military Sales Joint Resolutions: By 46 yeas to 50 nays (Vote No. 261), Senate rejected the motion to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 77, providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the United Arab Emirates of certain defense articles and services. **Pages S7296–S7317**

By 47 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. 262), Senate rejected the motion to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 78, providing for congressional disapproval of

the proposed foreign military sale to the United Arab Emirates of certain defense articles and services.

Pages S7313–17

Conference Reports:

National Defense Authorization Act—Agreement: Senate began consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year.

Page S7317

A motion was entered to close further debate on the conference report to accompany the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Friday, December 11, 2020.

Page S7318

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, December 10, 2020.

Page S7377

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 49 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. EX. 258), Allen Dickerson, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2025.

Pages S7291–92, S7293–94, S7377

By 92 yeas to 4 nays (Vote No. EX. 259), Shana M. Broussard, of Louisiana, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2023.

Pages S7294, S7377

By 50 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. EX. 260), Sean J. Cooksey, of Missouri, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2021.

Pages S7294–95, S7377

Messages from the House: Pages S7325–26

Measures Referred: Page S7326

Executive Communications: Page S7326

Petitions and Memorials: Pages S7326–27

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S7327–28

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S7328–31

Additional Statements: Pages S7324–25

Amendments Submitted: Pages S7331–72

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S7372

Record Votes: Five record votes were taken today. (Total—262) Page S7294–95, S7317

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:02 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2020. (For Senate's program, see the

remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7377.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

EU-U.S. PRIVACY SHIELD

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the invalidation of the European Union-United States Privacy Shield and the future of transatlantic data flows, after receiving testimony from James M. Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce; Noah Phillips, Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission; Victoria Espinel, BSA—The Software Alliance, Washington D.C.; Peter Swire, Georgia Tech Scheller College of Business, Atlanta, on behalf of the Cross-Border Data Forum; and Neil Richards, Washington University School of Law, St. Louis, Missouri.

NOMINATION

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Charles W. Cook, Jr., of Mississippi, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Wicker, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

CHALLENGES TO RETIREMENT SECURITY

Committee on Finance: Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions, and Family Policy concluded a hearing to examine investigating challenges to American retirement security, after receiving testimony from Scott Barr, Edward Jones, Zanesville, Ohio; Eric Stevenson, Nationwide, Columbus, Ohio; Michael P. Kreps, Groom Law Group, Washington, D.C.; and Joshua Luskin, National Association of Government Defined Contribution Administrators, Lexington, Kentucky.

TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine advancing tribal self-governance and cultural sovereignty for future generations, focusing on languages to homelands, after receiving testimony from Brian D. Vallo, Pueblo of Acoma, Acoma, New Mexico; Kirk Francis, United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund, Nashville, Tennessee; and John E. Echohawk, Native American Rights Fund, Boulder, Colorado.

VA RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs response to COVID-19 across the VA enterprise, after receiving testimony from Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, and Richard A. Stone, Executive in

Charge, Veterans Health Administration, both of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 25 public bills, H.R. 8906–8930; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 126; and H. Res. 1253–1255, were introduced.

Pages H7109–10

Additional Cosponsors:

Pages H7111–12

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 3632, to ensure that authorizations issued by the Secretary of Transportation to foreign air carriers do not undermine labor rights or standards, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 116–636); and

H.R. 5756, to amend the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to extend the provision of assistance for critical services with respect to certain disasters, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 116–637).

Page H7109

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Cuellar to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Page H7049

Recess: The House recessed at 11:33 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon.

Page H7059

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021, and Other Extensions Act: H.R. 8900, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2021, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 343 yeas to 67 nays, Roll No. 240;

Pages H7062–66, H7092–93

Reaffirming the commitment to media diversity and pledging to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to media diversity: H. Res. 549, reaffirming the commitment to media diversity and pledging to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to media diversity;

Pages H7066–67

Reliable Investment in Vital Energy Reauthorization Act: H.R. 3361, to amend the Energy Policy

Act of 2005 to reauthorize hydroelectric production incentives and hydroelectric efficiency improvement incentives;

Pages H7067–68

Tribal Power Act: H.R. 5541, amended, to amend the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to reauthorize programs to assist consenting Indian Tribes in meeting energy education, planning, and management needs;

Pages H7068–72

Timely Review of Infrastructure Act: H.R. 1426, to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act to address insufficient compensation of employees and other personnel of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission;

Pages H7072–74

Ceiling Fan Improvement Act of 2020: H.R. 5758, to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to make technical corrections to the energy conservation standard for ceiling fans, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 396 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 241;

Pages H7074–76, H7093

Medical Marijuana Research Act: H.R. 3797, amended, to amend the Controlled Substances Act to make marijuana accessible for use by qualified marijuana researchers for medical purposes;

Pages H7076–83

Amending title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening: H.R. 1570, amended, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening;

Pages H7083–86

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening, and for other purposes.”;

Pages H7085–86

Directing the Comptroller General of the United States to complete a study on barriers to participation in federally funded cancer clinical trials by populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in such trials: H.R. 1966, amended, to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to complete a study on barriers to participation in federally funded cancer clinical trials by populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in such trials; **Pages H7086–88**

Amending title XXX of the Public Health Services Act to provide for a technical correction to provide the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Service certain authorities with respect to investigations of information blocking: H.R. 7898, amended, to amend title XXX of the Public Health Services Act to provide for a technical correction to provide the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Service certain authorities with respect to investigations of information blocking; and **Pages H7088–92**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To amend the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to consider certain recognized security practices of covered entities and business associates when making certain determinations, and for other purposes.”. **Page H7092**

Senate Referrals: S. 1869 was held at the desk. S. 3325 was held at the desk. S. 3729 was held at the desk. S. 4138 was held at the desk. S. 4460 was held at the desk.

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H7092.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H7092–93 and H7093.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Committee Meetings

1890 LAND GRANT INSTITUTIONS—130 YEARS OF BUILDING EQUITY IN AGRICULTURE

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research held a hearing entitled “1890 Land Grant Institutions—130 Years of Building Equity in Agriculture”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FORT HOOD 2020: THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FORT HOOD INDEPENDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled “Fort Hood 2020: The Findings and Recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee”. Testimony was heard from the following Fort Hood Independent Review Committee officials: Chris Swecker, Chair; Jonathan Harmon, Member; Carrie Ricci, Member; Queta Rodriguez, Member; and Jack White, Member.

DIPLOMACY OR DEAD END: AN EVALUATION OF SYRIA POLICY

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Diplomacy or Dead End: An Evaluation of Syria Policy”. Testimony was heard from Joel D. Rayburn, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Levant Affairs and Special Envoy for Syria, Department of State.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CLOSING CIVIC SPACE

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled “International Human Rights and the Closing Civic Space”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PIPELINES OVER PEOPLE: HOW FERC TRAMPLES LANDOWNER RIGHTS IN NATURAL GAS PROJECTS

Committee on Oversight and Reform: Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties held a hearing entitled “Pipelines Over People: How FERC Tramples Landowner Rights in Natural Gas Projects”. Testimony was heard from David L. Morenoff, Acting General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and Terry Turpin, Director, Office of Energy Projects, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

THE TOXIC WORLD OF PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION DETERMINATIONS: WHY SHOULD OUR VETERANS WAIT?

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing entitled “The Toxic World of Presumptive Service Connection Determinations: Why Should Our Veterans Wait?”. Testimony was heard from Beth Murphy, Executive Director, Policy and Procedures, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

U.S. PRIORITIES FOR OSCE ENGAGEMENT

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, Commission concluded a hearing to examine United States priorities for engagement at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, after receiving testimony from Philip T. Reeker, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D1060)

H.R. 8247, to make certain improvements relating to the transition of individuals to services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, suicide prevention for veterans, and care and services for women veterans. Signed on December 5, 2020. (Public Law 116–214)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety, to hold hearings to examine the logistics of transporting a COVID–19 vaccine, 9:30 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to hold hearings to examine combatting the opioid crisis, focusing on oversight of the implementation of the STOP Act, 10 a.m., SD–342/WEBEX.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 4632, to amend title 17, United States Code, to establish an alternative dispute resolution program for copyright small claims, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to modify the scope of protection from civil liability for “good Samaritan” blocking and screening of offensive material, and the nominations of Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, Charles Edward Atchley, Jr., and Katherine A. Crytzer, both to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, Joseph Dawson III, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, and Zachary N. Somers, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: to hold hearings to examine small business in crisis, focusing on the 2020 Paycheck Protection Program and its future, 10 a.m., SR–301.

House

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, hearing entitled “Taiwan and the United States: Enduring Bonds in the Face of Adversity”, 10 a.m., Webex.

Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations, hearing entitled “The Elements of Presidential Transitions”, 10 a.m., Webex.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, December 10

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, National Defense Authorization Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, December 10

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.

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