



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2023

No. 176

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we praise Your Holy Name. Even when we don't understand the unfolding of Your providence, we place our trust in You.

Show our lawmakers the path they should choose. Rescue them from the traps of their enemies, and remove their fears with Your might. Continue to renew their strength. Protect our legislators with Your might, reassure them with Your presence, and comfort them with Your goodness.

Lord of Heaven's army, we give our lives to You, for no one who depends on Your compassion will ultimately fail.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 25, 2023.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4366, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4366) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Murray/Collins) amendment No. 1092, in the nature of a substitute.

Murray amendment No. 1205 (to amendment No. 1092), to change the effective date.

Schumer motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 1230, to change the effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday morning, Democrats and Republicans reached an important agreement to move forward on three bipartisan—underline bipartisan—appropriations bills: MILCON-VA, Agriculture, and Transportation-HUD.

We will begin voting on amendments as soon as this afternoon and keep going through the rest of the week and into the next. It is my hope that with bipartisan cooperation, we can wrap up our work on these bipartisan appropriations bills sometime next week.

And this will be the Senate working as it should, both parties cooperating, debating amendments, working through differences, without grinding the legislative process to a halt. Democrats promised our Republican colleagues that their voices would be heard, and we are making good on that promise. Forty amendments will be considered, many of them bipartisan, on issues ranging from telehealth funding for veterans, fixing infrastructure hit by natural disasters, to investments in rural America.

We worked closely with Republicans to put these appropriations bills together. If passed, the bills will make a huge difference for American farmers, for our infrastructure, for housing, and for our military bases and veterans.

Bipartisanship isn't easy. On the contrary, these days it is exceedingly difficult, but we are moving forward thanks to the good work of our appropriators, especially Chair MURRAY and Vice Chair COLLINS. They have set the tone from the start here in the Senate that bipartisanship should lead the way.

It was true in the Appropriations Committee; I hope it remains true here on the floor because we are going to need bipartisanship in all that we do

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



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during this time of divided government.

Bipartisanship will be essential for passing these appropriations bills; bipartisanship will be essential for keeping the government open in less than a month; and bipartisanship will be essential for passing the President's national security request.

I would say to my colleagues in the House, my Republican colleagues, if you try to do things not in a bipartisan way, it is going to lead to cul-de-sacs, gridlocks, and other things that hurt the American people.

Both parties recognize we must support our allies in Israel against Hamas. Both parties recognize that we must support our friends in Ukraine against Putin. Both parties know that we must fight the scourge of fentanyl coming through the border, outcompete the Chinese Government, and support Taiwan.

So to my Republican colleagues, House and Senate, let's work together to ensure that passing the supplemental remains bipartisan because only things that win support from both sides will make it to the President's desk.

I thank my colleagues on both sides who have shown that bipartisanship is still the key to getting things done here in the Senate. And, now, because of that bipartisanship, the appropriations process is finally—finally—moving forward.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President, on our AI Insight Forum, yesterday, the Senate held our second bipartisan AI Insight Forum. This one was focused on our North Star for AI, and that is innovation.

It was an amazing 3 hours. We learned so much about all the things we need to do on AI as well as things we still don't know. The biggest takeaway from our AI Insight Forums so far is that government has to be involved on AI, and that was the consensus among everybody yesterday, just as it was a few weeks ago. Democrats, Republicans, liberals, conservatives, and everyone in between knew that government had to be involved.

But after yesterday's conversation, I will add a few more things we agreed to. First, as you know, at the last forum, everyone agreed that the government had to be involved, but after today's forum, there was universal agreement that Congress had to be prepared, not just to be involved but to invest significant resources in AI innovation, both inside the government and outside, helping companies and universities and others because the government can do things in terms of dollar investments that others simply can't. The awesome power of the Federal Government and its ability to provide resources is way beyond the capability of any one company, university, et cetera.

One number mentioned yesterday was about \$32 billion in nondefense Federal spending, which is what the bi-

partisan National Security Commission on AI said we need in their 2021 report. It doesn't have to happen all at once, but it is important we prioritize these investments now and continue over time. Just about everybody in the room agreed that \$32 billion is really a floor not a ceiling, so we are going to need—if we want to stay No. 1 in AI, if we want to get our arms around it, if we want to make sure the good is maximized and the bad is minimized, we are going to need significant Federal dollars.

AI is another reason that we must fully appropriate the funds authorized in the CHIPS and Science Act, and that came up many times. There are many things that we authorized in the CHIPS and Science Act that haven't been appropriated. We have to do those things if we want to stay in the lead economically and in AI.

The second point that was made was that Congress doesn't have a lot of time to act because AI moved so fast and is growing in its complexity. We need to be proactive, not reactive. That is one reason we have made these AI Insight Forums a priority.

A third point that was made was our race against the Chinese Government. China is not waiting to invest in AI, just as they didn't wait on science and chips. With the CHIPS and Science bill, we met them—maybe even exceeded them—by putting in some real investments. We must do the same thing with AI or we will fall behind. And many of the speakers noted that if China gains the lead in AI, they will become the No. 1 economy in the world. They will set the values—authoritarian, not democratic values—and Americans will suffer.

So this investment in AI must be done; otherwise, we will fall behind China, something we don't want to do, and both parties agreed that is the case.

And particularly a point made by some of my Republican colleagues, we will fall behind on national security. If China gets ahead of us in AI and applies that to national security and we don't do what we are supposed to do, we will really have some problems. So that is point 3.

And point 4, just to reiterate, is that we need innovation. We need the government to help create innovation, both on the transformational side—creating new vistas, unlocking new cures, improving education, strengthening national security, protecting global food supply—but also, and this is harder, on sustainable innovation. That means to minimize the harms that come from AI like job loss, racial and gender bias, and economic displacement because if we don't have some guardrails, the whole thing, the whole AI enterprise, could go off the rails, and that would be of real detriment to this country and to our world.

The private sector does a good job on positive transformational innovation. They need some help. The government

needs to be involved, particularly in setting an ecosystem that works, in providing some of the resources to smaller companies so they are not dwarfed by the larger companies. But only the government can provide the guardrails for sustainable innovation.

It is not reasonable to expect all companies to act on their own and even less reasonable that they would act in concert, even if a few do. The challenge will be a balance between placing guardrails and preserving innovation.

It is a tough challenge, but, you know, as Theodore Roosevelt said, we are in the arena. And if not us, who? No one will do it.

So, again, yesterday was an exciting, illuminating, eye-opening conversation. Thank you to all the Senators who came yesterday from both sides of the aisle. And let's note, we are still just at the beginning. We will continue to hold bipartisan AI Insight Forums in the weeks and months to come and encourage the relevant committees to begin drawing up bipartisan legislation.

NEW YORK

Mr. President, on the Second Avenue subway, New York City is in the midst of an infrastructure renaissance, from the Gateway Tunnel to East Side Access to Penn Station Access. Today, I have even more great news for New York. I am proud to announce that the Second Avenue subway will receive \$3.4 billion in Federal funding to advance to phase 2 of its construction.

I have worked myself to the bone for years fighting for Federal funding for the Second Avenue subway, and I want to thank my colleague who has been along my side as we do this, and that is Congress Member ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, who represents the area in Congress, and he, too, has been a champion for funding.

Thanks to the investments we made in our bipartisan infrastructure law, Second Avenue subway has now received the largest capital investment grant in the history of the program, the CIG Program. So this is no longer abstract. Billions of dollars passed in Congress, but now it is across the country like here in New York and in East Harlem, in particular, it is becoming real—real in terms of jobs and real in terms of better transportation.

The Federal funding will mean tens of thousands of good-paying jobs in New York, and expanded services will benefit more than 300,000 riders on the Second Avenue subway every single day. That is more people than most cities have so it is important to do.

Most importantly, the subway will now expand into East Harlem, which has desperately needed better access to public transportation. When work on the Second Avenue subway is complete, people in East Harlem will have an easier time getting to work, going to the doctor's office, getting to school, and so much more. And it is not just an easier time. The studies show when there is transit, people get better and

more high-paying jobs because they can find these jobs and then get to them easily and don't say: Well, it is such a long commute, I can't go work there.

So thanks to President Biden, thanks to our Democratic and Republican bipartisanship action in the Senate, which I was so proud to help lead, New York continues to reap the benefits of our agenda: stronger infrastructure, more manufacturing jobs, lower prescription drug costs, and more opportunity.

I thank the administration for awarding New York this game-changing Federal grant, and we will keep going to improve life for New Yorkers as we are doing for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, government funding is set to run out in 23 days. We have a responsibility to keep the lights on and to avoid the disastrous effects of a shutdown.

We also need to make serious headway toward the full-year funding process the Nation actually deserves. This week, thanks to a lot of hard work from Senator COLLINS, Senator MURRAY, and our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the Senate will finally take an important step in the right direction. As we continue to review the President's request for urgent supplemental appropriations—and make necessary changes—Senate Republicans stand ready to vote on a robust package of amendments to this full-year appropriations measure and pass it quickly out here on the floor.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, now on another matter, it has been 18 days since the brutal terrorist attacks of October 7, 18 days since savages confronted the world with the depths of human depravity, since one of the oldest forms of hatred in human history reared its ugly head, since radical Islamic terrorists reminded us they pose a persistent threat to the civilized world.

In our shock, the West vowed solidarity. We pledged not to look away from the horrors Israel was grieving. We reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself, and we promised to stand with our ally as it fought back against pure evil.

But in the last 18 days, silence, amnesia, cowardice, and outright hate have begun to take their toll. All too quickly, the West's resolve has shown signs of weakness.

First, we saw the most elite corners of higher education rush to blame Israel for the deaths of its own children. We saw college administrators tie themselves in grotesque moral knots to avoid acknowledging reality, even in the face of alumni revolts.

Last night, for example, at George Washington University, here in the Nation's Capital, student activists projected anti-Semitic messages on the side of the campus building named for a pair of Jewish benefactors. They issued a call to "free Palestine from the river to the sea."

For anyone unfamiliar with Israel's geography, that is a call for the destruction of the Jewish State.

But, just a few blocks away, the Biden administration is in denial. After protestors in Time Square displayed the Nazi swastika and an Israeli student at Columbia University was beaten with a stick, the White House Press Secretary replied to a question about rising concerns of anti-Semitism that "we have not seen any credible threats." That is the White House Press Secretary. Even more absurd was how, in the very next breath, without even uttering the word "Jew," she pivoted abruptly to condemning Islamophobia.

Seriously, after thousands of Jews have been tortured and murdered, after hundreds have been taken hostage, after the sight of Jewish bodies paraded through Gaza was met with rejoicing from Arab capitals to London—after all of this—President Biden's Press Secretary reverted to the disgraceful "both sides" talking points.

Of course, as I have discussed before, the media organizations who engage with her deserve their own share of shame. Some in the press are already indulging the same tired language designed to sap the free world's sense of moral clarity. Headlines are already warning about the indiscernible "cycle of violence" and amplifying morally bankrupt calls for a cease-fire.

For anyone who needs a reminder, a cease-fire is what Israel thought it had with Hamas and with Palestinian Islamic Jihad earlier this summer. A cease-fire today is an amnesty for Hamas, a free path for terrorists from the same savage tribe as ISIS and al-Qaida.

So less than 3 weeks after the deadliest slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust, too many prominent corners of our society already need a reminder—a reminder—of the terrorist horrors that actually started the war.

Yesterday, I welcomed a group of important visitors to my office, among them were family members of Israelis being held hostage by Hamas. Two had survived the attacks and witnessed the terror firsthand. I would like to share with our colleagues two of their stories.

First was Netta, a 20-year-old student who lived in a kibbutz in southern Israel. Netta told me that he woke up on October 7 to the sound of sirens. He

talked about how he armed himself with a kitchen knife, barricaded himself in an interior room, and leaned against the door as terrorists ransacked his apartment. Netta told me about how he realized hours later, when his mother stopped replying to his texts, that his parents had been taken hostage by Hamas.

I also heard from a young woman named Maya who was at the music festival that morning with her friends. Maya described to me yesterday the sounds of rockets interrupting the party at sunrise. She described how she cried the first time she saw a victim lying in the road as she fled, not knowing if he was alive or dead. She recalled how she turned left on a road in search of safe haven while many of her friends—two of whom would be murdered—turned right. She told me how she called her father to say, "I love you, and I don't know if I will make it out," and how she waited hours in a kibbutz shelter, assuming that her "time was coming."

She remembers how news spread in message groups about which of her friends had made it out alive, and how friends witnessed bodies blown apart by grenades. Maya told me she is haunted by the images her friends shared of Hamas desecrating bodies and by how they seemed to enjoy it. She said she feels guilty for encouraging her friends to join her at the music festival that Saturday.

This is why Israel fights.

The attacks of October 7 confronted the world with the sort of horrors Jewish communities have no choice but to remember for generations. From European villages caught in pogroms to the horrors of Nazi Germany, to Israeli kibbutzim burned and bloodied by Hamas terrorists. For decades, the free world refrain has been: "Never forget. Never again."

God help us if we do not mean what we say.

There is no room for false moral equivalency. Let me repeat that: There is no room for false moral equivalency.

We must not forget who is responsible, and we must hold them accountable. Terror and self-defense are not the same thing. One side started the war, but the other side will finish it. And the United States must give Israel the time, space, and support to bring innocent people home and bring murderous terrorists to justice.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRENADA INVASION

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, today marks the 40th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Grenada. This short and

largely overlooked conflict is one of the most successful military interventions in history. In just 4 days, President Ronald Reagan toppled an anti-American regime, rolled back communism in the hemisphere, and saved American lives. In the years that followed, we built a strong, genuine, and enduring partnership with the people of Grenada.

But this success was far from certain. It was only possible because of President Reagan's decisive and overwhelming military response to a crisis on the island. The seeds of this crisis were sown—like many others—during Jimmy Carter's disastrous Presidency. Under President Carter, communism began to metastasize in Latin America, and in the especially pivotal year of 1979, both Nicaragua and Grenada fell to communists.

As he returned from Managua, Fidel Castro boasted, "Now there are three of us." The Cuban dictator had big plans to add more captive nations to his anti-American axis in the hemisphere.

Grenada is a small island located in the southeast Caribbean and strategically vital to both Cuba and Soviet Russia during the Cold War. Barely 150 miles off the coast of Venezuela, the island could serve as an offshore arms depot for communist rebels in Latin America and other Caribbean nations. Russia could also use Grenada as a base to launch submarines into the Caribbean Basin.

Most concerning was Grenada's proximity to Africa, which made it the potential final link in a chain of communist air bases from Southern Russia to North Africa, to West Africa, to Grenada, and then finally to Cuba. Soviet bombers and heavy-cargo planes could fly between these lily pads of bases for refueling and largely beyond American detection.

This grave threat materialized when Grenada welcomed hundreds of Cubans to construct a massive airport with a 9,000-foot runway. What Ronald Reagan called a "suspiciously huge" runway was far larger than anything Grenada's commercial aviation required. It was, curiously enough, just big enough to support the largest Soviet bombers and cargo aircraft.

This airbase posed a two-way threat. Russia could use Grenada as a launching pad in the hemisphere to arm Cuba and other Latin American communists. Going the other way, Castro could export revolutionaries to the bloody war in Angola and elsewhere in Africa.

Tensions boiled over into crisis in October 1983 when an even more radical, bloodthirsty gang of communists toppled the ruling communists in Grenada. The new government killed the former Prime Minister and instituted a 24-hour shoot-on-sight curfew that threatened hundreds of American medical students on the island. The Reagan administration feared a replay of the Iranian hostage crisis, and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean

States pleaded with the administration to intervene and prevent communism from spreading further in the region.

Within days, Reagan had concluded that we had "no choice but to act strongly and decisively," as he put it, and he authorized an invasion. This wasn't an easy decision. We had only spotty intelligence on Grenada's forces and capabilities and the presence of Cuban or other communist forces, we had little time to execute the mission, and many in Washington still hesitated to use military force due to Vietnam syndrome. But Reagan was undaunted.

Then a disaster halfway around the world threatened to derail the operation. Just after Reagan authorized the invasion planning, a suicide bomber killed 241 marines in their Beirut barracks. Although heartbroken and enraged by the attack, Reagan didn't let the crisis in Lebanon crowd out the crisis in our backyard. He declared:

There are Americans there and they are in danger. We are going.

This is an important point. Contrary to liberal smears, Reagan did not authorize the Grenada invasion as cover for his withdrawal from Lebanon or to flex his muscles after the Beirut bombing. He authorized the invasion planning before the bombing happened in Beirut. The historical record on this is absolutely clear. Unlike Democratic Presidents, Reagan didn't act tough to conceal his true weakness; Reagan was tough on America's enemies and tough in defense of America's interests.

On October 25, barely a week after the coup, around 8,000 American troops embarked on Operation Urgent Fury. They had a clearly defined mission: save the endangered Americans, depose the communist regime, and reestablish order on the island. Our troops had some setbacks, but they adapted, overcame, and prevailed.

The incomplete intelligence and short timeframe for preparation hampered the operation yet vindicated Reagan's judgment. Military leaders anticipated only 200 Cuban construction workers on the island. In reality, 700 well-armed Cuban soldiers awaited American forces. Our troops also discovered huge weapons caches at the airbase, enough to arm the Cuban forces and thousands more communist rebels. Reagan had acted just in time.

The war ended after 4 lopsided days. Our troops took fewer than 150 casualties, while the communists suffered nearly 500 casualties, and more than 600 Cubans surrendered. Our citizens on the island were safe. Reagan hit hard, he hit fast, and America won.

Fidel Castro's dreams of hemispheric revolution soon turned to ash. Reagan destroyed communism in Grenada and besieged the communist regime in Nicaragua. A year after Reagan left office, Nicaragua ousted Daniel Ortega in a democratic election, made possible by American pressure.

The Grenada operation was the first successful military rollback of communism during the Cold War. We had

eliminated a deadly threat on our doorstep, and we had liberated a grateful people, who enjoy freedom and democracy to this day.

Reagan worked to stabilize the island and later traveled there in 1986. Tens of thousands of Grenadians lined the streets and welcomed Reagan as a liberator. Grenada's Prime Minister described Reagan as "our own national hero" and "our rescuer after God." Reagan passed banner after banner that read "God Bless America" and later wrote that "I probably never felt better during my presidency than I did that day."

What Reagan felt that day was the joy of American success, made possible by American strength and confidence. This success stands in stark contrast to other interventions, like the one we saw in Somalia 10 years later under Bill Clinton.

I spoke here 3 weeks ago to mark the 30th anniversary of the Battle of Mogadishu. While Reagan delivered a crushing and decisive blow against a regime that threatened American interests, Bill Clinton used insufficient forces for an ill-defined, expansive mission in a nation where our interests weren't at stake. He then cut and ran after the first sign of resistance, emboldening our enemies, including Osama bin Laden.

No two interventions were more different in rationale, execution, or result, and they offer important lessons for today.

The most profound is that weak interventions with vague and self-righteous missions usually fail. Strong military action with well-defined missions focused on America's interests usually succeed.

We must never confuse the U.S. Army for the Salvation Army. Our military is not a charitable organization, and it is not a tool of mankind. It is the most fundamental instrument of our national power and ours alone, and it should be used to pursue American interests and American interests alone. It is not the military's responsibility to right every wrong in the world or to be an avenging angel of liberal democracy.

One of America's great statesmen, John Quincy Adams, once wrote that America is "the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own." Indeed, he famously observed that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy."

I have to observe, though, that Adams wrote that we do not "search" for monsters to destroy, but the architect of the Monroe Doctrine and chief defender of Andrew Jackson's conquest of Spanish Florida was no pacifist. When monsters rear their heads and challenge America, especially in her own hemisphere, America must indeed not hesitate to destroy those monsters. From Tripoli to Berlin, to Tokyo, to St. George's, we have done it before, and we must be prepared to do it again.

When we must go abroad to destroy monsters, we must use overwhelming force. If Washington is unwilling to use the force necessary to win, we ought not use force at all. It is unfair and cruel to both American troops pursuing the mission and to our friends in the nation where the mission is being conducted.

As we look for examples to follow in this new moment of international crisis and chaos, we should look to Reagan, not to Clinton. We need more Grenadas and no more Somalias.

On this 40th anniversary of the invasion of Grenada, I would also like to recognize and thank the veterans of that conflict, along with their families, for their invaluable service. They made our country proud and helped bring communism to its knees in this hemisphere. God bless them all, and God bless the United States of America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ISRAEL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, early yesterday morning, I returned from a whirlwind trip to the Middle East as part of a bipartisan codel, or a congressional delegation, to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The trip was a direct response to Hamas's savage attack on Israel. The codel, led by my friend Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, brought together 10 Senators from both parties to show the United States' support for Israel and to demonstrate U.S. commitment to protecting our now-threatened national interests in the region.

Our message was united: The United States stands with Israel. Iran is on notice, and it must stand down; and we need to get hostages freed and Americans out of harm's way.

We are committed to seeing Hamas defeated so that a new chapter of prosperity for Israel and its Arab neighbors can begin, of which normalized relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia would be a keystone.

Our engagements on the ground included frank and candid discussions with heads of state, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and our U.S. Embassy teams on the ground. Our day in Tel Aviv began with meeting the families of hostages being held in Gaza, including Americans who shared their painful stories. As a parent and grandparent, it is heartbreaking to see and hear the grief of these family members.

Later that day, we met with Israeli defense officials for an update on the war. We were shown video evidence of the unnerving atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists—horrific images that I will not soon forget. Our meetings made clear the absolute imperative to see Hamas defeated.

Hamas's attacks have been likened to Israel's own September 11; but Prime Minister Netanyahu made a point that is especially chilling for Americans but that every critic of Israel must hear. He pointed out that, on 9/11, our enemy was thousands of miles away. In Israel, their enemy is only a kilometer away.

For more than 15 years, Israel has had to live every day with a terrorist organization on its border whose sole mission in life is to kill Jews and to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth; and during that time, Hamas has loomed as a persistent threat to Israel, attacking, kidnapping, and killing Israelis. But the barbarism and brutality that Hamas displayed in its October 7 attacks took its evil to new heights, and now Israel knows what it has to do: It has to wipe Hamas off the face of the Earth.

For the Israelis, this is existential. Israel's cause is just, and its resolve is firm, and it should have every peace-loving nation in the world on its side. Now, how Israel goes about that mission matters, and it needs to be done in a way that minimizes civilian casualties.

The Palestinians living in Gaza are also victims of Hamas's reign of terror. Hamas has made it clear that the only value it places on the lives of Palestinians is to use them as fodder to direct attention away from its atrocities and to try and turn public sentiment, especially in Western media and the Arab street, against Israel. Case in point: Hamas's disproven claim that Israel struck a hospital, which sparked protests and riots in a number of countries.

Israelis know that there are innocent Palestinians trapped in this fight and that civilian casualties and a humanitarian crisis could drive more Palestinians toward extremism. That is why Israel is taking measures to protect innocents in Gaza, although its efforts are being undermined by Hamas, which has discouraged Palestinians from complying with Israel's evacuation order.

The United States and other peace-loving nations in the region and beyond need to give Israel space to take the fight to and eradicate Hamas, because if Hamas and its reign of terror are allowed to continue, no nation in the region or beyond will be able to live in peace and security. It really is that simple.

And one final but important point: Hamas might claim to represent Palestinians, but its violent actions do nothing—nothing—to benefit the Palestinian people. The only people who benefit from this brutal bloodshed are the ayatollahs in Iran, whose goal is to bring chaos, violence, and death to all who don't share their extreme and militant religious ideology, which, I might add, includes wiping Israel off the face of the Earth.

Look no further than Hamas if you want to see Iran's influence, as 90 percent of their military budget comes

from Iran, or Hezbollah, the terrorist organization on Israel's northern border with Lebanon, which is also armed and financed by Iran. Then there are the Houthis in Yemen who, in the aftermath of October 7, fired missiles and drones headed for Israel—again, likely at the direction of Iran; the Shia militias, who are attacking American soldiers in Iraq and Syria; the killing by Russians of innocent civilians in Ukraine with drones supplied by Iran. Through its proxies, Iran is literally getting away with murder.

To the Iranian regime, we say: We are on to you.

In addition to working with regional partners to get American hostages and citizens out of Gaza, the Biden administration must clearly articulate to the Iranians that, if they do not stand down or if they green-light the escalation of this war, the United States and our allies will be forced to respond forcefully. The movement of U.S. firepower to the region should make that point very clear to Tehran.

The attacks on October 7 represent a kind of evil that the world hasn't seen in generations, and it must be confronted and contained. If it is not, we could see death and destruction on a scale akin to the horrors of the last century. History is watching.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

H.R. 4366

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have been working incredibly hard alongside my colleagues to make sure we have an open, bipartisan appropriations process and to keep this process moving, which is why I am glad to say that in a moment, I will call up and ask for unanimous consent to adopt by voice vote the first series of amendments to the appropriations minibus.

These are amendments that will further strengthen a package of bipartisan appropriations bills—bills, I should mention, that passed our committee unanimously. We worked hard in committee to ensure this package reflects input from Members across the aisle and across the country.

While we may not agree on everything, the votes we are taking now are an opportunity for Members on both sides to provide additional input on this bipartisan package, debate those ideas, and put them up for a vote. This is an important step forward as we work to pass this package in the Senate, keep the appropriations process moving, and in the coming weeks, deliver absolutely essential supplemental funding as well. I am delighted that we are going.

I will turn it over to my vice chair who has been working alongside of me to get this moving.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me start by saying that I am so pleased that we are finally—finally—voting on amendments to the three-bill package that Senator MURRAY and I, as well as the terrific members of our Appropriations Committee, have worked very hard to bring before the Senate.

This has been the result of many weeks—far too many weeks—of negotiations and would not have happened without the leadership of Chair MURRAY.

I also want to thank Leader SCHUMER, Leader MCCONNELL, our Republican whip, JOHN THUNE, and the chairs and ranking members of the three subcommittees—Senators HEINRICH and HOEVEN, Senators MURRAY and BOOZMAN, Senators SCHATZ and Senator HYDE-SMITH—for their hard work. These are bills that really make a difference to the American people.

As our colleagues know, we are considering the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill; the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill; and also the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies bill.

So we finally are making progress, and I look forward to the robust—no one could say that this is not a robust amendment process.

Again, my thanks to Chair MURRAY. It has been a great pleasure to work with her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

MOTION TO COMMIT AND AMENDMENT NO. 1205
WITHDRAWN

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to commit H.R. 4366 and amendment No. 1205 be withdrawn.

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

AMENDMENT NOS. 1250, 1185, 1216, 1221, 1283, 1117, 1120, 1175, 1264, 1202, 1270, 1116, 1113, 1351, 1134, 1220, 1277, 1140, 1131, 1203, 1133, 1139, 1255, 1352, AND 1115

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as provided under the order of October 24, I call up the following amendments to Murray-Collins substitute amendment No. 1092 en bloc: Moran No. 1250, Daines No. 1185, Sullivan No. 1216, Sullivan No. 1221, Peters-Cornyn No. 1283, Rosen No. 1117, Schatz No. 1120, Booker-Tuberville No. 1175, Tillis-Welch No. 1264, Reed No. 1202, Britt No. 1270, Kelly-Tillis No. 1116, Hirono-Moran No. 1113, Warnock-Cornyn No. 1351, Smith-Ricketts No. 1134, Rosen-Crapo No. 1220, Cardin No. 1277, Padilla No. 1140, Shaheen No. 1131, Klobuchar-Moran No. 1203, Kelly No. 1133, Padilla No. 1139, Ossoff-Braun No. 1255, Merkley-Crapo No. 1352, and Stabenow No. 1115.

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

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1250

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds appropriated by division A to change rates for reimbursement for transportation via a special mode of transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to reduce certain amounts available to the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO CHANGE RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION VIA SPECIAL MODE OF TRANSPORTATION.

During the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on September 30, 2024, no funds appropriated by this division may be obligated or expended to change rates for reimbursement for transportation of a veteran or other individual via a special mode of transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from the rates in place as of January 1, 2023.

SEC. ____ . REDUCTION OF AMOUNTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The amounts otherwise made available by this division for the Departmental Administration—General Administration account of the Department of Veterans Affairs are hereby reduced by \$43,500,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1185

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress an earned value analysis of the Veterans Electronic Health Record system of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

On page 41, line 6, insert after the colon the following: “*Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report containing an earned value analysis of the Veterans Electronic Health Record system, which shall include a graphic performance report, a schedule and cost performance indexes, an estimate at completion and budget at completion, and a variance analysis for cost and schedule.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1216

(Purpose: To prioritize the use of funds for certain telehealth services and mental health programs for veterans)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . PRIORITIZATION OF USE OF FUNDS FOR CERTAIN TELEHEALTH SERVICES AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prioritize the use of any amounts provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs under this division for telehealth services or mental health programs, including for suicide prevention outreach and treatment programs or the Veterans Crisis Line established under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States Code, in States with the highest rate of suicide among members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

AMENDMENT NO. 1221

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to procure seafood from China for use in school meals)

In section 747 of division B, insert “or seafood” after “poultry products”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1283

(Purpose: To provide funding for the emergency and transitional pet shelter and housing assistance grant program)

At the appropriate place in title VII of division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . (a) There is appropriated \$3,000,000 for the emergency and transitional

pet shelter and housing assistance grant program established under section 12502(b) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (34 U.S.C. 20127).

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the total amount rescinded in section 745 is increased by \$3,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1117

(Purpose: To make amounts available to the Veterans Health Administration to sustain and increase telehealth capacity and associated programmatic efforts)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . TELEHEALTH CAPACITY OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2024 by this Act or any other Act under the “Veterans Health Administration – Medical Services”, “Veterans Health Administration – Medical Community Care”, and “Veterans Health Administration – Medical Support and Compliance” accounts, \$5,180,336,000 shall be made available to sustain and increase telehealth capacity, including in rural and highly rural areas, and associated programmatic efforts.

AMENDMENT NO. 1120

(Purpose: To extend the period of availability for fiscal year 2021 national infrastructure investments)

At the appropriate place in title I of division C, insert the following:

SEC. 110. The remaining unobligated balances, as of September 30, 2024, from amounts made available for the “Department of Transportation—Office of the Secretary—National Infrastructure Investments” in division L of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260) are hereby permanently rescinded, and an amount of additional new budget authority equivalent to the amount rescinded is hereby appropriated on September 30, 2024, to remain available until September 30, 2027, and shall be available, without additional competition, for completing the funding of awards made pursuant to the fiscal year 2021 national infrastructure investments program, in addition to other funds as may be available for such purposes: *Provided*, That no amounts may be rescinded from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

AMENDMENT NO. 1175

(Purpose: To increase funding for rural decentralized water systems)

In the matter under the heading “RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM ACCOUNT” under the heading “RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE” in title III, in the second undesignated paragraph, strike “, and of which not to exceed \$5,000,000 shall be available for the rural utilities program described in section 306E of such Act: *Provided*,” and insert “: *Provided*, That not to exceed \$20,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be available for the rural utilities program described in section 306E of such Act, of which not less than \$10,000,000 shall be used to provide subgrants to eligible individuals for the construction, refurbishing, and servicing of individually owned household decentralized wastewater systems: *Provided further*,”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1264

(Purpose: To require a review regarding veterans who engaged in toxic exposure risk activities while serving in Kosovo)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REVIEW OF VETERANS WHO ENGAGED IN TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES WHILE SERVING IN KOSOVO AND THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF SUCH TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES.

(a) **REVIEW REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the following:

(1) Data regarding the mortality of covered veterans.

(2) Any data on toxic exposure experienced by covered veterans that is both relevant and available, including toxicology studies.

(3) The type of toxic exposure risk activities covered veterans engaged in while serving in the active military, naval, air, or space service in Kosovo.

(b) **COVERED VETERANS.**—For purposes of subsection (a), a covered veteran is a veteran who—

(1) served in the active military, naval, air, or space service in Kosovo; and

(2) as part of such service, engaged in a toxic exposure risk activity.

(c) **MANNER AND SUITABILITY OF REVIEW.**—The Secretary shall carry out the review required by subsection (a) in a manner such that the findings of the Secretary with respect to the review are suitable and applicable under subchapter VII of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, AIR, OR SPACE SERVICE.**—The term “active military, naval, air, or space service” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) **TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITY.**—The term “toxic exposure risk activity” has the meaning given such term in section 1710(e)(4) of such title.

(3) **VETERAN.**—The term “veteran” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of such title.

AMENDMENT NO. 1202

(Purpose: To appropriate amounts for shellfish research, with an offset)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) For an additional amount for “Agricultural Programs—Agricultural Research Service—Salaries and Expenses”, there is appropriated, out of amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$1,000,000, to remain available until expended, for research on East Coast shellfish.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount made available by this Act under the heading “Farm Production and Conservation Programs—Farm Service Agency—State Mediation Grants” in title II shall be \$6,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1270

(Purpose: To provide appropriations for certain research using plant genomics, with an offset)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) For an additional amount for “Agricultural Programs—Agricultural Research Service—Salaries and Expenses”, there is appropriated \$1,000,000, to remain available until expended, for cooperative agreements with qualified nonprofit organizations to expedite research using plant genomics to develop drought- and disease-resistant peanut varieties and other crops.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount appropriated by this Act under the heading “Agricultural Programs—Processing, Research, and Marketing—Office of the Secretary” in title I for the Office of Communications shall be reduced by \$1,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1116

(Purpose: To require medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to share certain data with State cancer registries)

At the end of division A, add the following:

TITLE V—COUNTING VETERANS’ CANCER ACT OF 2023

SEC. 501. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Counting Veterans’ Cancer Act of 2023”.

SEC. 502. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

(1) According to 2017 data from National Program of Cancer Registries of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 26,500 cancer cases among veterans were not reported to State cancer registries funded through such Program.

(2) Established by Congress in 1992 through the Cancer Registries Amendment Act (Public Law 102-515), the National Program of Cancer Registries under section 399B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280e) collects data on cancer occurrence (including the type, extent, and location of the cancer), the type of initial treatment, and outcomes.

(3) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention support central cancer registries in 46 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, certain territories of the United States in the Pacific Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

(4) The data obtained by registries described in paragraph (3) combined with data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program of the National Cancer Institute and mortality data from National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention comprise the official United States Cancer Statistics.

(5) The United States Cancer Statistics reflect all newly diagnosed cancer cases and cancer deaths for the entire population of the United States, except for unreported veterans.

(6) Federal law requires the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Cancer Institute to collect cancer data for all newly diagnosed cancer cases, but that currently cannot be achieved due to frequent lack of reporting by medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(7) Releasing all data from medical facilities of the Department to State cancer registries will provide more complete data for health care providers, public health officials, and researchers to—

(A) measure cancer occurrence and trends at the local and national level;

(B) inform and prioritize cancer educational and screening programs;

(C) evaluate efficacy of prevention efforts and treatment;

(D) determine survival rates;

(E) conduct research on the etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer;

(F) ensure quality and equity in cancer care; and

(G) plan for health services.

(8) Capturing cancer data from medical facilities of the Department in State cancer registries and the United States Cancer Statistics can benefit veterans by—

(A) improving the ability to identify cancer-related disparities in the veteran community;

(B) improving understanding of the cancer-related needs of veterans, which can be incorporated into State Comprehensive Cancer Control planning for screening and treatment programs funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

(C) increasing opportunities for veterans with cancer to be included in more clinical trials and cancer-related research and anal-

ysis being done outside of the health care system of the Department.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—It is the purpose of this Act to improve care for veterans by ensuring all data on veterans diagnosed with cancer are captured by the national cancer registry programs supported by the National Program of Cancer Registries of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program of the National Cancer Institute.

SEC. 503. REQUIREMENT THAT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SHARE DATA WITH STATE CANCER REGISTRIES.

(a) **SHARING OF DATA WITH STATE CANCER REGISTRIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 7330E. Sharing of data with State cancer registries

“(a) **SHARING BY THE DEPARTMENT.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall share with the State cancer registry of each State, if such a registry exists, qualifying data for all individuals who are residents of the State and have received health care under the laws administered by the Secretary.

“(2) **REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO DATA SHARED.**—In sharing data under paragraph (1) with a State cancer registry, the Secretary shall comply with the requirements for non-Department facilities to report data, in a manner that is as complete and timely as possible, without requiring a data use agreement in place between the Department and each State cancer registry—

“(A) to State cancer registries that are supported by the National Program of Cancer Registries of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under section 399B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280e);

“(B) to State cancer registries that are supported by the Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results Program of the National Cancer Institute authorized under the National Cancer Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-218); and

“(C) to State cancer registries as set forth in relevant State laws and regulations that authorize a cancer registry.

“(b) **QUALIFYING DATA DEFINED.**—In this section, the term ‘qualifying data’, with respect to a State cancer registry, means all data required to be provided to the registry pursuant to the authorities specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of subsection (a)(2).”

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of subchapter II of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7330D the following new item:

“7330E. Sharing of data with State cancer registries.”

(b) **SHARING BY STATE CANCER REGISTRIES.**—The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall assist State cancer registries described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 7330E(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), in facilitating, to the extent allowed under State laws regulating the cancer registry program, the sharing with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of data in the possession of each such registry regarding diagnosis of cancer for each veteran—

(1) enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705(a) of such title; or

(2) registered to receive care from the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 17.37 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations.

AMENDMENT NO. 1113

(Purpose: To provide funding for competitive grants for construction of agricultural research facilities and related activities, with an offset)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. For an additional amount for “Agricultural Programs—National Institute of Food and Agriculture—Research and Education Activities”, for competitive grants to assist in the facility construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation, or remodeling of agricultural research facilities, as authorized by the Research Facilities Act (7 U.S.C. 390 et seq.), there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for “Agricultural Programs—Processing, Research, and Marketing—Office of the Secretary” is hereby reduced by, \$2,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1351

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Transportation to report on the Federal Aviation Administration’s workforce development programs)

At the appropriate place in division C, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Using amounts made available for the Federal Aviation Administration under this Act that are not otherwise obligated, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations on whether, and the degree to which, the Federal Aviation Administration’s workforce development programs authorized in section 625 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–254) have: (1) helped to expand the pool of prospective applicants to the industry; (2) strengthened aviation programs at minority-serving institutions, public institutions of higher education, women-focused institutions, and public postsecondary vocational institutions; and (3) encouraged the participation of populations that are underrepresented in the aviation workforce, including women, minorities, and individuals in economically disadvantaged geographic areas and rural communities. In submitting this report, the Federal Aviation Administration shall also provide recommendations on how it can better use its workforce development grant programs to: (1) expand the pool of prospective applicants to the industry; (2) strengthen aviation programs at minority-serving institutions, public institutions of higher education, women-focused institutions, and public postsecondary vocational institutions; and (3) encourage the participation of populations that are underrepresented in the aviation workforce, including women, minorities, and individuals in economically disadvantaged geographic areas and rural communities.

AMENDMENT NO. 1134

(Purpose: To require the submission of a report on improving staffing at the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the county level)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to Congress a report describing a plan for improving staffing at the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the county level, including recommendations for actions that Congress may take.

AMENDMENT NO. 1220

(Purpose: To provide funding for the suppression and control of Mormon crickets in western States)

On page 104 of the amendment, line 11, insert “, and of which \$6,000,000 shall be for the

suppression and control of Mormon crickets in western States” before the semicolon.

AMENDMENT NO. 1277

(Purpose: To provide funding for invasive catfish control)

On page 104 of the amendment, line 11, insert “, and of which \$750,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for invasive catfish control” before the semicolon.

AMENDMENT NO. 1140

(Purpose: To improve housing assistance for veterans experiencing homelessness)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. IMPROVING HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

In carrying out the program 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”), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) coordinate with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish pathways that would allow for temporary, transitional case management in areas in which public housing authorities have vouchers under the program that are available, allocated, and accompanied with case management resources provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but underutilized due to a lack of referrals from the Department; and

(2) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, finalize guidance regarding approval of a public housing authority to be a designated service provider.

AMENDMENT NO. 1131

(Purpose: To require a report on the use of third-party contractors to conduct medical disability examinations of veterans)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REPORT ON USE OF THIRD-PARTY CONTRACTORS TO CONDUCT MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the use of third-party contractors to conduct medical disability examinations of veterans for purposes of obtaining compensation under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) The number of contractors described in subsection (a) in each State who are used as described in such subsection.

(2) The requirements for performance and quality in the contracts governing the use described in subsection (a), including qualifications contractors described in such subsection are required meet for such uses.

(3) The average mileage veterans described in subsection (a) are required to travel to attend a contract medical disability examination described in such subsection, disaggregated by state;

(4) The number of veterans described in paragraph (3) who are required to travel beyond the mileage requirement in a contract described in paragraph (2).

(5) A description of the process at the Department for handling complaints of veterans about the use of contractors as described in subsection (a).

(c) DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—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.

AMENDMENT NO. 1203

(Purpose: To make funds available for the aeronautical information management program)

At the appropriate place in title I, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Of the funds made available in this Act under the heading “Department of Transportation—Federal Aviation Administration—Facilities and Equipment”, \$29,350,000 shall be for the aeronautical information management program, which includes Federal notices to air missions (“NOTAM”) sustainment, enhancements, and modernization in support of the NOTAM Improvement Act of 2023 (49 U.S.C. 40101 note).

AMENDMENT NO. 1133

(Purpose: To require a report relating to rural community facilities direct loan applicants)

In the matter under the heading “Rural Development Programs—Rural Housing Service—Rural Community Facilities Program Account” in title III of division B, strike the period at the end and insert “: *Provided further*, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on community facilities direct loan applicants for which there was a completed favorable analysis for eligibility but that were subsequently determined to be ineligible due to population calculation changes or other modeling errors, including a description of actions taken by the Department of Agriculture to minimize disruption to community planning initiatives and prevent future inaccurate determinations.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1139

(Purpose: To provide for the development of emergency evacuation route planning guidelines and best practices)

At the appropriate place in title I of division C, insert the following:

SEC. _____. EVACUATION ROUTE PLANNING.

Using amounts made available for the Federal Highway Administration under this Act that are not otherwise obligated, the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall develop and publish guidelines and best practices for States, Indian Tribes, and units of local government to use when conducting local emergency evacuation route planning, including routing of emergency response supplies, equipment, and workers, as part of natural disaster preparedness efforts.

AMENDMENT NO. 1255

(Purpose: To provide funds for the Office of Women’s Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand access of women veterans to mammography initiatives and equipment)

On page 75, line 23, strike the period at the end and insert the following: “, of which \$10,000,000 shall be made available for the Office of Women’s Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs established under section 7310 of title 38, United States Code, to be used by the Secretary to expand access of women veterans to—

(1) mobile mammography initiatives; (2) advanced mammography equipment; and

(3) outreach activities to publicize such initiatives and equipment.

AMENDMENT NO. 1352

(Purpose: To increase the set-aside for multi-benefit projects under the watershed and flood prevention operations program)

On page 121, lines 23 and 24, strike “\$10,000,000 shall be allocated to irrigation modernization projects and activities located in Western states” and insert “\$20,000,000 shall be allocated to multi-benefit irrigation modernization projects and activities”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1115

(Purpose: To provide funding for the Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Program)

On page 120, line 15, strike “2250a.” and insert “2250a: *Provided further*, That of the total amount available under this heading, \$8,500,000 shall be for necessary expenses to carry out the Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Program under section 222 of subtitle A of title II of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6923), as amended by section 12302 of Public Law 115–334.”.

Mrs. MURRAY. I know of no further debate on those amendments.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NOS. 1250, 1185, 1216, 1221, 1283, 1117, 1120, 1175, 1264, 1202, 1270, 1116, 1113, 1351, 1134, 1220, 1277, 1140, 1131, 1203, 1133, 1139, 1255, 1352, AND 1115

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 1250, 1185, 1216, 1221, 1283, 1117, 1120, 1175, 1264, 1202, 1270, 1116, 1113, 1351, 1134, 1220, 1277, 1140, 1131, 1203, 1133, 1139, 1255, 1352, and 1115) are agreed to en bloc.

Mrs. MURRAY. With that, I ask that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I now ask that following disposition of the Looman nomination, the Senate vote on Vance No. 1210 and, finally, that there be 2 minutes for debate, equally divided, prior to each amendment vote.

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

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive 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.

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 executive clerk read the nomination of Jessica Looman, of Minnesota, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor.

VOTE ON LOOMAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Looman nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. 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 executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 265 Ex.]

YEAS—51

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Heinrich | Rosen |
| Bennet | Hickenlooper | Sanders |
| Blumenthal | Hirono | Schatz |
| Booker | Kaine | Schumer |
| Brown | Kelly | Shaheen |
| Butler | King | Sinema |
| Cantwell | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Cardin | Lujan | Stabenow |
| Carper | Manchin | Sullivan |
| Casey | Markey | Tester |
| Coons | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley | Warner |
| Duckworth | Murphy | Warnock |
| Durbin | Murray | Warren |
| Fetterman | Ossoff | Welch |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Whitehouse |
| Hassan | Reed | Wyden |

NAYS—46

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Graham | Paul |
| Blackburn | Grassley | Ricketts |
| Boozman | Hagerty | Risch |
| Braun | Hawley | Romney |
| Britt | Hoeven | Rounds |
| Budd | Hyde-Smith | Rubio |
| Capito | Johnson | Schmitt |
| Cassidy | Kennedy | Scott (FL) |
| Collins | Lankford | Thune |
| Cornyn | Lee | Tillis |
| Cotton | Lummis | Tuberville |
| Cramer | Marshall | Vance |
| Crapo | McConnell | Wicker |
| Daines | Moran | Young |
| Ernst | Mullin | |
| Fischer | Murkowski | |

NOT VOTING—3

| | | |
|------|---------|------------|
| Cruz | Padilla | Scott (SC) |
|------|---------|------------|

The nomination was confirmed.

(Ms. SMITH assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume legislative session.

The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDMENT NO. 1210 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Mr. VANCE. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1210, and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. VANCE] proposes an amendment numbered 1210 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit funds appropriated for the Department of Transportation for fiscal year 2024 from being used to enforce a mask mandate in response to the COVID-19 virus)

At the appropriate place in title I of division C, insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds appropriated or made available by this division for the Department of Transportation for fiscal year 2024 may be used to enforce a mask mandate in response to the COVID-19 virus.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 2 minutes equally divided on this amendment.

Mr. VANCE. Mr. President, we are, unfortunately, in a world where COVID will be with us for the rest of our lives. That is not a good thing. It is not a thing to celebrate, but it is a thing to accept.

What we do not have to accept and what we do not have to make part of our lives is the never-ending cycle of public health panic that greets the rise of a respiratory virus that there is very little we can do to stop or control. What we do not have to accept is airline passengers fighting amongst each other and fighting with flight attendants because the flight attendants are asked to enforce a mask mandate. What we do not have to accept is that we respond to a public health problem with panic and with fear.

We know, of course, that the era of mask mandates caused a lot of problems. It caused problems for our kids. It caused developmental delays for school children. It caused a lot of rancor and a lot of division within our common American family.

If people want to wear masks, of course, they should be able to. But if people don't want to wear masks on airplanes, on transit, they should have that option as well, and that is all that my amendment does. It is narrowly scoped. It applies for the next 11 months, and it applies to transportation cases. And I think it is reasonable to not ask the American people to reenter the era of mask mandates. My amendment does that, and I ask that my colleagues support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, just to point out, this amendment only applies to surface transportation, Amtrak and passenger rail in particular. I think it is counterproductive. I understand the point that the Senator from Ohio is making. But the problem right now—look, I don't think President Biden or the head of Amtrak or Secretary Buttigieg or anyone else is, at all, planning to implement any kind of mask mandate in the foreseeable future.

But he said something that I agree with, which is that COVID is going to be with us for the foreseeable future and there will be new variants. And if it looks the same, it looks same. But if

it is, say, 10 times as virulent, 100 times as deadly and airborne, then I do think public health officials should be able to consult with Agencies to try to figure out what measures ought to work.

And for those reasons, I oppose this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1210

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. VANCE. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 266 Leg.]

YEAS—59

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Graham | Paul |
| Barrasso | Grassley | Ricketts |
| Bennet | Hagerty | Risch |
| Blackburn | Hawley | Romney |
| Boozman | Hoeven | Rosen |
| Braun | Hyde-Smith | Rounds |
| Britt | Johnson | Rubio |
| Brown | Kaine | Schmitt |
| Budd | Kelly | Scott (FL) |
| Capito | Kennedy | Shaheen |
| Cassidy | Klobuchar | Sinema |
| Collins | Lankford | Sullivan |
| Cornyn | Lee | Tester |
| Cotton | Lummis | Thune |
| Cramer | Manchin | Tillis |
| Crapo | Marshall | Tuberville |
| Cruz | McConnell | Vance |
| Daines | Moran | Wicker |
| Ernst | Mullin | Young |
| Fischer | Murkowski | |

NAYS—38

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Blumenthal | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Booker | Hickenlooper | Schatz |
| Butler | Hirono | Schumer |
| Cantwell | King | Smith |
| Cardin | Lujan | Stabenow |
| Carper | Markey | Van Hollen |
| Casey | Menendez | Warner |
| Coons | Merkley | Warnock |
| Cortez Masto | Murphy | Warren |
| Duckworth | Murray | Welch |
| Durbin | Ossoff | Whitehouse |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Wyden |
| Hassan | Reed | |

NOT VOTING—3

Fetterman Padilla Scott (SC)

The amendment (No. 1210) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 p.m., the Senate vote on the Rubio No. 1237 and Kennedy No. 1354 amendments, and that at 5:45 p.m., the Senate vote on Lankford amendment No. 1232, with all previous provisions remaining in effect.

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

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

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

AMERICAN ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the need for more American energy. Joe Biden's policies are destructive to our Nation, and that is because he continues to put liberal priorities first and America last.

Last week, the Biden administration agreed to ease oil sanctions on Nicolas Maduro's brutal socialist regime in Venezuela. Let's be clear. I want to be clear about what is going on here. Venezuela gets to produce more oil. President Biden is putting Venezuelan oil production ahead of American oil production. He is prioritizing Venezuelan energy workers over Wyoming and American energy workers.

Our energy workers at home are rightly asking: When is Joe Biden going to ease the sanctions that he has put on American energy production?

Because, since day one, American oil, American natural gas, American coal producers have been in the President's crosshairs. He refused to change course, even when gas prices skyrocketed.

Well, Biden certainly has never encouraged more American production like he has around the world in Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and even Russia at one point. Instead, Joe Biden has raided the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and he did it to deflect blame for high energy costs at the gas pump. That was in the runup to the midterm elections. So he used our energy stockpile emergency supply for his own political gain. And it is disgraceful.

America's energy reserve is now 45 percent lower than it was when Joe Biden entered office, much lower than it was when he was Vice President. Our emergency supply is actually at a 40-year low in terms of the energy supply we need for emergencies.

With the Hamas terrorists' attack against Israel, there is more uncertainty in global oil production, and our own stockpiles here at home are dangerously low. And this could be the time when we need it the most.

So, last week, the administration came to the conclusion: Well, maybe we ought to try to fill it up again. So he has announced the purchase of 6 million barrels of oil to help replenish our emergency supply. Six million barrels is a drop in the bucket compared to the 290 million barrels that the President has already drained. The President's administration plan is too little, too late, and it comes at too high of a price. President Biden is offering 79 cents a barrel for these 6 mil-

lion barrels of oil to help start to replenish the emergency reserve. Well, the price of oil now is \$90 a barrel.

So Joe Biden is going, once again, on bended knee to dictators, begging them to produce more oil and sell it to the United States. Maybe he believes this begging will lower oil prices and increase his abysmal approval ratings. But turning to dictators is not a way to govern, and it is not a way to focus on America's national interests.

Joe Biden continues to turn his back on America's workers, on American families; and, once again, he is putting liberal politics first and American energy workers and the American public last.

Maduro isn't Joe Biden's first date with a dictator. Oh, no. He has been coddling dictators, and he is making it a habit. He tried to placate Vladimir Putin by choosing not to impose sanctions on Russia's Nord Stream 2 Pipeline to Germany, and what the President got in return for his appeasement was more Russian aggression and Russia attacking Ukraine.

While the President was draining our strategic emergency oil reserves, he was looking for ways that the Ayatollah in Iran could sell more oil. It is astonishing. He foolishly refused to enforce maximum pressure sanctions against Iranian oil, and this refusal allowed Iran to line its pockets with \$80 billion from selling oil exports.

I wonder what they could have used that money for. Well, let's look.

The President continues to kiss up to Iran. He cut a deal to send \$6 billion in sanctioned funds to Iran. In return, Iran was able to expand its support and financing of terrorist groups like Hamas.

Today, the world is witnessing the devastation and the violence inflicted by Iranian-backed-and-funded terrorism. Hamas's unprovoked attack against Israel killed thousands of civilians, including children, with at least 33 Americans dead, more missing.

President Biden has not learned from his mistakes because he continues to repeat the mistakes over and over again. This appeasement by Joe Biden will not work. It didn't work with Russia. It didn't work with Iran. It is not going to work with Venezuela. But President Biden refused to do what we know will work—will work here at home—and that is, unleash American energy.

The President's administration has used every trick in the book to smother American production of oil, gas, and coal. It has had an extreme negative impact on families all across America and on our Nation's economy.

Look, before the COVID pandemic, the Energy Information Administration, they forecasted that here in America, we would produce about 14 million barrels every day this year—14 million barrels of oil a day. Through June of this year, due to Joe Biden's attacks on American production, production is running way, way behind

what was anticipated and what we need as a nation. As a result, we are turning to countries for the 1.4 million barrels a day that we need additional.

We are way behind, and it is not just energy. This President continues to outsource not just our supply of oil and gas but our mineral supply—critical minerals that we need here in the United States. The Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending bill just accelerates that.

Last week, I issued a report proving how the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending bill moves the United States away from energy independence to energy and mineral dependence. An energy transition dependent on China, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, the tyrants and the terrorists there is not what our Nation needs, but it is what Joe Biden has brought upon us. Yep, it is what he caused.

America should never have to beg for energy, for minerals from anybody, let alone from dictators. Our energy policy should enrich American people. The American economy should be strengthened by it. Instead, Joe Biden's policies, dictated by the liberal left, are enriching our enemies.

America's energy policy must always put affordable, reliable American energy first. We must put America first. We must unleash American energy. That is the solution to help build our economy, build our country.

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.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ISRAEL

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, we were here last week when I addressed the floor on this very issue that I want to talk about again because it is so absolutely critical to the world's security and our security, because violence is continuing to rage in Israel. We continue to hear the horrific and heart-breaking stories of Hamas's vicious attack on innocent Israeli civilians and families, and our own American citizens remain unaccounted for and are being held hostage by Hamas in the wake of their unjustifiable terrorist attack on the nation of Israel.

In this Chamber and in this country, our support for Israel and their right to defend themselves must be unwavering. We must stand with our ally and friend as they continue to withstand barbaric attacks from terrorist militant groups and threats from all directions.

There is absolutely no question that now is the time for American leadership. Our response needs to be united, and our response needs to meet the urgency of a moment just like this. As a world power, the United States of America has both the responsibility

and the wherewithal to support our allies, especially as they come under attack by nefarious adversaries. It becomes vitally important that our Nation recognize this, that the American public hear the stories from those in Israel, and that we understand the brutal, inhumane, and devastating tactics that Hamas is deploying on the residents of the Jewish state.

Last week, I had the opportunity to speak with two American families who have members who are being held hostage in Gaza by the terrorist organization Hamas. These stories are gut-wrenching—one, a 3-year-old child; the other, a married couple—and bring to light what is truly happening in Israel right now. Elderly families were ripped from their homes, children taken from their parents, family members executed in front of their loved ones.

I am a mother myself and a grandmother, and I know everyone in this Chamber and everybody listening has members of their own family and loved ones they care about so deeply. So can we really imagine what that feels like? This is the reality that the Israeli people are facing every day.

These attacks need to be condemned and denounced in the strongest possible terms, and they have been, and it makes it all the more imperative that the United States provide the support it needs to stop and root out the evil Hamas.

It is impossible—impossible—to understate—or to overstate, even—the outside role that Iran has played in these past 18 days since the initial attack. We know—we know—that Iran is financially supporting Hamas. We know in the strongest terms that Iran has helped reinforce Hamas's military strengths and capabilities and training. We know that Iran is backing Hezbollah, to the north in Lebanon, who stands at the ready to open a second front of this war along the Israel-Lebanon border.

We know that the Iranian-backed militias are responsible for the recent attacks on U.S. personnel stationed in the Middle East, and we know that Iran harbors deep resentment and hatred for our own United States and our ally Israel. Make no mistake, Iran is an evil empire, and they must be held accountable for these attacks as well. Sanctions need to be imposed and enforced on this regime and all others that are complicit in the illicit Iranian oil trade, which funds terror and aggression in the Middle East.

The unmistakable anti-American hatred from Iran and its allies creates greater questions regarding our own national security. It highlights the importance of our investments in our own homeland security and national defense. We are at a very difficult juncture right now, and the security of America and the defense of our allies should remain our first priority.

In addition to the terrorist attacks in Israel, there is a large-scale ground war in Europe perpetrated by Russia,

the likes of which we have not seen since World War II. China continues to increase their posture and presence toward Taiwan. And our southern border is totally porous. It remains under siege.

And 2.48 million immigrants came across our border in fiscal year 2023, a new record—a new record. Just last month, we set another new record: over 269,000 encounters at the southern border and then not to mention that 169 of these encounters were people on our terror watchlist, which is more than the last 6 fiscal years all tied together.

So what does that tell you? We are not sheltered from terrorism. We can't think that what we see going on in the Middle East can't come here. We know it has been on our shores before, and there is no reason it can't come back unless we do something where we make intentional investments.

So now is the time to make those investments into our national security across the board. Support for Israel, Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, and our southern border is paramount and will serve to directly invest back into our own country and our own defense.

America's place on the world stage requires a level of leadership and accountability that we must accept with authority—we are the superpower—while we must always prioritize the needs of our own country first and then the support of our allies.

The good news is that when we are supporting the defense of our allies, we are also investing in deterrence and also supporting our own security and deterrence.

I am supportive of providing supplemental funding towards our defense capabilities—our southern border, Israel, Ukraine, and Indo-Pacific allies—because it is in the best interest of our country, our citizens, our neighbors, but I say in the strongest terms, I mentioned the southern border, but this must be front and center of any kind of supplemental that comes forward.

The Senate will have its say on the supplemental. The President has put his proposal before us. I would venture to say that will drastically change. The buckets may not change so much, but certainly the areas of influence will, and we will have a bill that creates and reflects our own thoughts, what we think. We need to craft a response to the attacks on Israel and other national security emergencies of this time.

I believe the Biden administration has been defined by its shakiness. The Senate needs to be defined by its strength and make certain that our country is ready and able to act.

There is no doubt that the United States is currently being tested by our adversaries, but we must make certain that we don't respond with weakness. By working together—and I think we will and can—I am confident in our ability to lead.

We must meet this moment, as our Nation has done in times of trial before. That is what will define this body, and we will move our country forward.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, 18 days ago, terror shook the Middle East. Eighteen days ago, Hamas tore children from their parents and tore mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters from their families. Eighteen days ago, terrorism swept across Israel, destroying everything in its path.

We all know this. We have heard about these attacks repeatedly with every news cycle. Even as we continue reading articles, hearing analyses, and seeing new information, let us not forget the reality of these terror attacks, the seriousness of such a massive loss of human life.

Hamas killed over 1,400 people, over 1,400 innocent civilians, in its attacks this month. Death touched thousands of friends and family members, and its aftereffects are still rippling across Israel and across the world.

Let us resist our modern impulse to leave this tragedy behind in favor of the next headline, the next crisis. Let us allow the abuse, the torture, and the murder of Israelis and Americans alike to strike a fresh sense of grief and anger in our hearts every time we hear about them. That grief and anger must drive us to respond to the horror of terrorism.

Israel is responding, yes, but the response to terrorism should not be bound by Israel's national borders because terrorism itself is not bound by national borders.

Hamas killed American citizens in its attack on innocent people across Israel. Terrorists are still holding American citizens hostage in Gaza. Hamas has American blood on its hands.

One American, Hayim Katsman, hid in a closet with his neighbor as Hamas militants rained gunfire on an Israeli village. A neighbor told CNN that Katsman covered him with his body and saved his life by absorbing the bullets.

American Deborah Matias and her husband sacrificed themselves for their 16-year-old son, acting as human shields against Hamas's fire.

Two American brothers, Igal and Amit Wachs, died together, both trying to save those around them. Amit, who volunteered as head of the village's self-defense unit, ran outside to help his neighbors at the beginning of the attack. In the process, he was killed. Igal was killed as he searched for a weapon to defend himself and his family.

These are real people—real Americans—whose lives were extinguished far too early by the terror in Israel.

It is critical that we see the return of every American stranded in Israel or held hostage in Gaza. Every American must be accounted for and safely brought home.

Following the coldblooded slaughter of both Americans and Israelis, the United States must stand firmly with Israel. We must send a clear message to Hamas, to Hezbollah, and to their state sponsor, Iran: We will not equivocate in our support for Israel. We will stand with them and provide the assistance they need as they make difficult decisions to defend their sovereign nation.

Congress and the administration must work together to gather all of our diplomatic and economic strength against Iran. We must work together to aid Israel, whether through economic support, lethal aid, or increased intelligence sharing.

We know Israel will need more defensive capabilities, including Tamir interceptors for its Iron Dome air defense system, the backbone of its missile defense architecture. I support the Department of Defense's current plans to send our two Iron Dome batteries to Israel to bolster their security.

My colleagues and I introduced a bill to reallocate aid funding to Israel's Iron Dome that could have ended up in Hamas's pocket. This legislation would be an important first step in defending Israel against future attacks.

We know Israel will need more offensive capabilities, including precision-guided munitions to hit specific ground targets. We know Israel will need our intelligence on the Middle East so it can eliminate the Hamas threat completely. And we know standing with Israel against terror will buttress and fortify our own national defense and our own national security. Our support for Israel will help it triumph over terrorism, and our support for Israel will help us show strength and deter our adversaries. By protecting Israeli interests, we will promote American interests as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, the world is still reeling from Hamas's brutal massacre of more than 1,400 Israelis and 33 Americans on October 7. Israel is completely justified in their response to the worst attack on their nation since the Yom Kippur War 50 years ago.

Israel's ultimate goal is and it rightly should be the destruction of Hamas. The United States must stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel and support this goal with lethal aid and intelligence support. In the coming weeks, Congress will consider the President's request for emergency national security funding that is aimed at doing just that.

Beyond debating the specifics of how much or what type of aid we send, I believe now is the time to rethink U.S. policy when it comes to the Hamas government and Gaza.

Beginning with their founding charter, the ideology of Hamas is motivated by anti-Semitism and genocidal—that is right, genocidal—intentions towards the Jewish people. In fact, the Hebrew word “hamas” means “violence.”

Since Hamas took power in the Gaza Strip in 2006, they have continued this violence and terrorism against Israel and their allies. Hamas employs murder, rape, torture, and unspeakable brutality against the Jewish people. Hamas even fires rockets indiscriminately towards Israeli civilians, many of which misfire and land, killing people in their own Gaza, innocent Palestinians.

Make no mistake, the only word to describe Hamas is “evil,” and when they commit atrocities like those of October 7, we must not look away.

One aspect of the October 7 attack that continues to this day is the plight of the more than 200 innocent people currently being held hostage in Gaza, including several Americans, including some from my own State of North Carolina.

Last week, I met with some of these families here in Washington. They told me stories about their loved ones and gave me their photos. These families—their fear and their heartache are something that no American should ever have to face.

Part of the President's funding package is so-called humanitarian aid in Gaza. Given that Gaza is governed by Hamas, I simply don't believe it is right to give a dime of taxpayer money to the very terrorists who are holding Americans hostage.

When this funding package comes to the floor, I plan to offer several amendments to hold all humanitarian aid to Gaza until each and every American hostage is home and is safe. And we should go further. U.S. and other foreign humanitarian aid should no longer be used as a crutch for Hamas to hold on to power.

The United States shouldn't be giving any money to Gaza until Hamas is no longer the de facto government. For the sake of innocent Israelis, innocent Palestinians, and for the future of peace in the Middle East, we must stop propping up such an evil regime with U.S. aid. It is my hope that the upcoming spending package includes more than just money, but that it demonstrates the strength and wisdom that this moment requires.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes, followed by Senator GRAHAM for up to 5 minutes, prior to the scheduled rollcall votes.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, as elected Members of Congress, our most important obligation is the safety and security of all Americans. Events here at our southern border and across the globe are putting at risk the safety and security of Americans today.

We are appalled by the terrorist attacks Hamas committed against Israel. Those attacks did great harm to the

people of Israel and also to American citizens, some of whom are still being held hostage.

We support Israel's efforts to secure the release of all of the hostages held by Hamas.

That means we also expect the Government of Qatar to do more to bring those hostages safely out of Gaza. I say that because the Government of Qatar hosts the leadership of Hamas. That is where the leadership of Hamas is. I find it remarkable that they are living in Qatar rather than in Gaza. It says a lot; doesn't it? But because they are there, the Government of Qatar is in a position to do a lot more and be helpful in getting these hostages released.

We continue to stand—and we will continue to stand—with Israel as it prepares to remove Hamas from power in Gaza, and that is something they must do for their own safety and really for the safety of many other countries, as well, because Hamas is a terrorist organization dedicated to terror. That means killing indiscriminately, and that is exactly what they have been doing and what they are doing.

We know that this will require the Israeli people to make enormous sacrifices, but that these sacrifices will ultimately bring security to Israel and to the region. More broadly, we know that many Americans, including members of our military, our diplomats, and many civilians in the Middle East, are threatened by violence instigated by Iran.

We owe it to these Americans to provide the protection they need and to deter further violence from Iran. So we must set aside fruitless negotiations with the terror regime in Tehran, increase sanctions, and demonstrate that we will respond forcefully to Iranian-backed violence against our people and our interests.

The threats that Americans face are not confined to the Middle East. Our porous southern border opens the door to threats that can emerge here at home—threats from terrorists—and we need to address that. Instability in the Middle East and other parts of the world make securing our southern border even more urgent.

We must identify who is attempting to enter the United States and stop those who are entering our country illegally. A secure border helps us identify potential threats before they get inside the United States.

Just last week, Customs and Border Protection confirmed that the United States experienced the highest ever monthly encounters at the southern border, nearly 270,000—270,000—in 1 month. And with nearly 2.5 million crossings, fiscal year 2023 has now seen the highest ever annual toll of encounters at the southern border, almost 2.5 million. And, to make matters worse, in fiscal year 2023, a record number of individuals from the terror watchlist—from the terror watchlist—attempted to cross into the United States.

Think about that—from the terror watchlist. DHS admits that this is a

growing threat. Its most recent "Homeland Threat Assessment" found that the Department is seeing annual increases of individuals on the terror watchlist attempting to illegally cross into the United States. Specifically, the report found that "as part of the overall increase in migration, we have also encountered a growing number of individuals in the Terrorist Screening Data Set (TSDS), also known as the 'watchlist.'" Hamas and other violent extremists certainly are aware of this vulnerability.

We know what the solutions are. The Biden administration won't enforce them. Everyone knows what the solutions are: Enforce the "Remain in Mexico" policy, enforce the "safe third country" agreements—we know they work. The last administration proved it. We know they work. But the Biden administration will not enforce them, and they need to. Border security is national security—and finish building the border wall.

As we consider proposals to aid our allies, we must not forget to also secure our own border. Border security is national security. Meaningful border security provisions should be included as part of our efforts to make Americans safer and more secure.

As we stand with Israel—and we must stand with Israel—we must also secure our southern border.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I think Senator HOEVEN is absolutely right. If we don't secure our border, it would be a big mistake.

I just returned from Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt with a 10-person—5 and 5—Senate delegation. So the Senate is working. I am glad we have a Speaker of the House. But we had five Republicans and five Democrats, and here is the takeaway.

This is happening in Israel now because Iran fears reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Building on the Abraham Accords that President Trump was able to achieve, President Biden has been working to try to get Saudi Arabia and Israel to have diplomatic ties and to recognize each other to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. That is a nightmare for Iran. For the region to come together, look forward; go to the light, not the darkness.

Here is what we have to decide as a country. Let's not let Iran win here.

To our Arab allies, to our friends in Turkey, this barbaric attack on Israel by Hamas is beyond what happened in the Holocaust. I have seen the photos. It is so vicious. It is so lacking any humanity.

Does it have a purpose? Yes. They filmed it so Israel had to go in.

The Ayatollah wants Israel to have to take action, hoping the world will turn on Israel, call for a cease-fire, and let time pass so that the moment to reconcile between Saudi Arabia and Israel passes. It is putting pressure on

our allies in Jordan, in Egypt, and in Turkey by saying some pretty provocative things to our Arab allies, to our Turkish friends.

This attack by Hamas against Israel has to be dealt with by the destruction of Hamas. If you are in the region and you are expecting Israel not to go on the ground, that is not going to happen. You cannot destroy Hamas from the air. They are going in on the ground, and they are going to destroy Hamas to the best they can.

The goal then is to have a Palestinian plan that would give hope to the Palestinians who lost all hope and to continue the reconciliation process. As long as Hamas exists, there is no hope for peace.

It was mentioned in Turkey that Hamas is a liberator group. Hamas could care less about the Palestinian people. They want to destroy the Jewish people. If you don't believe me, listen to what they say. They are not trying to achieve a better life for the Palestinian people. They are trying to kill all the Jews. That is their charter, their religious nonsense.

To expect Israel not to go in is unrealistic. They are going to go in, and they are going to have our full support. The goal is to destroy Hamas without destroying the chance for peace.

I see an opportunity here, once Hamas has been dismantled, to bring the region together to get the Palestinian people a better life. The Iranian Ayatollah is the great Satan—not Israel, not the United States. He is a religious Nazi. He wants to purify Islam in his own image. He wants to destroy the Jewish State and come after us. It is a religious theocracy that can't be compromised with.

Here is what I would say we need to do today. Let the Iranians know if there is a second front opened by Hezbollah against Israel—which could be devastating—that we will be going to Iran to fix the problem. If one American soldier is killed by Shiite militia attacks against our forces in Syria and Iraq, we are going to blame the Ayatollah.

I appreciate moving the military force forward—two carrier battle groups—and moving assets into the region. I do not want a war, but I am tired of living this way.

The Ayatollah needs to know that a second front means three fronts—that we are coming after you. We are going to destroy your ability to fund terrorism.

Ninety-three percent of all the money Hamas receives comes from Iran. All of their money comes from their oil industry. They are incredibly exposed to being knocked out of business.

To the Members of the Senate here, we need to tell Iran clearly what happens: If you escalate against America, you escalate against Israel, you will be in the crosshairs of American military response. It is your choice to make.

If you want a war with America, you will lose it. If you continue to try to

throw gasoline on a fire, you are going to regret it. Anything short of a military response being real to the Ayatollah will lead to more bloodshed. So if you want a smaller war, well, let Iran know: You are going to be in a bigger war if you attack Israel or kill an American.

If we don't do that, we are making a huge mistake. I am trying to stand behind the Biden administration. I want to help them reconcile Saudi Arabia and Israel. I appreciate what they have done with the military force posture moving forward, but it needs to be clear to the Iranians: Escalation means an attack on you. And if they believe that, I think we can stop this thing from getting bigger. If they don't believe it, we are going to wake up with a real big war on our hands beyond what we have today.

I have never been more worried about the situation of the world than I am right now. But here is what I am confident of: The Israelis will fight. They may get killed, but they are going down fighting. There will not be a second Holocaust. The Israeli people, through their IDF, will fight anybody who tries to destroy the Jewish people. That is Hamas. They want to kill all the Jews. I can't believe this is being said in 2023. To the world: To get to our friends in Israel, you have to come through us. If you want to destroy all the Jews, you have to come through America. And good luck with that.

I want peace between the Arabs and the Israelis. I want a better life for the Iranian people. I want a better life for the Palestinian people. But you cannot have a better life when the forces of darkness are in control.

Destroy Hamas once and for all. Create a better life for the Palestinian people. Reconcile the Arab-Israeli conflict, and move forward.

God bless our friends in Israel.

AMENDMENT NO. 1237 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Madam President, I call up Senator RUBIO's amendment and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. GRAHAM], for Mr. RUBIO, proposes an amendment numbered 1237 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to implement the final rule regarding energy efficient standards for certain subsidized housing)

At the appropriate place in title II of division C, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to impose updated minimum energy efficiency standards for new housing financed by the Department as part of carrying out the notice entitled "Adoption of Energy Efficiency Standards for New Construction of HUD- and USDA-Financed Housing" (88 Fed. Reg. 31773 (May 18, 2023)).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are now up to 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I wish to speak against this amendment. It would hurt low-income families and saddle them with higher energy costs.

The updates that HUD has proposed are estimated to generate cost savings of almost 35 percent over current standards and to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 2.2 million tons.

That will amount to savings of \$74 million a year or a total of \$1 billion to \$1½ billion over 30 years. Now, that is real money that households, particularly in northern climates like New Hampshire, can use for other needs and millions of tons of carbon dioxide that are kept out of the atmosphere.

The fact is the current standards are outdated; and by law, HUD and USDA are supposed to update their standards within 1 year of industry revisions.

This amendment would prevent them from doing that. It will raise costs. And as Rob Portman and I worked since 2011, energy efficiency is the fastest, cheapest way to deal with our energy needs. We need to vote down this amendment. It is no good.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1237 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on agreeing to amendment No. 1237.

Mr. PAUL. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote or change their vote?

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 267 Leg.]

YEAS—47

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Fischer | Paul |
| Blackburn | Graham | Ricketts |
| Boozman | Grassley | Risch |
| Braun | Hagerty | Romney |
| Britt | Hawley | Rounds |
| Budd | Hoeven | Rubio |
| Capito | Hyde-Smith | Schmitt |
| Cassidy | Johnson | Scott (FL) |
| Collins | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Cornyn | Lankford | Thune |
| Cotton | Lee | Tillis |
| Cramer | Lummis | Tuberville |
| Crapo | Marshall | Vance |
| Cruz | McConnell | Wicker |
| Daines | Moran | Young |
| Ernst | Mullin | |

NAYS—51

| | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Baldwin | Cardin | Fetterman |
| Bennet | Carper | Gillibrand |
| Blumenthal | Casey | Hassan |
| Booker | Coons | Heinrich |
| Brown | Cortez Masto | Hickenlooper |
| Butler | Duckworth | Hirono |
| Cantwell | Durbin | Kaine |

| | | |
|-----------|---------|------------|
| Kelly | Murray | Smith |
| King | Ossoff | Stabenow |
| Klobuchar | Peters | Tester |
| Lujan | Reed | Van Hollen |
| Manchin | Rosen | Warner |
| Markey | Sanders | Warnock |
| Menendez | Schatz | Warren |
| Merkley | Schumer | Welch |
| Murkowski | Shaheen | Whitehouse |
| Murphy | Sinema | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—2

Padilla

Scott (SC)

The amendment (No. 1237) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be up to 6 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1354 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 1354, and I ask that it be reported by number.

The clerk will report by number.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana [Mr. KENNEDY] proposes an amendment numbered 1354 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the availability of funds for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report certain information to the Department of Justice for use by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . **PROHIBITION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO REPORT CERTAIN INFORMATION REGARDING VETERANS.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5502 of title 38, United States Code, in any case arising out of the administration by the Secretary of laws and benefits under such title, to report a person who is deemed mentally incapacitated, mentally incompetent, or to be experiencing an extended loss of consciousness as a person who has been adjudicated as a mental defective under subsection (d)(4) or (g)(4) of section 922 of title 18, United States Code, without the order or finding of a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction that such person is a danger to himself or herself or others.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, before I explain my amendment, I would like to yield 30 seconds to my good friend Senator TESTER.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from Louisiana.

I rise in support of the Kennedy amendment and in support of the Second Amendment rights of veterans in Montana and across this country.

It is not right that a DC bureaucrat at the VA could take away veterans' legal rights to their firearms simply because they need assistance in managing their finances.

A Montana veteran and mental health advocate told me that the VA's longstanding policy to threaten veterans' constitutional rights, who ask

for help in managing their affairs, has been a barrier to veterans receiving help for years. It is time to end it so veterans can reach out for the financial help they need and the mental help they need.

I agree and don't believe someone who has served this country and who needs a fiduciary should have to hire a lawyer and go back to court to get their Second Amendment rights back.

I yield to Senator KENNEDY.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, there are 16 million veterans in our country. Sometimes some of them need help with managing their financial affairs. When they do, they go to the Veterans Health Administration, and the Veterans Health Administration appoints a fiduciary to help that veteran manage his or her financial affairs.

But, under current VA policy, if a veteran who defended this country has to go to the VA and ask for help with managing his or her financial affairs, the VA automatically reports that veteran to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System—we call it NICS—and that veteran loses his firearm. He loses his firearm automatically—no due process, no questions asked. This decision is not being made by a judge; it is being made by a bureaucrat.

All our amendment would do would be to say that the VA, just because you have asked for help with your money, cannot automatically take away your firearm or report you to NICS unless a judge has ruled that that veteran is a danger to himself or to others.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I thought one of the few things that we agreed on with firearms was that people with serious mental illness—people who are judged to be mentally incompetent—shouldn't be able to buy guns. That is what we are talking about here today.

We are not talking about people who just can't balance their checkbooks. We are not talking about people who just need some assistance with their financial affairs. The standard that the VA uses is the standard of mental incompetence. These are veterans who have been judged to be mentally incapacitated. And let me put a finer point on it. One-third of the veterans we are talking about in this category are diagnosed schizophrenics, and this amendment allows for every single one of them to have their gun rights restored.

Some of the most mentally ill people in this Nation—people to whom we owe a duty of care; people who are, frankly, more prone to suicide than the general population—are now going to be able to get their hands on a weapon to kill themselves or others if we pass this. This is a death sentence for scores of deeply mentally ill veterans.

What it does not do is set up some process by which to have a court judge

whether or not they should own a gun. In fact, there is no current cause of action for that to occur. We didn't have to be at this point where our only choice is to restore gun rights even to actively suicidal veterans. We made an offer to sit down and try to work out a compromise—a better appeals process, a mechanism for these veterans to go to court—but that did not happen. That offer was not accepted.

So, instead, we are voting on an amendment that gives gun rights back to every single seriously mentally ill veteran who has been judged to be mentally incompetent, even those who are actively suicidal. That is a death sentence—a death sentence—for thousands of seniors, for thousands of veterans all across this country if this becomes law. This is a terrible idea, and we should defeat it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, with all the respect I can muster, what my colleague said is inaccurate.

Now, I understand this is America; people can believe what they want. There are people who wish we didn't have the Second Amendment. I get that, but we do. And I agree with Senator MURPHY. We both agree on this. CHRIS believes that love is the answer, and I do, too, but I own a handgun just in case. That is my right, and every veteran has that right. We shouldn't take away a person's gun without a judge—not a bureaucrat at the VA—ruling that person to be mentally incompetent.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1354

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 268 Leg.]

YEAS—53

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Grassley | Ricketts |
| Blackburn | Hagerty | Risch |
| Boozman | Hawley | Romney |
| Braun | Hoeven | Rosen |
| Britt | Hyde-Smith | Rounds |
| Budd | Johnson | Rubio |
| Capito | Kennedy | Schmitt |
| Cassidy | King | Scott (FL) |
| Collins | Lankford | Sinema |
| Cornyn | Lee | Sullivan |
| Cotton | Lummis | Tester |
| Cramer | Manchin | Thune |
| Crapo | Marshall | Tillis |
| Cruz | McConnell | Tuberville |
| Daines | Moran | Vance |
| Ernst | Mullin | Wicker |
| Fischer | Murkowski | Young |
| Graham | Paul | |

NAYS—45

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Peters |
| Bennet | Hassan | Reed |
| Blumenthal | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Booker | Hickenlooper | Schatz |
| Brown | Hirono | Schumer |
| Butler | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Cantwell | Kelly | Smith |
| Cardin | Klobuchar | Stabenow |
| Carper | Lujan | Van Hollen |
| Casey | Markey | Warner |
| Coons | Menendez | Warnock |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley | Warren |
| Duckworth | Murphy | Welch |
| Durbin | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Fetterman | Ossoff | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—2

Padilla Scott (SC)

The amendment (No. 1354) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Illinois.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss an urgent need: the confirmation of two pending U.S. attorney nominees.

U.S. attorneys across the United States represent the Department of Justice. They are the leaders we turn to locally to deal with problems beyond local law enforcement's control—problems and challenges from Federal law. Whether we are fighting fentanyl epidemics or we are fighting those who would undermine this country—many who would cheat and steal at the expense of others—we count on professional prosecutors to make those decisions.

We go through a process here where a President will name a potential U.S. attorney. That is not the end of the story. The attorney's name is then submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, and then it goes through a rigorous bipartisan process and investigation of each one of these nominees. Until they clear both sides of the table—Democrats and Republicans—the nominees don't move. Once having been cleared, they are then put up for approval before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Traditionally, that was virtually the end of the story. The name would hit the calendar. The calendar name would be called and approved, and the person would move into action.

Under the previous President, Donald Trump, there was a lot of controversy—political controversy associated with all sorts of issues. So you have to wonder: Out of the 85 U.S. attorney nominees proposed by President Donald Trump, how many of them ran into an obstacle or were stopped on the Senate floor by Democrats for political reasons? The answer: none, not one.

Despite all the controversy of the Trump administration, the feeling was that it was only fair to these men and women, asking to serve our Nation as representatives in the Department of Justice, to give them that chance if they cleared the bipartisan background process. They did. We gave our approval. They served across the Nation.

But, unfortunately, we have come into a new era. U.S. attorneys—law enforcement officers who lead our Nation to prosecute violent criminals and protect our communities from gun traffickers, gun violence, terrorism, and so many other things—are still central to our system of justice.

I have emphasized that the U.S. Attorneys Offices in the Northern District of Ohio—that would be Cleveland—and the Northern District of Illinois—that would be Chicago—undertake important investigations and prosecutions that keep our communities safe.

The State of Ohio, like many others, suffers from the scourge of fentanyl trafficking. We know about this deadly narcotic. It is a killer. It is fourth in the Nation for drug overdose deaths. The U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Ohio oversees the area's response to fatal overdoses from fentanyl through the U.S. Attorney's Heroin and Opioid Task Force. I would guess many Ohioans would want to know why that task force is waiting for Senate-confirmed leadership.

In my home State of Illinois, over the last 2 years, the Chicago Police Department has recovered more than 10,000 firearms—10,000 a year—from various criminal investigations. The U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois is responsible for coordinating the efforts with all the law enforcement agencies in the Chicago Firearms Trafficking Strike Force.

My constituents can't understand why one Senator from another State is blocking the confirmation of one U.S. attorney candidate in Illinois, April Perry, who has been found to be highly qualified, not only by the White House but by a bipartisan investigative committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

April Perry is well-qualified for this job. She would like to be on the job and should have been weeks ago, making it safer to live in my State.

Another point I made before is the irony that the Senator who is blocking these two nominees is considering this a "tough on crime" position. Tough on crime when you refuse to put a person in the role of prosecutor who is supposed to put these criminals behind bars?

When he ran for the Senate, my colleague from Ohio pledged to "fight the criminals—not the cops." That is his quote. He argued that Americans will not be safe if "politicians keep attacking police officers instead of violent criminals."

I just have to tell him his strategy of stopping two leading U.S. attorneys, one in his State and in the State of Illinois, is the best news the criminals have had in a long time.

The same man who pledged to fight the cops now proudly brags that he wants to "grind the Department of Justice to a halt." I am not making that up, and he has not denied it. He said his goal is to "grind the U.S. Department of Justice to a halt."

Listen to this headline from a recent article in Newsmax:

Sen. Vance to Newsmax: Blocking DOJ Nominees Makes AG's Job Harder.

We want to make the Attorney General's job harder when it comes to prosecuting drug criminals? Is that what this is all about?

I said it before, and I will say it again: Senator VANCE needs to read a resolution he proposed in this body earlier this year and take his own advice. He should give law enforcement officers the support and resources they need, rather than trying to score political points by making their jobs harder.

Unlike me, Senator VANCE doesn't need to worry about sounding like a broken record. Each time I come to the floor to ask for unanimous consent, he offers a different explanation for why he is blocking the confirmation of these highly qualified nominees. First, he claimed he was punishing the Justice Department for what he falsely called "unprecedented political prosecution" of former President Trump. As I have pointed out, this is a weak excuse for hamstringing law enforcement, considering the former President has now been indicted 4 separate times on 91 different counts and continues to threaten judges, prosecutors, jurors, and witnesses.

Senator VANCE also previously stated here on the Senate floor—and I quote; it is in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

My objection is not specific to the qualifications or the particular individuals that have been nominated.

He said he wanted to make it clear that it is in reference to both Ms. Lutzko in Ohio and Ms. Perry in Illinois.

In response, I offered the junior Senator from Ohio the opportunity to keep his promise to support law enforcement by allowing us to schedule confirmation votes on these pending U.S. attorneys—exactly what he said he wanted on the Record in the Senate. He looked me in the eye and agreed with me. He released his objection to Ms. Lutzko and Ms. Perry under the condition that we hold rollcall votes on them, which I agreed to.

Seemingly overnight, he decided that he does object to even holding confirmation votes on these nominees. He then claimed that "expecting us to vote on cloture . . . is not too much to ask." I was surprised to hear that. It was a new wrinkle in his argument, considering that, just last month, the junior Senator from Ohio was on the Senate floor attempting to force the Senate to skip a cloture vote on one of his bills.

I look forward to hearing what his new argument may be today. If he is trying to punish those who are in the process of prosecuting the former President of the United States, what is his retribution when it comes to the State of Georgia? We now have so many counts naming the former President for wrongdoing, and we have four

people who have been accused who have pled guilty so far in this process. Does he have a special agenda now when it comes to the State of Georgia to determine whether or not there is going to be some retribution to grind to halt the system of justice in that State?

We have reached the point where it is hard to explain why Senator TUBERVILLE of Alabama is stopping military promotions of deserving women and men who have risked their lives in service to America, and another Republican Senator is stopping ambassadorial positions being filled, and now this Senator has decided we have enough criminal prosecutors in America to take care of crime; we don't need more.

We certainly need these two—and many more—doing a professional job.

So I ask unanimous consent that, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 314 and 315; that there be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided in usual form, on each nomination; that upon the use or yielding back time, the Senate proceed to vote, without intervening action or debate, on the nominations in the order listed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VANCE. Reserving the right to object, with respect to my colleague from Illinois, I heard a number of arguments that I somehow changed my tune. What I would say is I haven't changed my tune. The Senator from Illinois keeps making different arguments, and I keep needing to respond to each one of them.

But to restate my fundamental problem here, I will note that one of the consistent criticisms of my hold on Department of Justice nominees is that this is unprecedented; that when Donald Trump was President, we let these nominees sail through, and now I am holding up these nominations to the Department of Justice. I would counter that what is unprecedented is not the hold policy but the Department of Justice attempting to throw its political opponents in jail.

Now, much is made about the political prosecution of Donald Trump. I think that is unjustified, and it is, frankly, scary in the world's greatest democracy to have the political opposition leader prosecuted by the sitting President. That is pretty weird, not something that happens a whole lot in the United States of America—and thank God for that.

But you don't even need to make it about the current President. You can

run down any number of everyday conservatives, people who have been prosecuted, investigated, harassed by this Department of Justice. It should be enforcing the law. It should leave the politics to this Chamber and to the electoral process.

I will continue to object so long as the Department of Justice conducts its business in a highly politicized way. If Merrick Garland or anyone else is listening, please get back to the business of enforcing the law, get out of politics, and then and only then will I release my hold policy.

Because of that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week in my home area of Chicago, a 6-year-old Palestinian boy answered the door and was stabbed over and over again until he died and then the assailant went into another room and tried to kill his mother. The question is, Is this a hate crime because of his Palestinian origin? Does it deserve an investigation? Does it sound, in America, like this is the sort of thing we want an answer to? Whom would we turn to for that investigation? The U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern District of Illinois.

But the Senator from Ohio—because of his hurt feelings over the indictment of former President Trump by many others—has decided to say, in my region of the country, we will have no U.S. attorney; we will leave the position vacant, not because the person isn't qualified to take it over but because he is hurt and believes he wants to protest over the idea of holding a former President accountable.

Obviously, in his mind, former Presidents are above the law—not in my mind and not in any democracy. I don't know if former President Trump is guilty of any charges. We have a system of laws and law enforcement to reach that conclusion. But in the meantime, whether it is a hate crime in a suburb of Chicago or drug crimes that are claiming lives every single night in every single neighborhood in our Nation, how can we stand here in good conscience and say we want to grind the Department of Justice to a halt?

That is exactly what he said over and over again: grind the Department of Justice to a halt. To prove what? To prove what about this Nation? We deserve the opportunity to be protected by the Agencies of government we have appointed, and the men and women who are willing to sacrifice their time, their skills to serve that purpose and keep us safe deserve better treatment than what is happening on the Senate floor.

I wish I could say this is a unique experience. It has become a pattern: a House of Representatives which goes for 21, 22 days trying to find a leader on the Republican side of the aisle; military appointments, hundreds of them,

men and women, qualified, serving in the military, risking their lives, whose nominations are being held up on the Senate floor by one Republican Senator; the idea that we are holding back the possibility of appointing Ambassadors in parts of the world where war is imminent and underway and could drag the United States into conflict if we are not careful.

To take that position that we want to stop government, whether it is in the Department of Defense and their promotion policy, whether it is in the Department of State and the representatives around the world, or whether it is in the Department of Justice, is shameful.

This is not public service. This is a political errand. I wish it would come to an end soon, and I wish the Senator, who is new to this body, would think twice about whether this is how he wants to write his record in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS AND THE RECORD-SETTING VOLLEYBALL DAY IN NEBRASKA EVENT ON AUGUST 30, 2023

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, on August 30, Nebraska made history. Thousands of spectators streamed into Lincoln's Memorial Stadium for two women's volleyball matches: the first between the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Wayne State College and the second between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Omaha.

On Volleyball Day in Nebraska, we broke a world record. Our Nebraska team set the new record for attendance at a women's sporting event: 92,003 fans. Volleyball Day in Nebraska took months of preparation to pull off, but the University of Nebraska did it successfully. Our Nebraska colleges planned and worked hard in anticipation of this new record. It is a picture of Nebraska. We are a State that is defined by dedication, drive, and—most of all—by community.

Nebraskans showcased that dedication and drive as they came together to get as many people as possible in the stands. And when they got there, they supported and encouraged players and fans alike. Whether the spectators were Husker, Maverick, Lopers, or Wildcat fans, they showed sportsmanship and good will.

In response to Nebraska's exciting new record, we are passing a resolution today that would celebrate women's collegiate athletics in our home State. This resolution will recognize the historic Volleyball Day in Nebraska on a Federal level.

In addition to attendance at a women's sporting event, Volleyball Day in Nebraska broke several other records. The event exceeded the previous at-

tendance record for NCAA women's volleyball. The new women's volleyball record of 92,003 fans in attendance is almost five times more than the old record of 18,755. The August 30 match also exceeded the attendance record for UNL's Memorial Stadium.

Our resolution specifically honors Nebraska's former coach Pat Sullivan, who started the University of Nebraska volleyball program in 1975. It also honors former coach Terry Pettit, who built the volleyball program from 1977 to 1999, and current coach John Cook, who has sustained excellence in this program since the year 2000.

And the team has sustained excellence ever since Volleyball Day in Nebraska. Our UNL women's volleyball team won the battle of the undefeated against Wisconsin this past weekend, and our team is now ranked No. 1. This Senate resolution celebrates a special day for women, for volleyball players, and for all Nebraskans. I am proud to bring well-deserved recognition to this unique accomplishment. As we often say, there is no place like Nebraska.

And I would yield the floor to my colleague from Nebraska, Senator RICKETTS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I am here today to join my senior Senator to celebrate this historic achievement for our State of Nebraska and women's athletics.

Nebraskans, we love our sports. And we are particularly proud of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cornhuskers. Today, I especially want to point out our pride in the UNL women's volleyball program. As my senior Senator just recognized, they are the No. 1 team in the Nation. We have had five national championships in volleyball in the State of Nebraska. It is the third most in the NCAA. That is also as many national championships as we have had for our college football team. The volleyball program has nine former Olympians. The Husker women have also played on the U.S. National Team. In fact, three of them are on that team right now. They are also pioneers in name, image, and likeness.

As my senior Senator pointed out, we just beat the previous No. 1, undefeated University of Wisconsin Badgers on Saturday night in a five-set thriller that lived up to its billing as the match of the century. In 2022, our volleyball team led the Nation with an average attendance of 8,190 fans per game. We have had 314 consecutive sellouts in the regular season. And for the last nine consecutive seasons, we have led the Nation in attendance.

But earlier this year, Nebraskans helped the women's volleyball program reach a new height, a world record. It was Volleyball Day in Nebraska: 92,003 of the best fans in sports jammed into Memorial Stadium to watch four women's volleyball programs highlight their talent. The Wayne State College Wildcats took on the University of Nebraska at Kearney Lopers, and the

Omaha Mavericks took on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cornhuskers. The eyes of the entire world were focused on Memorial Stadium.

Right in my home State of Nebraska, we had the most highly attended women's sporting event in the world ever. As Omaha World-Herald columnist Tom Shatel wrote:

Volleyball Day in Nebraska may be the biggest Title IX statement of all time.

Volleyball Day demonstrated just how much progress we have made in providing equal opportunity to our daughters, granddaughters, and sisters in sports. Title IX was about leveling the playing field for women's athletics. And for over 50 years, it has done just that. And, of course, this is more than just about sports for many of these women. Athletics have been a pathway for scholarships, educational opportunities, and career pathways.

The University of Nebraska also prides itself in instilling life skills into its student athletes. The Huskers Women's Volleyball Program has been filled with remarkable student athletes in the truest sense of the word. They lead the Nation with 40 volleyball Academic All-Americans as part of a nation-leading 351 Academic All-Americans in all sports. They also have three NCAA volleyball Elite 90 award winners.

The players are the stars. But, of course, you can't have a good team without a good coach. The Nebraska women's volleyball program has a great one in Coach John Cook. Coach Cook has been a part of the Nebraska volleyball family for 23 years. During that time, the team has made the NCAA playoffs every single year. Under his eye, the women's volleyball team has won four national championships. And in September of 2022, Coach Cook celebrated his 800th career coaching win.

The Huskers' tagline is: "In our grit, our glory." Volleyball Day in Nebraska and a new world record in attendance at a women's sporting event is the epitome of this motto.

Congratulations to everyone at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln whose grit made Volleyball Day possible and to all the other programs who participated.

I also want to thank vice chancellor and athletic director Trev Alberts and his team for their efforts. Thanks also to Coach Cook and his staff, and most especially, thank you to the women of the University of Nebraska volleyball program. You have given us something very special to be proud of. Truly, there is no place like Nebraska. Nebraska is what America is supposed to be.

And, finally, thank you to the senior Senator from Nebraska for introducing this resolution. I am proud to join you in recognizing this great achievement. I yield back.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I would like to thank my colleague Senator RICKETTS for his great comments

in recognizing the women's volleyball team, the State of Nebraska, and the great people that we have.

Mr. President, and with that, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 428, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 428) recognizing women's collegiate athletics and record-setting Volleyball Day in Nebraska event on August 30, 2023.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. FISCHER. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 428) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

FARM BILL

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about rural communities like my hometown of Clare, MI. It was a great place to grow up. My dad and my grandpa ran the local Oldsmobile dealership on Main Street, and my mom was director of nursing at the local hospital, and my relatives were dairy farmers.

And I saw how hard they worked every single day, rarely taking a day off. In fact, on Thanksgiving or Christmas, they were not there most of the time. They had to run back and milk the cows. So I so appreciated how hard they worked. I had many jobs growing up, but my first real job was at the local Dairy Phil, where I learned the art of filling a cone with soft-serve ice cream.

It wasn't a big town. It still isn't. But there was a real sense of community there. People shopped at local businesses, attended local events, cheered for the local high school sports teams, and rallied around local families when they needed help.

Places like Clare still exist, of course. In fact, in August, I was there to celebrate the Dairy Phil's 70th anniversary. But small towns and rural communities have seen a lot of changes over the years, and not all of them have been good. When I graduated from

high school in 1968, about 1 in 4 people lived in rural communities. Today, only 1 in 7 call rural America home. There are fewer people and a lot fewer farms.

Among other things, trade wars started by the Trump administration helped fuel this consolidation, causing dramatic drops in crop prices and billions in ad hoc inequitable Federal trade assistance payments. As people have left and as our economy has changed, many smalltown Main Streets have a lot more empty storefronts. Other towns have lost their schools, and more than 190 rural hospitals have closed since 2005.

Our small towns and rural communities are under a lot of pressure, and that is something that we all should care about. These communities are important. They are a crucial part of the fabric of our Nation. And I am so proud of the investments we have made over the last few years to strengthen that fabric.

We invested in healthcare and rural hospitals during the pandemic. In the American Rescue Plan, we invested in telehealth to bring healthcare providers to people where they were when they needed healthcare. In fact, telehealth visits by people in rural areas skyrocketed from 9,000 visits in 2019 to more than 830,000 visits in 2020. We invested in keeping critical rural hospitals open, like where my mom worked as a nurse.

We also know that healthcare above the neck is as important as healthcare below the neck. Farmers and ranchers have always been a stoic group, more likely to tough it out than to talk about it. That can make anxiety and depression and other mental health issues worse. In fact, farming is one of the occupations with the highest risk of suicide today.

We took big steps towards getting folks the help they needed by investing in our bipartisan certified community behavioral health clinics. I so appreciate the Presiding Officer's support in that.

There are now more than 500 of these clinics operating across the country, many of them in rural communities. It is the largest investment in behavioral healthcare in our Nation's history.

Our rural communities have also been pummeled by the climate that is changing right before their eyes. Last year, our country saw 18 separate billion-dollar disasters—18—costing 474 Americans their lives and over \$175 billion in damages. This year, we have already seen 24 separate billion-dollar disasters so far. But it doesn't take a billion-dollar disaster to destroy a family farm. Think about the cherry farmer who loses an entire crop when warm weather causes the trees to bloom early only to be wiped out in a cold snap a few weeks later. Or a wheat farmer whose hard work is leveled when a violent summer storm pummels her fields with hail. Or a family who

have to slaughter their entire population of turkeys when their farm is struck by avian flu.

Farming has always been a tough way to make a living. With the climate crisis, it is getting even tougher. That is why it is so important that we invested almost \$20 billion in new funding for voluntary conservation programs to support our farmers and ranchers as they work to mitigate their risks from violent, unpredictable weather events and as they lead in our country's efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we also learned how important high-speed internet is. All of a sudden, the lack of good internet connection meant our kids couldn't make it to class—maybe they would sit in the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant to try to get Wi-Fi. And folks couldn't see a doctor.

It proved the point that I have been making for years that high-speed internet is infrastructure. And I am so proud we came together in a bipartisan way to address this.

In our bipartisan infrastructure law, we invested \$65 billion to help ensure that all Americans, whether they live in a big city or 30 miles from the closest highway—have access to high-speed internet.

We also remember how hard it was to get basic food staples when supply chains broke down during the pandemic. It was even harder in small towns and rural communities. That is why we invested in strengthening food supply chains that build connections between local farmers, communities, and businesses.

Small and regional processing operations also bring jobs back into the community instead of shipping them off to large, consolidated centers hundreds of miles away.

Our food systems should be at the heart of our communities. This is about how we get local products from local farmers and producers onto local tables.

It is also important to note that when we invest in rural America, we are not just investing in the families who live there—which is important to do, of course—but we are investing in all of us because each and every one of us depends on our farmers and local communities.

Why am I saying all this? First of all, we have multiple needs in small towns and rural communities. We have spent the last 2½ years—and I want to thank the Biden administration for investing in so many ways to support our small towns and rural communities. They need it. They need our support.

But right now, we have the opportunity and responsibility to come together to build on those investments, those things that relate to quality of life and economic opportunity. And that is called the farm bill. The farm bill is our next opportunity to truly revitalize rural America.

I am committed to passing a strong, bipartisan farm bill as soon as possible.

This is actually the sixth one that I have been involved in. It is the sixth farm bill that is coming to Congress and the third one that I have been leading.

You know, our committee is unique. We don't just sit at a raised dais facing witnesses. Instead, we sit around a table, much like families do after a long day of work, and we face each other.

That is part of our bipartisan tradition. To get a farm bill done, it needs to be bipartisan. It must pull together the broad coalition of support that has been the cornerstone of this process for decades. Since Ranking Member BOOZMAN and I started working on a bipartisan farm bill in April of 2022, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and its subcommittees have held more than 20 hearings. There has also been countless farm bill listening sessions around the country.

I appreciate so much the community input and the bipartisan work of our committee Members. The success of a farm bill is always based on finding bipartisan solutions to the problems we need to address and bipartisan ways to address funding priorities. In this farm bill, that means protecting our critically needed conservation funding for our farmers, and it means keeping nutrition funding in the nutrition title for our families.

Having said that, I have committed to finding ways to bring additional resources to meet other needs in the farm bill that are so important to producers.

I am very grateful that Leader SCHUMER is committed to find several billion dollars in additional resources through bipartisan offsets outside the farm bill to help us achieve that goal.

I have to tell you, it is almost unheard of, because I remember not that long ago when the Senate leadership was telling us to cut—cut—\$23 billion from the farm bill. So I am grateful for this unified commitment to get this done.

There are a lot of people counting on us to get this done. More than 21 million Americans depend on the food and agriculture industry for their jobs.

In Michigan, that is one out of four people that are in agriculture and the food industry. Another 4.6 million Americans work in the growing biobased manufacturing industry that I think is so exciting.

But the farm bill isn't just about jobs. It isn't just about our economy. The farm bill has three goals in my mind: We want to keep farmers farming; we want to keep families fed; and we want to keep rural communities strong and build on the investments that we have done in the last 2½ years.

The farm bill is the foundation of the farm safety net. During our oversight hearings this year, every single group representing farmers told us that protecting and strengthening crop insurance was their No. 1 priority. They asked for more options to make it more affordable, and I support that.

Crop insurance covers over 130 different crops, large and small, and it is continuing to expand to more crops and regions.

Coming from Michigan where we grow more than 300 different crops, I am proud that I have been known as the specialty crop champion. During my time in the Senate, I have led efforts to expand crop insurance protection, especially for my State's fruit and vegetable growers. I am continuing to work on ways to expand crop insurance for specialty crops and other farmers.

Time and time again, from small producers in Michigan to national groups like the American Farm Bureau, we all hear from farmers across the country that we must protect and enhance crop insurance. I agree. It is the number one risk management tool for farmers.

It can be tailored and evolve to meet the individual needs of farmers. Most importantly, farmers will see the benefits of any changes that we make to crop insurance immediately. Any changes we make to reference prices in the commodity title, for instance, will not have any impact until the fall of 2025, at the earliest. This is why I am currently exploring a proposal that would make crop insurance premiums more affordable on area-based crop insurance plans. No mandates—just new options to support our producers.

The Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs are very important to many of our farmers as well, and we built a solid base in improving those programs in the 2018 Farm Bill.

There is good news here. In 2022, farmers recorded the highest farm income in history, and 2023 is projected to be the seventh highest in the last 21 years.

But we know that farmers have also experienced a lot of challenges and that not everyone has benefited from the recent high prices.

We know input costs have been rising. And though the costs of diesel fuel and fertilizer are declining, we need to ensure farmers have effective tools to address their costs so they can keep farming.

Fortunately, USDA is using its authority to help farmers long-term by supporting the development of lower cost, American-made fertilizer and implementing innovative fertilizer technologies. This will create more jobs, provide more choices for farmers, and make us less reliant on foreign supplies of fertilizer.

In many ways, the farm bill already helps farmers address higher input costs.

The dairy safety net is structured around the difference between the cost of feed and the price of milk. Crop insurance can also expand and adjust to provide similar policies for a broader group of farmers.

There is other good news. In the 2018 farm bill, we were able to improve the PLC program by including what was

called an escalator—an escalator provision that is projected to increase reference prices for most commodities—there are 20 commodities in that commodity title—and most will see a 10 to 15 percent increase by this 2025 crop year under existing law without any changes. So because of this escalator, we are going to see reference prices for many commodities increase by 10 percent to 15 percent by 2025.

I can't claim any credit for this provision. It was a bipartisan idea championed by the former House Republican chairman, Mike Conway, of Texas.

But I know it is important to find other ways to include ARC and PLC for the 22 crops that benefit from this program as well. As we do so, I believe it is important to find the best ways to help all of our farmers, both beginning farmers who are crucial for our future as well as medium- and large-established operations.

But we can't lose sight of the fact that the farm safety net extends far beyond title I, the commodity title, and title XI, the crop insurance title. The "farm" does not need to be put back into the farm bill; it is on every page. The farm safety net is support for research. It is access to affordable credit and loans. It is specialty crop block grants and dairy and sugar programs and disaster assistance and trade. It is protecting the health of our livestock, and it is voluntary conservation programs.

I strongly believe—and I know I have colleagues on both sides of the aisle who agree—that conservation programs are a vital part of risk management for our farmers today. As I said earlier, you don't need to explain to a farmer what the climate crisis is. They see it in their orchards and their pastures and their fields every day. Farmers want to make their operations more resilient in the face of the climate crisis. They want to build healthier soil by keeping carbon in the ground. That is why we are seeing record demand for popular voluntary conservation programs that we have passed, and the good news is we now have more funding to meet their needs.

The farm safety net is also about building markets, and we have received some great news on that front. This week, Secretary Vilsack announced \$2.3 billion in investments from the Commodity Credit Corporation to invest in trade promotion, markets. That is what our farmers are saying are the top two things: crop insurance and markets. They want to be able to trade. So Secretary Vilsack has announced \$2.3 billion to invest in trade promotion and important in-kind international food assistance. It is so critical. This will support American farmers and help people in need around the world.

I very much appreciate Secretary Vilsack's responding to my request, the request I sent with Senator BOOZMAN. I very much appreciate that he responded and said yes to what Senator

BOOZMAN and I had asked. Secretary Vilsack's continued commitment to meet the needs of our agricultural community, as well as his partnership with us to get a bipartisan farm bill done, is so important.

This new CCC funding doubles the amount available for trade promotion for the next 5 years. We never see that, and we are able to do that now. It also creates an opportunity to spread the money out more evenly over 10 years. This would allow us to grow permanent baseline funding for trade promotion programs in this farm bill and in every subsequent farm bill—something that has not happened since 2006.

Our farmers are looking to sell their products across the ocean, but they are also looking to sell their products across the country, across the State, and across the street. When our growers can get their apples on lunch trays at the local elementary school or sell tomatoes to their neighbors at the Saturday morning farmers' market, that puts money in their pockets and keeps our local economy going.

Farm bill trade promotion programs, international food assistance, bioeconomy programs, local foods programs—all of these increase market opportunities for our Nation's farmers to be successful. And we all want farmers to be successful, not just those who are already doing well but those who are new or who are struggling. That is why I am laser-focused on ensuring that the farm bill includes targeted support for beginning farmers, for our organic farmers, and for our BIPOC farmers and urban growers.

While the farm bill is the backbone of the farm safety net, its nutrition programs are the backbone of the family safety net. So we want to make sure that we keep farmers farming, but we want to make sure that we keep families fed as well. I believe that no parent should have to worry about whether or not their child is going to be able to eat, and no American senior should have to go hungry because their food budget simply won't stretch far enough. It would be unconscionable to further cut the modest assistance of \$6 a day that helps millions of Americans put food on the table and make ends meet.

I also reject the premise that we must choose between supporting farmers and supporting families. The needs of farmers and families are interconnected. Farmers benefit when families can afford to buy the food they produce, and the economy benefits as well. In fact, every dollar in SNAP—every dollar in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—generates \$1.50 in economic activity. Someone is buying food. They are going to the grocery store. It is the farmers, the transportation; it is the grocery store. It is one of the quickest ways to create economic opportunity.

Just like the farm safety net, these nutrition programs expand during times of need and contract during

times of plenty. We have already seen participation in SNAP decline as the country continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic—just like the program is designed to do.

Nutrition assistance is also much more than SNAP. It is what we call Double Up Food Bucks, which started in Michigan, with the idea of being able to support families in going to the local farmers' market and buying fresh fruits and vegetables that are more expensive by giving double the value of their SNAP dollar. This has been so successful that we are now expanding it to grocery stores, and it is widely successful across the country.

This is also about the wonderful work of our local food banks. It is getting fresh local foods to children in school. It is ensuring that those same children aren't going hungry in the summer or when school isn't in session.

I am extremely proud that, in December, Senator BOOZMAN and I led the successful effort to establish the first permanent investment in child nutrition in over a decade, which will provide summer meals to 29 million children—29 million children—every summer, and it is providing support for farmers' markets, which strengthen connections between growers and the communities they feed.

So our goal: Keep farmers farming; keep families fed; and then, finally, keep rural communities strong.

A strong farm safety net and a strong family safety net build strong small towns. Every American, no matter where they live, deserves a great quality of life and the chance to be successful. That is why we have put money into high-speed internet. That is why we have supported rural hospitals. That is why we have supported telehealth. That is why, in the last 2½ years, we have invested in rural communities.

The truth is, we need strong small towns. We need thriving rural communities. We need young folks to go off to college and want to come home, work on the farm, start a small business, and raise their families in the communities where they grew up. We need small towns to have strong schools and quality healthcare, high-speed internet, and vibrant Main Streets. We need the Dairy Phil in Clare, where I worked, to teach young people the art of creating the perfect soft-serve ice cream cone and so many other life lessons. We need them to do that for another 70 years.

Getting the farm bill done won't be easy—it never is—but I am committed to doing so. Unfortunately, it looks like this is going to take a little longer than I would like, but it would be irresponsible to allow vital programs and the farm safety net to lapse and revert to Depression-era policy in January. We cannot allow that to happen. And, given the chaos in the House, I know we will need an extension.

But let's be clear: It would be equally irresponsible to take our focus off of a 5-year farm bill that provides stability

and certainty for our farmers and communities. I am laser-focused on delivering a bipartisan farm bill that keeps farmers farming, families fed, and rural communities strong and on getting it done in the coming months. It is critical that we give rural America and agriculture the certainty of a 5-year farm bill.

The unifying principle behind the farm bill is that it is a safety net for farmers and families. When crops fail or when disaster strikes, the farm safety net steps in to provide stability and security. When a pandemic hits or the economy takes a turn for the worse, it is the family safety net that steps in. The farm bill is designed to—and it must—support both.

Senator BOOZMAN and I have a strong working relationship, and we have already accomplished so much together. I know that we can come together with colleagues on both sides of the aisle and agree on a bipartisan farm bill that addresses the important needs of agriculture and rural America. Together, and with the bedrock support of the broad farm bill coalition, everyone, from farmers to climate to nutrition advocates—we can get this done. Communities, farmers, and families are counting on us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ISRAEL

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I wanted to take a few minutes to share my thoughts regarding the horrific situation in Israel and Gaza.

On October 7, Hamas terrorists waged a barbarous attack against Israel, killing over 1,400 innocent men, women, and children. Young people at a music festival were machine-gunned down in cold blood, babies and older people were brutally murdered, and over 200 Israeli and Americans are being held as hostages.

Some people describe the October 7 attack on Israel as equivalent to the 9/11 terrorist attack against the United States. That is wrong. Israel is a small country with under 10 million people. On a per capita basis, the 1,400 Israelis killed by Hamas would be the equivalent of over 40,000 Americans killed if Israel had the same size population as we do—40,000. On 9/11, as everybody recalls, we lost 3,000 people.

Let us be clear. Israel suffered a major attack and has, as do all other countries under similar circumstances, the absolute right to defend itself. But having the right to defend your country against a terrorist attack and a terrorist organization like Hamas does not mean having the right to violate

international law and wage indiscriminate warfare against innocent men, women, and children in Gaza.

The people of Israel have gone through a horrific and traumatic shock. It is understandable that they are furious and want to strike back forcefully. Revenge, however, is not a useful policy. Killing innocent Palestinian women and children in Gaza will not bring back to life the innocent Israeli women and children who have been killed. It will only make a terrible situation even worse and more intractable.

Let us be clear. The Palestinian people today are experiencing nothing less than a humanitarian disaster. Thousands are already dead, including many children—perhaps thousands of children—and far more have been wounded. Hundreds of thousands have been forced out of their homes. These people—deeply impoverished before this war began—now lack food, water, fuel, shelter, medicine, and other basic necessities.

Unbelievably, more than 400,000 Palestinians driven from their homes are now sheltering in densely crowded, U.N.-run schools—400,000 people in U.N.-run schools. Dozens of medical facilities have been damaged and made inoperable, and 35 United Nations aid workers have been killed. The aid trickling into Gaza is just a fraction—a small amount—of what is needed. In a few days, hospitals will run out of fuel, and ventilators and incubators will shut off.

This is a desperate, desperate humanitarian crisis.

I echo Secretary Blinken's call for the immediate release of all hostages and for a humanitarian pause by all parties. A pause is essential for the protection of civilians, as required by the laws of war, as well as for the provision of robust supplies of food, water, and medical aid to address the growing humanitarian catastrophe. I know that Senator MERKLEY and others are working hard to gain support here in the Senate for that position, and I agree with it.

Israel suffered a terrible attack, but the response must be carefully thought through and be carried out in line with international law.

When the United States was attacked on 9/11, we allowed anger and rage to drive our response. This resulted in making grave mistakes in terms of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which cost us thousands of members of the U.S. military and, in fact, the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people in those countries.

Israel has a right to defend itself and go after Hamas, but innocent Palestinians also have a right to life, security, and peace.

Please remember that the last election held in Gaza was in 2006, when a majority of people in Gaza today were not yet born or could not vote. Even then, back in 2006, a minority voted for Hamas. Hamas is an authoritarian or-

ganization that does not necessarily represent a broad swath of the Palestinian people, and we must not conflate all Palestinians with this terrorist organization.

Further and of much concern to me and, I think, many others, Israel is apparently contemplating an invasion and occupation of Gaza. I have very serious concerns about what this could mean in terms of the long-term security of Israel, the well-being of the Palestinian residents of Gaza—half of whom are children—and the hope that peace, security, and justice will at some point come to that region.

In Congress, we will soon be voting and debating a package which includes billions of dollars to Israel above and beyond the \$3.8 billion in military aid the United States sends there every year. The American people have a right to know if that money will be used to defend Israel or whether it will be used for an invasion and occupation.

Israel's proposed invasion will likely bring difficult, street-by-street fighting against entrenched Hamas fighters in a dense urban environment still populated by many civilians. Hamas will continue to use human shields and its extensive tunnel network and will likely resort to insurgent tactics.

As two experts on the subject recently wrote, "The battle will not end when Israel has reoccupied the territory. There is no Palestinian entity that Israel trusts to govern Gaza in Hamas's stead. As a result, a military victory could mean Israel has to administer the territory for the foreseeable future. Israeli officials, in other words, will have to govern an immiserated people who see them as their enemy and who may wage a guerrilla war."

I have serious concerns about what this invasion and potential occupation of Gaza will mean, both in terms of the long-term security of Israel and the well-being of the Palestinian residents of Gaza.

In Congress, as we consider a package including billions of dollars for Israel that could fund this invasion and occupation, we clearly need much more information about Israel's long-term plans and goals, as well as the U.S. Government's assessment of those prospects.

These are some—some—of the questions that need to be answered:

How many innocent men, women, and children will be killed or wounded if Israel engages in an invasion and an occupation?

How many Israeli soldiers will be killed or wounded in an operation of that kind?

How will many hundreds of thousands of civilians receive the food, water, fuel, and medical care they need in the midst of what could be extremely heavy urban warfare in a very densely populated area?

How long will it take to establish military control of Gaza, and what level of insurgent activity is anticipated from that point? In other words,

controlling Gaza is not the end of that process.

How will the success of the operation be measured?

Are there alternative approaches to a ground invasion that would be effective in ensuring Israel's long-term security?

What will this operation mean for the hostages still being held in Gaza?

What political force will administer Gaza after an Israeli operation?

Will the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have been driven from their homes—they have been pushed out of their homes now, no place to go—will they be guaranteed safe return to their homes?

Importantly, what impact will the invasion and occupation of Gaza have on the international community's support for Israel? How will the whole world feel about a powerful nation occupying a very impoverished part of the world?

How will the international community address the ongoing needs in Gaza and the rest of Palestine when the shooting and bombs stop?

What political process will follow this conflict, and what is the desired end-state in Gaza?

These are some of the questions that have to be asked. As Congress considers the administration's emergency funding request, we need answers to these questions.

This is, tragically, the fifth conflict between Israel and Hamas in 15 years—fifth war in 15 years. Clearly, a terrorist organization like Hamas cannot be the answer to the very serious problems facing the people of Gaza.

Just a few months ago, thousands of people defied Hamas's authoritarian rule to protest on the streets of Gaza. They stood up, with great courage, against Hamas's authoritarian rule. Their voices are silenced now, but there can be no long-term solution to this ongoing crisis without a serious effort to address Palestinian demands for peace, legitimate political representation, and a vibrant economy.

I would just mention one fact, and that is, before this war, some 75 percent of the young people were unemployed. So you have, aside from everything else, an economic disaster in Gaza.

In my view, the United States must take a leading role in charting out a future that respects the lives of Palestinians and Israelis alike. We can start by answering the questions laid out above, and I very much look forward to receiving from the administration a briefing, in a classified setting, if necessary, in order for Members of Congress to understand what an occupation and invasion will look like.

We are living in a horrifically difficult moment in the Middle East, and I can understand the outrage that many people in Israel feel in terms of the attack that killed 1,400 of their people, but now is the time, in Israel and in the United States, for us to not allow revenge and rage to dictate our

policy but to really think this issue through.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, we have the opportunity to take a really big step today that the entire country would pause and go: Finally. We have the opportunity to end government shutdowns forever. We will say: That is off the table. We, as a nation, don't do government shutdowns.

Government shutdowns haven't always been in our system as a nation. They really started in the 1980s, and we have had this repetitive cycle of government shutdowns over and over and over again.

The American people and folks in my State in Oklahoma say: How do we make this stop?

Well, this is how we make it stop. Senator HASSAN and I sat down 5 years ago and just said: Everyone wants to stop it, but we have never figured out a way that is a totally nonpartisan way. Let's figure this out. What is a nonpartisan way to end government shutdowns?

So we sat down and worked on some language to try to figure out how to be able to do this. We took input from Members all over this conference on both sides of the aisle. We actually sat down years ago with the Trump administration and worked with their Office of Management and Budget and then have since sat down with the Biden administration, with their Office of Management and Budget, to make sure the process would actually work; that it would actually be effective because we weren't interested in having a messaging bill; we were interested in actually ending government shutdowns—that it would work.

The idea is really very simple. If Congress gets to the end of the fiscal year and the appropriations work is not done by the end of the year, we stay in session 7 days a week. We can't move to any bill other than appropriations until we actually finish appropriations.

If I can just make it just this simple: If we don't finish our classwork, we have to stay after class. That is all it is. In the meantime, the government continues to run at the previous year's levels. That way, Federal workers are held harmless. The American people are held harmless. The pressure is on the people it should be on: us.

Now, I have heard from some folks that this won't work because the House is crazy, and they won't care about staying here 7 days a week because they are crazy. Well, I would respectfully say that House Members, though definitely crazy at times, still love their families, still have responsibilities back in their home district. They also want to be able to get back home. They are not going to stay here 7 days a week forever.

We do have other bills to be able to pass—the National Defense Authoriza-

tion and thousands of other things that we still have to do. So the thought that we would be in continual CRs, both here, House and Senate, 7 days a week and never leave and that we would never do other bills is just not realistic.

I have also heard that if we take away the threat of a government shutdown, we would lose the pressure point to be able to do appropriations. Well, again, respectfully, I disagree. I don't think Federal law enforcement and Border Patrol agents, air traffic controllers, HUD staff, and millions of other Federal workers and their families are leverage. They are not leverage to be able to get appropriations work done. They are families. They are families who just want to serve their neighbors and be able to get a paycheck for it.

Right now—right now—there are thousands of marines, sailors, and airmen who are currently in the Mediterranean on high alert.

They should not have to make contingency plans for their family not to get a paycheck at the end of this month. Right now, in Fort Sill, OK, there are soldiers who are packing equipment to leave and head to the Middle East right now. They should not have to look at their loved ones before they leave and say: In case checks don't get deposited at the end of next month, here is what to do. They should be able to go serve.

So as simple as I can say it, we shouldn't say to them: Maybe we won't have a shutdown or probably we won't have a shutdown. We should say: Definitely, we are not going to have a shutdown. Thank you for serving our country.

That is what we should do. The hardest thing in this body to change is status quo. It is the hardest thing to change. Today, we have an opportunity to change the status quo and to begin the process of ending government shutdowns forever.

I encourage my colleagues to join Senator HASSAN and I and so many other folks from both sides of the aisle to say: Let's take a step forward, and let's actually do our business.

AMENDMENT NO. 1232 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

(Purpose: To provide for a period of continuing appropriations in the event of a lapse in appropriations under the normal appropriations process, and establish procedures and consequences in the event of a failure to enact appropriations.)

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I would like to call up my amendment, amendment No. 1232, and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. LANKFORD] proposes an amendment numbered 1232 to amendment No. 1092.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of September 18, 2023, under "Text of Amendments.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, this amendment would create an automatic CR, which would make it way harder for Congress to actually get its job done and fund our government. It would allow Members, particularly those who are fine with obstructing, to ignore their responsibility to fund our government and deliver for the communities that they represent; it will hurt Agencies and programs people count on by freezing funding levels; it will weaken our ability to deliver funding for Ukraine and Israel, for childcare and so much else; it will allow critical laws to lapse and potentially create chaos on this floor.

Let's be clear. No one wants to avoid a shutdown more than I do. But the way that we avoid a shutdown is by Members of Congress sitting down and working together to prevent one, responsibly, by funding our government, not by abdicating Congress's responsibility to control the powers of the purse and avoiding the hard work of compromise by putting funding on perpetual autopilot.

But I am afraid that is exactly what this amendment would do, and it would create a new, unproven fast-track process, allowing six Senators to completely ignore our committee process, completely ignore regular order, and take over the floor and force the Senate to consider appropriations vehicles of any and all sizes with little or no scrutiny or input.

We need to get our jobs done. We need to pass our appropriations bills. That is what we are working on, not set ourselves on a path to endlessly kick the can down the road. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote no on this amendment.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1232 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on agreeing to amendment No. 1232.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 269 Leg.]

YEAS—56

| | | |
|-----------|---------|----------|
| Barrasso | Cassidy | Daines |
| Blackburn | Collins | Ernst |
| Boozman | Cornyn | Fischer |
| Braun | Cotton | Graham |
| Britt | Cramer | Grassley |
| Budd | Crapo | Hagerty |
| Capito | Cruz | Hassan |

| | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Hawley | Marshall | Schmitt |
| Hoeven | McConnell | Scott (FL) |
| Hyde-Smith | Menendez | Sinema |
| Johnson | Moran | Sullivan |
| Kaine | Mullin | Thune |
| Kelly | Murkowski | Tillis |
| Kennedy | Ricketts | Tuberville |
| King | Risch | Vance |
| Lankford | Romney | Warner |
| Lee | Rosen | Wicker |
| Lummis | Rounds | Young |
| Manchin | Rubio | |

NAYS—42

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Fetterman | Reed |
| Bennet | Gillibrand | Sanders |
| Blumenthal | Heinrich | Schatz |
| Booker | Hickenlooper | Schumer |
| Brown | Hirono | Shaheen |
| Butler | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Cantwell | Lujan | Stabenow |
| Cardin | Markey | Tester |
| Carper | Merkley | Van Hollen |
| Casey | Murphy | Warnock |
| Coons | Murray | Warren |
| Cortez Masto | Ossoff | Welch |
| Duckworth | Paul | Whitehouse |
| Durbin | Peters | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—2

Padilla Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1232) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 3135

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3135) making emergency supplemental appropriations for assistance for the situation in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions: S. Res. 430, S. Res. 431, and S. Res. 432.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

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

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

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 23-70, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Latvia for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$220 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-70

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

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of the Republic of Latvia.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * \$195 million.

Other \$25 million.

Total \$220 million.

Funding Source: National Funds and Foreign Military Financing.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Six (6) M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS)

Twelve (12) M30A2 Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) Alternative Warhead (AW) Pods with Insensitive Munitions Propulsion System (IMPS)

Twelve (12) M31A2 GMLRS Unitary (GMLRS-U) High Explosive Pods with IMPS
Ten (10) M57 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) Pods

Non-MDE: Also included are Reduced Range Practice Rocket (RRPR) Pods; intercom systems to support the HIMARS Launcher; ruggedized laptops; training; training equipment; publications for HIMARS, munitions, and spares; services; other support equipment; and other related elements of program and logistic support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (LG-B-UEL).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: LG-B-PCA.

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

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

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: October 24, 2023.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Latvia-M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems

The Government of the Republic of Latvia has requested to buy six (6) M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS); twelve (12) M30A2 Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) Alternative Warhead (AW) Pods with Insensitive Munitions Propulsion System (IMPS); twelve (12) M31A2 GMLRS Unitary (GMLRS-U) High Explosive Pods with IMPS; and ten (10) M57 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) Pods. Also included are Reduced Range Practice Rocket (RRPR) Pods; intercom systems to support the HIMARS Launcher; ruggedized laptops; training; training equipment; publications for HIMARS, munitions, and spares; services; other support equipment; and other related elements of program and logistic support. The estimated total program cost is \$220 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a NATO Ally that is an important force for political stability and economic progress in Europe.

The proposed sale will improve Latvia's capability to meet current and future threats, and will enhance its interoperability with U.S. and other allied forces. Latvia will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

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

The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin, Grand Prairie, TX. There are no known offset agreements in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require the assignment of two (2) U.S. Government and five (5) contractor representatives to Latvia for a period of one year. Additional U.S. Government or contractor representative travel to Latvia will be required for program management reviews. This travel is expected to occur approximately twice a year or as needed to support equipment fielding and training.

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-70

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

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) is a C-130 transportable wheeled launcher mounted on a 5-ton Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles truck chassis. HIMARS is the modern Army-fielded version of the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) M270 launcher and can fire all of the MLRS Family of Munitions (FOM), including Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) variants and the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). Utilizing the MLRS FOM, the HIMARS can engage targets between 15 and 300 kilometers with GPS-aided precision accuracy.

2. The Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) M31A2 Unitary is the Army's primary munition for units fielding the M142 HIMARS and M270A1 Multiple Launcher Rocket System (MLRS) Launchers. The M31 Unitary is a solid propellant artillery rocket that uses Global Positioning System/Precise Positioning Service (GPS/PPS)-aided inertial guidance enabled by SAASM or M-Code to deliver a single high-explosive blast fragmentation warhead accurately and quickly to targets at ranges from 15-70 kilometers. The rockets are fired from a launch pod container that also serves as the storage and transportation container for the rockets. Each rocket pod holds six (6) total rockets.

3. The M30A2 GMLRS Alternative Warhead shares a greater than 90% commonality with the M31A1 Unitary. The primary difference between the GMLRS-U and GMLRS-AW is the replacement of the Unitary's high explosive warhead with a 200-pound fragmentation warhead of pre-formed tungsten penetrators which is optimized for effectiveness against large-area and imprecisely located targets. The munitions otherwise share a common motor, OPS/PPS-aided inertial guidance enabled by SAASM or M-Code, control system, fusing mechanism, multi-option height of burst capability, and effective range of 15-70km.

4. The M57 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS)—Unitary is a conventional, semi-ballistic missile that utilizes a 500-pound high explosive warhead. It has an effective range of between 70 and 300 kilometers, and has increased lethality and accuracy over previous versions of the ATACMS due to a GPS/Precise Position System (PPS) aided navigation system.

5. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

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

7. A determination has been made that Latvia can provide the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

8. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to Latvia.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act

requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

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

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 23-68, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Japan for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$74.6 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-68

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

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$71.6 million.

Other \$3.0 million.

Total \$74.6 million.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Up to sixty-three (63) Rolling Airframe Missiles (RAM) Block 2B Tactical Missiles, RIM 116E.

Non-MDE: Also included are RAM Guided Missile Round Pack Tri-Pack shipping and storage containers; training equipment; operator manuals and technical documentation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering; technical and logistics support services; support for establishment of an Intermediate Level Maintenance Facility (ILMF); and other related elements of logistics and program support.

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

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: JA-P-AUF, JA-P-AUN.

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

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

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: October 24, 2023.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Japan—Rolling Airframe Missiles (RAM)
Block 2B Tactical Missiles

The Government of Japan has requested to buy up to sixty-three (63) Rolling Airframe Missiles (RAM) Block 2B Tactical Missiles, RIM-116E. Also included are RAM Guided Missile Round Pack Tri-Pack shipping and storage containers; training equipment; operator manuals and technical documentation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering; technical and logistic support services; support for establishment of an Intermediate Level Maintenance Facility (ILMF); and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$74.6 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a major ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific region.

The proposed sale will improve Japan's capability to meet current and future threats by providing significantly enhanced self-defense for surface units defending/transiting/patrolling critical air and sea lines of communication.

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

The principal contractor will be Raytheon Missiles and Defense Company, Tucson, AZ. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Japan.

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-68

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

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The RIM-116E Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) is an autonomous, lightweight, supersonic, surface-to-air tactical missile for ship self-defense against current and evolving anti-ship cruise missile threats. Advanced technology in the RIM-116E includes dual-mode (radio frequency/infrared) (RF/IR) guidance with IR all-the-way capability for non-emitting threats.

2. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is CONFIDENTIAL.

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

4. A determination has been made that Japan can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Government of Japan.

TRIBUTE TO MICHIGAN'S
VETERANS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to salute the people of

Michigan past and present who have served in our Armed Forces and to honor their families.

There are few actions as selfless as serving in our military. When our Nation called, these brave Michiganders stood up. They were willing to be sent anywhere—at any time—in order to protect our Nation, our people, and our values. Some of them never came home. Others came home, but were never quite the same. And many continue to serve their communities long after their military commitment is fulfilled: a U.S. Marine veteran from Holland who walks across the State each year to raise awareness of mental health issues and to highlight organizations that serve veterans; an Air Force veteran in Mid-Michigan who shares her own painful story about trying to fit in to help support other historically excluded veterans; an Upper Peninsula veteran who has spent decades coaching and mentoring young people through youth sports.

These veterans have our backs. It is crucial that we have theirs, too. That is why I was so pleased when President Biden signed the bipartisan PACT Act into law last year. This law helps ensure that veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, burn pits, and other toxic substances during their service receive the healthcare and benefits they have earned.

One year later, the Department of Veterans Affairs has received more than 780,000 disability claims under the PACT Act and approved more than 348,000. And more than 111,000 veterans have enrolled in VA healthcare, including nearly 10,000 in Michigan. These 10,000 Michigan veterans served honorably and bravely. Sadly, they have paid a price for that service. And just as they were there for us in our Nation's time of need, now we can be with them in theirs.

Whether it is healthcare, education, a chance at a good job, or military recognition, veterans should not stand at the back of the line for anything. That is what my dad—a World War II veteran—taught me, and I have spent my time in public service ensuring that we keep our promises to our veterans. The PACT Act is one more promise kept.

On this Veterans Day and every day, I salute everyone who has served in our military and their families. I thank them for their service, their sacrifice, and their deep dedication to our Nation. Every day, they show us what patriotism is all about.

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY
FEDERATION

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today, along with my colleague TIM SCOTT of South Carolina, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the National Wild Turkey Federation and to recognize the organization's significant contributions to research, habitat conservation, as well as its promotion and protection of the long-honored outdoor traditions of the United States.

The National Wild Turkey Federation was incorporated on March 28, 1973, with the aim of bringing together State, Federal, and nongovernmental partners to promote the conservation of wild turkeys. Edgefield, SC, is proud to house the organization's national headquarters, and both the State and Nation continue to benefit from their stewardship.

Since 1985, the National Wild Turkey Federation, its members, and chapters have invested more than \$500,000,000 to conserve or enhance more than 22,000,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat, forests, and grasslands, as well as more than \$8,500,000 in research to ensure a healthy wild turkey population. In addition, the organization is a long-standing Stewardship partner with the U.S. Forest Service and is heavily engaged in the development and implementation of the Department of Agriculture's Wildfire Crisis Strategy. These efforts have played a significant role in one of the greatest conservation success stories in the United States: the return of the wild turkey from the brink of extinction.

I ask that you and our colleagues join me in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the National Wild Turkey Federation and wish the organization and its members continued success in fulfilling their mission.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:55 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 810, resolving that a message be sent to the Senate to inform that body that MIKE JOHNSON, a Representative from the State of Louisiana, has been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 3135. A bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for assistance for the situation in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2607. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Import Regulations for Horses" ((RIN0579-AE62) (Docket No. APHIS-2016-0033)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 12, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2608. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense,

transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Privacy Act of 1974; Implementation (CIG-16, Inspector General Administrative Investigation Records (IGAIR))” (RIN0790-AL62) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2023; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2609. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Limitation on Certain Institutes of Higher Education” (RIN0790-AL41) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 12, 2023; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2610. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an inventory summary of certain required activities performed during the preceding fiscal year pursuant to staff augmentation contracts for services for on behalf of the Department; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2611. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a certification that the export of the listed items to the People’s Republic of China is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2612. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Modernization of Beneficial Ownership Reporting” (RIN3235-AM93) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2023; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2613. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a legislative proposal relative to providing appropriations to carry out agreements related to the Compacts of free Association between the Government of the United States of America and the government of the three freely associated states; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-2614. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Dedicated Purpose Pool Pump Motors” (RIN1904-AF27) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 12, 2023; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-2615. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Commercial Water Heating Equipment” (RIN1904-AD34) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2023; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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-77. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alaska urging the United States Secretary of Commerce, the

National Marine Fisheries Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and other federal and state agencies to defend the state’s fisheries, including the Southeast Alaska troll fishery; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5

Whereas commercial fishing is a mainstay of the state’s economy and the largest private sector employer in the state; and

Whereas, in Southeast Alaska alone, the seafood industry directly employed 11,300 workers and provided \$653,000,000 in total economic output in 2019; and

Whereas the troll fleet is one of the largest fleets in the state and the largest fleet in Southeast Alaska, and, in 2019, approximately 1,450 fishers earned income directly from the fishery; and

Whereas state residents comprise 85 percent of the state’s commercial troll permit holders, making it the highest level of local ownership of any major fishery in the state; and

Whereas commercial salmon trolling contributes to the economy of Southeast Alaska year-round, with winter, spring, and summer troll seasons sustaining employment in fishing, seafood processing, and fisheries-related industries; and

Whereas, when accounting for multiplier effects of the fishing, seafood processing, and fisheries-related industries, commercial trolling is one of the three most valuable commercial fisheries in Southeast Alaska and has a total annual economic impact of approximately \$85,000,000, as measured in terms of total output; and

Whereas, as compared to the costs of entry to other state fisheries, the affordability of the troll fishery provides an entry level opportunity for new commercial fishers, and, as a result, there are troll fishery permit holders in nearly all 33 communities in Southeast Alaska, all of which will suffer if the Southeast Alaska chinook troll fishery is closed; and

Whereas the Wild Fish Conservancy filed a lawsuit against the United States Secretary of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service alleging that the Southeast Alaska chinook troll fishery authorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service is contributing to the extinction of an endangered population of southern resident killer whales; and

Whereas only two to three percent of the total Alaska catch is from the Puget Sound chinook salmon and lower Columbia River fall stocks, which constitute the most important stocks for southern resident killer whales, and the Alaska fishery catch is only a small portion of those stocks’ runs; and

Whereas numerous studies have identified habitat loss and industrial activities in Puget Sound as factors negatively affecting southern resident killer whales; and

Whereas, while the population of southern resident killer whales has struggled, most of the northern and Alaska resident killer whale populations have at least doubled over the last 40 years; and

Whereas the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit has the potential to result in the closure of the Southeast Alaska troll fishery, despite the improbability of the closure resulting in meaningful benefits to southern resident killer whales; and

Whereas, if successful, the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit could affect other state fisheries by rescinding the state’s delegated authority to manage and implement salmon fisheries in state water and in the exclusive economic zone off the shores of the state, requiring changes in the allocation of salmon under the Pacific Salmon Treaty and implementing new restrictions and closures in the state’s fisheries; and be it further

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature urges the National Marine Fisheries Service to find a way to hold the Southeast Alaska troll fishery harmless and prioritize preparation of the necessary documents and processes to support the continuation of the Southeast Alaska winter and summer troll fisheries while the National Marine Fisheries Service prepares a new biological opinion; and be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature urges the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to commit the necessary resources to effectively defend the state’s fisheries in present and future lawsuits, including the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit; and be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature urges the state to work with the Alaska Congressional delegation to keep the Southeast Alaska troll fishery open should the court adopt the magistrate judge’s recommendation that the troll fishery be closed.

Copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Gina Raimondo, United States Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D., United States Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator; Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the Honorable Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

POM-78. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alaska disapproving the proposed rule by the National Park Service limiting non-subsistence hunting methods and urging the National Park Service to withdraw the rule; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

Whereas the United States Supreme Court has long interpreted the United States Constitution to provide state primacy in wildlife management; and

Whereas art. VIII, sec. 4, Constitution of the State of Alaska, provides for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife, including the maintenance of healthy predator populations; and

Whereas federal law recognizes the state’s authority to manage wildlife, including the Alaska Statehood Act and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act; and

Whereas the state has managed wildlife on both state and federal land in Alaska since the United States Department of the Interior granted the state management authority in 1959; and

Whereas the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act established each of the national preserves in the state as National Park Service land that would remain open to hunting and trapping under state management; and

Whereas the National Park Service proposed a rule to amend its regulations for non-subsistence hunting and trapping in national preserves that would prohibit certain hunting practices that have been approved by the Alaska Board of Game following a public process with significant input from biologists, local residents, and other stakeholders; and

Whereas, ignoring the state’s objection, the National Park Service has labeled certain hunting practices as predator control or

predator reduction actions and has prohibited that predator control or predator reduction in national preserves; and

Whereas, as a result, the ability of state residents to hunt bears, wolves, and even caribou is limited, without biological basis and with contrary evidence from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, which shows that those practices do not pose conservation, public safety, or public administration concerns; and

Whereas the proposed National Park Service rule would limit the ability of state residents to engage in traditional hunting practices; and

Whereas the proposed National Park Service rule is contrary to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and the Alaska Statehood Act; and

Whereas the proposed National Park Service rule is an overreach of federal authority and would inappropriately limit the state's authority to manage wildlife on national preserves; be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature disapproves of the proposed National Park Service rule; and be it further

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the National Park Service to withdraw the proposed rule without adoption and to affirm the mandates within its 2020 national preserves rule in any new rule that is prepared in response to court order; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution is the policy of the Alaska State Legislature until it is withdrawn or modified by another resolution.

Copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Deb Haaland, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Charles F. Sams III, Director, National Park Service; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

POM-79. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alaska supporting oil and gas leasing and development within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and urging President Biden and the United States Department of the Interior to approve the Willow Master Development Plan; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, in 1923, President Warren G. Harding issued an Executive Order establishing Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 on the North Slope region to provide a potential supply of oil for the United States Navy; and

Whereas 42 U.S.C. 6501 (Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976) redesignated Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 as the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and transferred responsibility for its administration to the Secretary of the Interior; and

Whereas the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska encompasses 23,500,000 acres, with boundaries extending south from Icy Cape to the drainage divide of the Brooks Range, then following the divide eastward to 156 degrees west longitude, then north to the Colville River, and following the Colville River downstream to its mouth; and

Whereas the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska falls entirely within the boundary of the North Slope Borough and includes the communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Nuiqsut, Utqiagvik, and Wainwright; and

Whereas, in 2017, the United States Geological Survey estimated there to be 8,700,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil and 25,000,000,000 cubic feet of recoverable gas reserves in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska; and

Whereas the 2020 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement estimates potential annual government revenue, including local, state, and federal taxes and royalties, of \$730,000,000 to \$4,750,000,000 from oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska; and

Whereas the 2020 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement estimates that the exploration, development, and production of oil and gas in the reserve could generate 3,600 direct jobs and 2,750 indirect jobs annually over a period of 30 years; and

Whereas the Willow oil and gas prospect, known as the Willow project, is located in the Bear Tooth Unit of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and would be the farthest-west producing field on the North Slope; and

Whereas the Willow project would tap into reserves of an estimated 600,000,000 barrels of oil and, at peak production, produce 180,000 barrels a day; and

Whereas the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Willow Master Development Plan was developed over multiple years through a rigorous process with significant involvement by and support from local communities and Alaska Native entities and was specifically designed to protect surface values and the Inupiat way of life; and

Whereas, on February 1, 2023, the United States Department of the Interior released its Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Willow project, which demonstrates that the project is legally sufficient and environmentally sound; and

Whereas the Inupiat people are the long-standing stewards of the land on which the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska sits, and take seriously the need for careful and balanced stewardship; and

Whereas the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, the North Slope Borough, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Alaska Native Village Corporation Association, the ANCSA Regional Association, the City of Utqiagvik, the City of Wainwright, the City of Atkasuk, and the Kuukpik Corporation are all united in support of the Willow project; and

Whereas the Willow project has received the support of labor unions and trade groups, including the Alaska Petroleum Joint Crafts Council, the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, the Alaska AFL-CIO, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers' International Union of North America, the National Association of Manufacturers, the North America's Building Trades Unions, and the Alaska Chamber of Commerce; and

Whereas Representative Mary Peltola, Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Senator Dan Sullivan, the Alaska delegation in Congress, unanimously support approval of the Willow project; and

Whereas state royalties from oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska are allocated to the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Impact Mitigation Fund, which is used to provide the local communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Nuiqsut, Wainwright, Utqiagvik, and the North Slope Borough with grants to mitigate impacts related to oil and gas development; and

Whereas oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska would

strengthen national security and provide long-lasting benefits to the national economy by creating thousands of jobs nationwide, generating billions of dollars in government revenue, providing affordable energy to American consumers, and decreasing dependence on foreign energy; and

Whereas resource development in the state has benefited rural communities by bringing family-supporting jobs and wages, increased educational opportunities, safe water and wastewater facilities, and expanded health care services to those communities; and

Whereas, because of resource development, compared with the national average, rural areas of the state experienced greater increases in life expectancy between 1980 and 2014 in locations where resource development activities, including oil and gas development, mining, and fisheries operations, have occurred; and

Whereas safe and responsible oil and gas exploration, development, and production has been demonstrated by over 50 years of activity on the North Slope region without adverse effects on the environment or wildlife populations; and

Whereas the state's leadership in the nation's energy future includes robust support for the development and implementation of renewable energy systems and sources to ensure that cost-effective energy and power are provided to communities and individuals in the state; and

Whereas responsible resource development today equips communities in the state to make investments in technology and infrastructure to support the use of renewable sources of energy and power; and

Whereas the Willow project is an important part of a diverse energy future for the state and the nation; be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, to maximize the area available for oil and gas leasing and development within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska while conserving and protecting valued fish, wildlife, subsistence, and cultural resources; and be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature urges President Biden and the United States Department of the Interior to move forward with final approval of the Willow project by selecting the preferred Alternative E plan, which allows three drill sites, the minimum for the project to remain economically viable; and be it

Resolved, That a further delay in approval or construction of the Willow project undermines the values and benefits of the project to the state and its residents and the nation, and is not in the public interest; and be it

Resolved, That the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, when considering management activities related to the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, to take into account the long history of safe and responsible oil and gas development on the North Slope region and the enormous benefits that development of oil and gas resources in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska would bring to local communities, tribal governments, the state, and the nation.

Copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Deb Haaland, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning, Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior; Steve Cohn, Alaska State Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and

the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mrs. MURRAY, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled "Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals for Fiscal Year 2024" (Rept. No. 118-108).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CARDIN for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Herro Mustafa Garg, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Nominee: Herro Mustafa Garg.

Post: Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount:

1. Self: None.
2. Spouse: Ravneesh Garg: None.

Richard H. Riley IV, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Nominee: Richard H. Riley IV.

Post: Federal Republic of Somalia.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, donee:

- Self: None.
Spouse: None.

Mark Toner, of Pennsylvania, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Liberia.

Nominee: Mark Christopher Toner.

Post: Liberia.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None, N/A, N/A.
2. Spouse: \$250, 09/02/2020, Biden Victory Fund.

Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Israel.

Nominee: Jacob J Lew.

Post: Ambassador to Israel.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

Elissa Slotkin for Congress, \$1000, April 2018, Biden for President, \$2800, October 2019, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, \$1000, February 2020, Khazei for Congress, \$1000, February 2020, Biden for President, \$2800, July 2020, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, \$1500, January 2020, Self.

Biden for President, \$2800, July 2020, Biden for President, \$2800, July 2020, Spouse.

David E. White, Jr., of New York, to be Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

Paul K. Martin, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, United States Agency for International Development.

Mr. CARDIN, Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Andrew Edlefsen and ending with Christopher Wilken, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 13, 2023.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Olutayo O. Akingbe and ending with Kathy W. Yao, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 30, 2023.

By Mr. SANDERS for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

*Monica M. Bertagnolli, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health.

*Charlotte A. Burrows, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2028.

*Amanda Wood Laihow, of Maine, to be a Member of Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2029.

*Erika L. McEntarfer, of the District of Columbia, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, for a term of four years.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 3121. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to improve provisions relating to dyslexia, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 3122. A bill to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to provide for the denial of certain applications for solar or wind energy development projects right-of-way applications; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 3123. A bill to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 3124. A bill to expand and improve the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program to ensure legal assistance is provided for survivors in proceedings related to domestic violence and sexual assault, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 3125. A bill to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 3126. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish or replace a headstone, marker, or medallion for the grave of an eligible Medal of Honor recipient regardless of the recipient's dates of service in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 3127. A bill to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to reduce the production and use of certain single-use plastic products and packaging, to improve the responsibility of producers in the design, collection, reuse, recycling, and disposal of consumer products and packaging, to prevent pollution from consumer products and packaging from entering into animal and human food chains and waterways, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 3128. A bill to streamline the reporting of violations against immigrant children in Federal custody, to provide protections for unaccompanied immigrant children, and to ensure safe release to sponsors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 3129. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 3130. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to improve the recruitment and retention of employees in the Indian Health Service, restore accountability in the Indian Health Service, improve health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. CARPER):

S. 3131. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to expand and clarify the exclusion for orphan drugs under the Drug Price Negotiation Program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 3132. A bill to require regular reporting to Congress on individuals encountered along a border of the United States or a port of entry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 3133. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to authorize the Reentry Employment Opportunities Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 3134. A bill to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, to amend the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 to include the city of North Las Vegas, Nevada, and the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, to clarify the authority of the Department of Defense to conduct certain military activities at the Nevada Test and Training Range, to designate the Southern Paiute Wilderness in the State of Nevada, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Mr. VANCE, Mr. LEE, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 3135. A bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for assistance for the situation in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KING, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 427. A resolution calling on Congress, schools, and State and local educational agencies to recognize the significant educational implications of dyslexia that must be addressed, and designating October 2023 as "National Dyslexia Awareness Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. Res. 428. A resolution recognizing women's collegiate athletics and the record-setting Volleyball Day in Nebraska event on August 30, 2023; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. Res. 429. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate in support of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) nuclear security role; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. KING):

S. Res. 430. A resolution designating October 20, 2023, as "National Early Childhood Literacy Awareness Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RISCH, Ms. HIRONO, Ms.

COLLINS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. BRITT, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BUDD, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WARNER, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Ms. BUTLER):

S. Res. 431. A resolution recognizing the month of October 2023 as "National Women's Small Business Month"; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 432. A resolution recognizing the fifth commemoration of the antisemitic attack that occurred on October 27, 2018, at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 26

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 26, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the amendments made to reporting of third party network transactions by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

S. 135

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 135, a bill to provide for a period of continuing appropriations in the event of a lapse in appropriations under the normal appropriations process, and establish procedures and consequences in the event of a failure to enact appropriations.

S. 348

At the request of Mrs. BRITT, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 348, a bill to require asylum officers at the United States embassies and consulates to conduct credible fear screenings before aliens seeking asylum may be permitted to enter the United States to apply for asylum, and for other purposes.

S. 509

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 509, a bill to provide resources for United States nationals unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad, and for other purposes.

S. 557

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to prohibit certain practices relating to certain com-

modity promotion programs, to require greater transparency by those programs, and for other purposes.

S. 653

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 653, a bill to lift the trade embargo to Cuba.

S. 838

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 838, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to mental health services under the Medicare program.

S. 1258

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1258, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on projects that are over budget and behind schedule, and for other purposes.

S. 1332

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1332, a bill to require the Office of Management and Budget to revise the Standard Occupational Classification system to establish a separate code for direct support professionals, and for other purposes.

S. 1351

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1351, a bill to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes.

S. 1384

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 1384, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 1426

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1426, a bill to improve the identification and support of children and families who experience trauma.

S. 1544

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1544, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure equitable payment for, and preserve Medicare beneficiary access to, diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals under the Medicare hospital outpatient prospective payment system.

S. 1613

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1613, a bill to amend the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to reauthorize the feral swine eradication and control pilot program, and for other purposes.

S. 1753

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1753, a bill to amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to allow individuals with drug offenses to receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 1761

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1761, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the exception for de minimis payments by third party settlement organizations.

S. 1963

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1963, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to ensure College for All.

S. 2460

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2460, a bill to amend the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to clarify the availability and appropriateness of training for local food service personnel, and for other purposes.

S. 2598

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2598, a bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to modify whole farm revenue protection, and for other purposes.

S. 2874

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2874, a bill to provide fresh produce to individuals facing food and nutrition insecurity, and for other purposes.

S. 2926

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2926, a bill to prohibit the importation, sale, manufacture, transfer, or possession of .50 caliber rifles, and for other purposes.

S. 3049

At the request of Mr. MORAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 3049, a bill to freeze \$6,000,000,000 of Iranian funds held in Qatar, and for other purposes.

S. 3078

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 3078, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit institutions of higher education that authorize Anti-Semitic events on campus from participating in the student loan and grant programs under title IV of such Act.

S. 3105

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3105, a bill to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. CON. RES. 22

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 22, a concurrent resolution expressing support for the Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family and urging that the United States rejoin this historic declaration.

S. RES. 380

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 380, a resolution designating the week of October 1, 2023, through October 7, 2023, as "Religious Education Week" to celebrate religious education in the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 3125. A bill to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise to join my colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois and chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator DURBIN, in introducing the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2023. This bill would update and reauthorize Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, which have provided lifesaving services and housing for America's homeless youth for nearly half a century.

Homelessness is affecting youth in truly staggering numbers. According to the National Network for Youth, an estimated 4.2 million young people experience homelessness at some point each year. Some of these youth may be away from home for a few nights, while others have been living on the streets for years. No area of this country is immune from the scourge of homelessness, as it affects rural and urban communities alike.

Tragically, runaway and homeless youth are at high risk of victimization, abuse, criminal activity, and even death. This population is at greater risk of suicide, unintended pregnancy, and substance abuse. Many are unable to continue with school and are more

likely to enter our juvenile criminal justice system. The reality is that available data likely underestimate the scale and consequences of this problem.

I have met with teachers, social workers, and others from Maine who work directly with young people experiencing homelessness, and I have talked with homeless teens to learn from their experiences. We talked about the pressure that student homelessness places on teachers, school administrators and their already strapped resources, and—most important—the homeless students themselves. I have also visited New Beginnings in Lewiston, ME, where I saw firsthand how Runaway and Homeless Youth Act resources are providing essential safety nets for young people in need. The staff at New Beginnings provides a safe place, helps young people with case management, facilitates referrals to State and local agencies, assists with housing needs and access to shelter, and connects individuals to local educational and employment programs.

Several years ago, as the chair of the Senate Transportation and Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, I held a hearing that featured testimony from Brittany Dixon, a former homeless youth from Auburn, ME who gave powerful testimony on her personal experience with homelessness. After becoming homeless, Brittany was connected with New Beginnings. In her testimony, she said, "New Beginnings provided many resources I could use to succeed, including assistance with college applications and financial aid . . . New Beginnings has helped me to develop critical life skills and to become self-sufficient . . . Programs that support homeless youth are important to so many young people like me," she added. "It gives young people the chance to have a safe place to stay while they get their footing and figure out what they want to do in their lives."

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs helped make Brittany's success story possible. Sadly, however, there are still many homeless youth who do not have the support they need. We must build on our past efforts because homeless youth should have the same opportunities to succeed as their peers.

The three existing Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs—the Basic Center Program, the Street Outreach Program, and the Transitional Living Program—help community-based organizations reach young people when they need support the most. These programs help runaway and homeless youth avoid the juvenile justice system, and early intervention can help them escape victimization and trafficking.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act would reauthorize and strengthen these programs that help homeless youth meet

their immediate needs, and it would help secure long-term residential services for those who cannot be safely reunited with their families. Our legislation would also create a new program—the Prevention Services Program—designed to help prevent youth from becoming homeless in the first instance. Moreover, our bill supports wraparound services for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act will support those young people who run away, are forced out of their homes, or are disconnected from their families. A caring and safe place to sleep, eat, grow, study, and develop is critical for all young people. The programs reauthorized and modernized through this legislation help extend those basic services to the most vulnerable youth in our communities.

I thank Senator DURBIN for his leadership on this bill and urge my colleagues to support it.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 3128. A bill to streamline the reporting of violations against immigrant children in Federal custody, to provide protections for unaccompanied immigrant children, and to ensure safe release to sponsors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 3128

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Unaccompanied Children Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—STREAMLINING REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS AGAINST IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN FEDERAL CUSTODY

Sec. 101. Definitions.

Sec. 102. Office of the Ombudsperson for Immigrant Children in Federal Custody.

Sec. 103. Data collection.

Sec. 104. Expert advisory committee.

Sec. 105. Coordination with Department of Homeland Security.

Sec. 106. Rule of construction.

TITLE II—PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Subtitle A—Unaccompanied Alien Children in Immigration Proceedings

Sec. 201. Legal representation in removal proceedings.

Sec. 202. Motions to reopen.

Subtitle B—Access to Services

Sec. 211. Clarification of unaccompanied child determination procedures.

Sec. 212. Improving access to post-release services.

Sec. 213. State-level coordinators for unaccompanied children’s services.

Sec. 214. Assistance for children and families separated under zero tolerance.

Subtitle C—Facilities Housing Unaccompanied Alien Children

Sec. 221. Technical assistance for community-based care providers.

Sec. 222. Standards and compliance.

Subtitle D—Child Welfare at the Border and Prevention of Family Separation

Sec. 231. Child welfare training at the border.

Sec. 232. Preventing family separation of unaccompanied children.

TITLE III—ENSURING SAFE RELEASE TO SPONSORS

Sec. 301. Ensuring safe release to sponsors who are not parents or legal guardians.

Sec. 302. Expansion and evaluation of home studies.

Sec. 303. Requirements for child and sponsor case management system.

TITLE IV—PROTECTIONS AND ACCESS TO CERTAIN SERVICES FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILES AND OTHER VULNERABLE IMMIGRANTS

Sec. 401. Eliminating annual employment-based visa caps for special immigrant juveniles.

Sec. 402. Elimination of annual numerical limitation on U visas.

Sec. 403. Access to Medicaid for certain children granted status.

TITLE V—STOPPING CHILD LABOR TRAFFICKING

Sec. 501. Victims of serious labor and employment violations or crime.

Sec. 502. Labor enforcement actions.

TITLE VI—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 601. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 602. Supplemental appropriation.

TITLE I—STREAMLINING REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS AGAINST IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN FEDERAL CUSTODY

SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) COMMITTEE.—The term “Committee” means the expert advisory committee established under section 104(a).

(2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

(3) FACILITY.—The term “facility”—

(A) means a location at which 1 or more immigrant children are detained by the Government or held in Government custody; and

(B) includes—

(i) an Office of Refugee Resettlement facility; and

(ii) a Department of Homeland Security facility, including—

(I) a U.S. Customs and Border Protection temporary holding facility and transportation contractor;

(II) a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement family detention facility;

(III) a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement juvenile facility;

(IV) a location operated by a private entity, including a hotel room; and

(V) any other location at which the Department of Homeland Security detains or holds in custody an immigrant child.

(4) FLORES SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.—The term “Flores settlement agreement” means the stipulated settlement agreement filed in the United States District Court for the Central District of California on January 17, 1997 (CV 85-4544-RJK).

(5) IMMIGRANT CHILD.—The term “immigrant child” means an alien (as defined in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)) under the age of 18 years.

(6) IN-NETWORK FACILITY.—The term “in-network facility” means a facility operated by an Office of Refugee Resettlement grantee, subgrantee, contractor, or subcontractor.

(7) OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FACILITY.—The term “Office of Refugee Resettlement facility”—

(A) means—

(i) a shelter operated by an Office of Refugee Resettlement grantee, subgrantee, contractor, or subcontractor to hold immigrant children;

(ii) a staff secure facility, a secure care facility, a residential treatment center, transitional foster care housing, or long-term foster care so operated; or

(iii) any other location operated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement to hold immigrant children; and

(B) includes an in-network facility and an out-of-network facility.

(8) OMBUDSPERSON.—The term “Ombudsperson” means the ombudsperson appointed under section 102(c).

(9) OUT-OF-NETWORK FACILITY.—The term “out-of-network facility” means a facility at which an immigrant child is placed as a result of an Office of Refugee Resettlement determination that there is no care provider available among in-network facilities to provide specialized services required by the immigrant child, such as medical or mental health support.

(10) UNOBSTRUCTED ACCESS.—The term “unobstructed access” means—

(A) with respect to a facility, the ability to enter the facility, including unannounced, to tour and physically visit all areas of the facility; and

(B) with respect to information, the ability to obtain requested information in a timely manner and with the full cooperation of the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Homeland Security, as applicable.

(11) WORKING GROUP.—The term “Working Group” means the interagency working group established under section 105(b).

SEC. 102. OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN FEDERAL CUSTODY.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established, within the Department of Health and Human Services, an Office of the Ombudsperson for Immigrant Children in Federal Custody (referred to in this section as the “Office of the Ombudsperson”).

(1) to endorse and support the principle that family separation and detention are generally not in a child’s best interest; and

(2) in cases in which Federal detention or custody is required—

(A) to ensure that immigrant children are only detained or held in custody by the Federal Government in the least restrictive setting;

(B) to advocate for the quick, safe, and efficient release of immigrant children from Federal detention or custody whenever possible; and

(C) in any case in which an immigrant child is held in Department of Homeland Security custody together with his or her family unit, to advocate for the release of the child and concurrent release of the parent or legal guardian of the child.

(b) INDEPENDENCE.—The Office of the Ombudsperson shall be—

(1) an impartial, confidential resource to ensure the best interest of children in Federal custody; and

(2) fully independent of—

(A) the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(B) the Department of Homeland Security.

(C) OMBUDSPERSON.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Office of the Ombudsperson shall be headed by an Ombudsperson, who shall be appointed by, and report directly to, the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The individual appointed as Ombudsperson shall have demonstrated experience in—

(A) immigration law; and

(B) child advocacy or child welfare.

(3) DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES.—

(A) MONITORING.—On a regular basis, the Ombudsperson shall monitor facilities, including licensed facilities that are not licensed by a State, for compliance with all applicable laws, policies, and standards, including—

(i) the Flores settlement agreement;

(ii) section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232);

(iii) the applicable provisions of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (34 U.S.C. 30301 et seq.);

(iv) applicable policies of U.S. Customs and Border Protection relating to the standard of care for individuals in Federal custody; and

(v) Office of Refugee Resettlement policies relating to the care and custody of unaccompanied alien children.

(B) INVESTIGATIONS.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Ombudsperson shall investigate—

(I) claims of abuse, neglect, or mistreatment of immigrant children, by the Government or any other entity, while in Government custody;

(II) complaints against foster care providers, including foster care providers under State oversight; and

(III) potential violations of related laws and standards.

(II) REPORTING OF STATE LICENSING VIOLATIONS.—If, in the course of an investigation under clause (i)(II), the Ombudsperson discovers a State licensing violation, the Ombudsperson shall report the violation to the child welfare licensing agency of the applicable State.

(iii) VIOLATIONS IN UNLICENSED FACILITIES.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Ombudsperson shall monitor any potential violation of law, policy, or standard in a facility that is not licensed by a State on a regular basis.

(II) REPORT.—If, in the course of monitoring a facility described under subclause (I), the Ombudsperson determines that a violation of law, policy, or standard has occurred, not later than 30 days after making such determination, the Ombudsperson shall report the violation the Secretary of Health and Human Services for further action.

(C) STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS.—Not less frequently than quarterly, the Ombudsperson shall invite community stakeholders, Flores settlement agreement class counsel, and, as applicable, the Flores settlement agreement court-appointed monitor to participate in a meeting—

(i) to ensure that the Ombudsperson is aware of stakeholder concerns and priorities; and

(ii) to provide feedback on stakeholder requests.

(D) INDIVIDUAL CASE ASSISTANCE.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Ombudsperson may offer individual case assistance to an immigrant child who is in Government custody if the case of the immigrant child is long-pending or otherwise requires expedited processing or elevated attention, as determined by the Ombudsperson.

(II) COMMUNICATION.—To ensure a complete understanding of the status of a case described in clause (i), the Ombudsperson may communicate with—

(I) the immigrant child concerned;

(II) the family members and potential sponsor of such child; and

(III) the child advocate, legal counsel, Office of Refugee Resettlement case manager and Federal field specialist, and any other relevant individual charged with care provision, case management, or case coordination of the immigrant child concerned.

(E) SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.—Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Ombudsperson may—

(i) issue a subpoena to require the production of all information, reports, and other documentary evidence necessary to carry out the duties of the Ombudsperson; and

(ii) invoke the aid of any appropriate court of the United States.

(F) REPORTING MECHANISMS.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Ombudsperson shall establish and maintain—

(I) a toll-free telephone number to receive complaints and reports of matters for investigation; and

(II) an email address to receive such complaints and reports.

(II) AVAILABILITY.—The Ombudsperson shall ensure that—

(I) in each facility—

(aa) such telephone number is made available in a prominent, visible, and public location in a common area of the facility; and

(bb) a telephone is accessible to each immigrant child;

(II) such email address is made available to sponsors, Flores settlement agreement class counsel, legal services providers and child advocates who serve such immigrant children, and state-level coordinators appointed under paragraph (7) of section 235(c) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)), as added by section 213; and

(III) in each facility, such telephone number and email address are made available, in a prominent, visible, and public location in a common area of the facility, to all individuals employed, contracted, or otherwise tasked with the care and custody of children by the Secretary of Health and Human Services so that such individuals may report—

(aa) any potential violation of law, policy, or standard relating to immigrant children in Federal custody; or

(bb) any other claim of abuse, neglect, or mistreatment of immigrant children.

(iii) REVIEW AND EVALUATION.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter, the Ombudsperson shall complete a review of the reporting mechanisms under this subparagraph to evaluate whether such mechanisms are sufficient to ensure the oversight and monitoring required by this title.

(II) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of each review required by subclause (I), the Ombudsperson shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the review that includes, in the case of a determination that such mechanisms are insufficient, recommendations for their improvement.

(G) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30 each year, the Ombudsperson shall submit to Congress a report on the accomplishments and challenges of the Office of the Ombudsperson during the fiscal year ending on that date.

(II) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by clause (i) shall include, for the applicable fiscal year, the following:

(I) A summary of the status of immigrant children in Federal Government custody that highlights broader trends and recommendations for future action.

(II) Statistical information on immigrant children in Federal Government custody, together with an analysis of such information.

(III) A summary of complaints received and proposed resolutions.

(IV) A description of the investigations into claims of abuse, neglect, or mistreatment of immigrant children in Federal Government custody, including a summary of the results of such investigations.

(V) Any attempt by the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, or any entity to which the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary of Health and Human Services is delegated, to interfere with the independence of the Office of the Ombudsperson.

(VI) A description of the objectives of the Office of the Ombudsperson for the next fiscal year.

(H) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.—The Ombudsperson shall—

(i) conduct a review of data collection, as described in section 103(a);

(ii) establish the Committee, as described in section 104; and

(iii) enter into a memorandum of understanding, as described in section 105(a).

(d) ACCESS TO FACILITIES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure—

(1) unobstructed access by the Ombudsperson to any facility; and

(2) the ability of the Ombudsperson—

(A) to monitor any facility; and

(B) to meet confidentially with—

(i) staff of any facility;

(ii) employees, grantees, contractors of the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Department of Homeland Security; and

(iii) any immigrant child in Federal Government custody, after notification of the immigrant child's counsel, as applicable.

(e) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall ensure unobstructed access by the Ombudsperson to—

(1) the case files, records, reports, audits, documents, papers, recommendations, or any other pertinent information relating to the care and custody of an immigrant child; and

(2) the written policies and procedures of all Office of Refugee Resettlement facilities.

(f) REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Ombudsperson may request from the Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Secretary of Homeland Security, or any entity to which the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Secretary of Homeland Security has been delegated, any information or assistance required to carry out this title. Information and assistance requested pursuant to this paragraph shall be provided to the Ombudsperson in a timely manner.

(2) UNREASONABLE REFUSAL.—If upon request for information by the Ombudsperson, an entity or agency described in paragraph (1) unreasonably refuses to provide, or otherwise does not provide, as determined by the Ombudsperson, such information or assistance requested by the Ombudsperson, the Ombudsperson shall, without delay—

(A) in the case of an unreasonable refusal by the Department of Health and Human Services, report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services the circumstances of such refusal;

(B) in the case of an unreasonable refusal by the Department of Homeland Security, report to the Secretary of Homeland Security the circumstances of such refusal; or

(C) in the case of an unreasonable refusal by the Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Secretary of Homeland Security, report on the circumstances of such refusal to—

(i) the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(ii) the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 103. DATA COLLECTION.

(a) INDEPENDENT REVIEW BY OMBUDSPERSON.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Ombudsperson shall regularly review data collected by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Homeland Security relating to immigrant children in facilities.

(2) COLLABORATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide the Ombudsperson unobstructed access to—

(A) real-time custody and detention data for each immigrant child detained by the Government or held in Government custody, including—

(i) the location and level of placement;

(ii) biographical information, including full name, date of birth, country of citizenship, and alien number;

(iii) all locations at which the immigrant child has been detained or held in custody;

(iv) the dates and times the immigrant child is booked in and booked out of any facility;

(v) transfer and discharge information; and

(vi) whether the child—

(I) has an attorney of record; and

(II) has been appointed an independent child advocate under section 235(c)(6) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(6)); and

(B) Department of Homeland Security and Department of Health and Human Services data personnel for the purpose of reviewing data collection and integrity issues.

(b) OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To support the data collection and monitoring duties of the Ombudsperson and to facilitate public monitoring, the Director shall develop a data collection system that collects and maintains the following information:

(A) The total number of immigrant children held in custody by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(B) The average and median number of days immigrant children remain in such custody.

(C) The average and median number of days immigrant children stay in an Office of Refugee Resettlement facility.

(D) The number of immigrant children discharged to sponsors, disaggregated by sponsor category, placement level, specific Office of Refugee Resettlement facility.

(E) The sponsor categories of immigrant children held at each Office of Refugee Resettlement facility, disaggregated by placement level.

(F) The number and percentage of immigrant children held in an Office of Refugee Resettlement facility with more than 25 immigrant children, disaggregated by placement level.

(G) The percentage of filled capacity across all Office of Refugee Resettlement facilities.

(H) The total number of children held at out-of-network facilities, disaggregated by placement level.

(I) For each Office of Refugee Resettlement facility—

(i) the percentage of filled capacity;

(ii) the maximum number of available beds;

(iii) the number and percentage of immigrant children with disabilities, disaggregated by placement level;

(iv) the number and percentage of immigrant children receiving mandatory home studies, discretionary home studies, and post-release services, disaggregated by placement level; and

(v) the number and percentage of immigrant children on a waitlist to receive post-release services.

(2) ACCESSIBILITY.—All information collected and maintained by the data collection system required by paragraph (1)—

(A) searchable; and

(B) disaggregated by country of citizenship, race, gender, primary language, age, and, as applicable, ethnicity.

(3) PUBLICATION.—Not later than the 15th of each month, the Director shall make the data collected under paragraph (1) for the preceding month available to the Ombudsperson.

(c) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN USES OF INFORMATION.—Information collected under this section may not be used for immigration enforcement or law enforcement purposes.

(d) PRIVACY PROTECTIONS.—Any record collected, stored, received, or published under this section shall be—

(1) collected, stored, received, or published in a manner that protects the privacy of any individual whose information is included in such data;

(2) de-identified or anonymized in a manner that protects the identity of any individual whose information is included in such data; and

(3)(A) limited in use for the purpose of carrying out the duties of the Office of the Ombudsperson; and

(B) protected from any other—

(i) internal use by any entity that collects, stores, or receives the record; or

(ii) inappropriate use.

SEC. 104. EXPERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Ombudsperson shall establish an expert advisory committee to assist the Ombudsperson in—

(1) identifying relevant trends relating to immigrant children in Government custody;

(2) conducting fact-finding missions and investigations of facilities; and

(3) ensuring Government and private contractor compliance with applicable law and standards for facilities.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The members of the Committee shall—

(1) be appointed by the Ombudsperson;

(2) represent various geographical regions; and

(3) be comprised of subject matter experts, including—

(A) legal advocates or specialists in the fields of child and family welfare, immigration, and human rights;

(B) pediatricians or other appropriate pediatric health care experts;

(C) child or adolescent psychiatrists or psychologists;

(D) social workers;

(E) data analysis experts; and

(F) any other relevant subject matter expert.

(c) MEETINGS.—The Committee shall meet not less frequently than quarterly.

(d) DUTIES.—The Committee shall regularly—

(1) review facility compliance with applicable law and standards relating to Government detention and custody of immigrant children, including the Flores settlement agreement and section 235 of the William

Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232); and

(2) submit to the Ombudsperson recommendations for improvement.

(e) SITE VISITS.—The Committee may designate 1 or more individuals who shall have the authority—

(1) to carry out facility site visits; and

(2) interview immigrant children held in Government custody, after notification of counsel, as applicable.

SEC. 105. COORDINATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Ombudsperson shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to coordinate oversight between the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The memorandum of understanding required by paragraph (1) shall do the following:

(A) Require the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide information to the Ombudsperson with respect to each immigrant child detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or who is otherwise in the custody of the Secretary of Homeland Security, including—

(i) the location of the immigrant child;

(ii) biographical information, including full name, date of birth, country of citizenship, race, and alien number;

(iii) all locations at which the immigrant child has been so detained or held in Department of Homeland Security custody;

(iv) exact times at which the immigrant child was booked in and booked out of such custody;

(v) the date on which the immigrant child is released from such custody or transferred to the custody of the Secretary of Health and Human Services;

(vi) in the case of an immigrant child who remains in Department of Homeland Security custody for more than 72 hours, the reason for such continued custody; and

(vii) any other information the Ombudsperson considers relevant to the oversight and monitoring duties described in section 102(c)(3).

(B) Establish the right of the Ombudsperson and the Committee to monitor Department of Homeland Security facilities for compliance with applicable standards of custody.

(C) Provide the Ombudsperson and the Committee full and unobstructed access to—

(i) Department of Homeland Security facilities for regular site visits; and

(ii) the written policies and procedures of Department of Homeland Security facilities.

(3) LIMITATION.—The memorandum of understanding may only allow the Ombudsperson to share information with the Secretary of Homeland Security on a case-by-case basis, and with the informed consent of the immigrant child concerned (unless the Ombudsperson determines that the child lacks the capacity to consent), if the Ombudsperson determines that the disclosure of the information to the Secretary of Health and Human Services will advance the best interests of the immigrant child, including by facilitating the release of the immigrant child from custody.

(4) EVALUATION.—Not later than 2 years after the Ombudsperson and the Secretary of Homeland Security enter into the memorandum of understanding required by this subsection, the Comptroller General of the

United States shall evaluate the coordination between the Ombudsperson and the Secretary to determine whether such memorandum of understanding is sufficient to ensure the oversight and monitoring required by this title.

(5) **RECOMMENDATIONS.**—If the Comptroller General makes a determination under paragraph (4) that the memorandum of understanding is insufficient, the Comptroller General shall recommend actionable steps to be implemented—

(A) to improve coordination between the Ombudsperson and the Secretary of Homeland Security; and

(B) to ensure effectiveness of the mandate of the Ombudsperson.

(b) **INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established an interagency working group to identify and discuss concerns relating to immigrant children in facilities.

(2) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Working Group shall be composed of representatives of—

(A) the Department of Justice;

(B) the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Director or a senior representative of the Office of Refugee Resettlement;

(C) U.S. Customs and Border Protection;

(D) U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement;

(E) relevant oversight offices, including—

(i) the Immigration Detention Ombudsman of the Department of Homeland Security; and

(ii) the Inspectors General of the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and

(F) any other relevant Federal agency or office.

(3) **MEETINGS.**—The Working Group shall—

(A) hold meetings not less frequently than quarterly;

(B) invite representatives of nongovernmental organizations that provide services to immigrant children to participate in such meetings as the Ombudsperson considers appropriate; and

(C) provide to the Ombudsperson a summary of each such meeting.

SEC. 106. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in the title shall be construed to preclude or limit Flores settlement agreement class counsel from conducting independent investigations or seeking enforcement actions relating to violations of the Flores settlement agreement in any appropriate district court of the United States.

TITLE II—PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Subtitle A—Unaccompanied Alien Children in Immigration Proceedings

SEC. 201. LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5)(D)(iii), by striking “access to” and inserting “representation by”; and

(2) in subsection (c), by amending paragraph (5) to read as follows:

“(5) **LEGAL REPRESENTATION.**—

“(A) **APPOINTMENT OR PROVISION OF COUNSEL.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—As expeditiously as possible after an unaccompanied alien child is issued a notice to appear under section 239(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229(a)), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall appoint or provide counsel to represent the child in removal proceedings under section 240 of the Immi-

gration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229a), related matters before the Department of Homeland Security, and in any appeal proceeding before the Attorney General from any such removal proceeding. Counsel shall be provided under this subparagraph at Government expense unless a child has retained counsel authorized to represent the child in such proceedings.

“(ii) **IMMIGRATION FILE.**—Each unaccompanied alien child, and the counsel of such a child, shall receive a complete copy of the child’s immigration file (other than documents protected from disclosure under section 552(b) of title 5, United States Code).

“(B) **ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.**—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall—

“(i) to the maximum extent practicable, make every effort to use the services of competent counsel who agree to provide representation to children described in subparagraph (A)(i) without charge;

“(ii) in the case of an unaccompanied alien child who retained counsel at his or her own expense but whose counsel has ceased to represent the child, ensure the continued representation of the child through the pendency of removal proceedings and any appeal proceeding before the Attorney General from any such removal proceeding by appointing or providing new counsel as expeditiously as possible;

“(iii) in consultation with the Attorney General, develop model guidelines for representing children in immigration proceedings for the purposes of—

“(I) helping to protect children from individuals suspected of involvement in criminal, harmful, or exploitative activities associated with the smuggling or trafficking of children; and

“(II) ensuring the fairness of removal proceedings in which children are involved; and

“(iv) as necessary and appropriate, enter into contracts or award grants for the provision of immigration-related legal services to children.

“(C) **ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.**—The Attorney General shall ensure that all immigration courts before which unaccompanied alien children appear contain specialized children’s dockets. Such dockets shall contain child-appropriate procedures that advance due process in unaccompanied alien children’s proceedings. Immigration judges assigned to specialized children’s dockets shall have received specialized training in such procedures. Such procedures shall include processes for coordinating with legal services organizations to facilitate legal representation of unaccompanied alien children.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(1) Section 462(b)(1)(A) of Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279(b)(1)(A)) is amended by striking “, consistent with the law regarding appointment of counsel that is in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act”.

(2) Section 292 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1362) is amended by inserting “, except as provided in section 235(c)(5) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(5))” after “at no expense to the Government”.

SEC. 202. MOTIONS TO REOPEN.

Section 240(c)(7)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229a(c)(7)(C)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(v) **SPECIAL RULE FOR UNACCOMPANIED ALIEN CHILDREN ENTITLED TO APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL.**—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services fails to appoint or provide counsel for an unaccompanied alien child (as defined in 462(g)(2) of Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279(g)(2)))—

“(I) the limitations under this paragraph with respect to the filing of a motion to reopen by such child shall not apply; and

“(II) the filing of such a motion shall stay the removal of the child.”.

Subtitle B—Access to Services

SEC. 211. CLARIFICATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILD DETERMINATION PROCEDURES.

(a) **ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES REGARDLESS OF CUSTODIAL STATUS.**—Section 235(c)(1) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “Such policies and programs shall be available to unaccompanied alien children regardless of whether they are or have ever been in Federal custody.”.

(b) **SCREENINGS OF CHILDREN FROM CONTIGUOUS COUNTRIES CONDUCTED BY ASYLUM OFFICERS.**—Section 235(a) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “the Secretary of Homeland Security” and inserting “an asylum officer (as defined in section 235(b)(1)(E) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1225(b)(1)(E)))”; and

(2) in paragraph (4) by inserting “by an asylum officer” after “the child shall be screened”.

(c) **ANALYSIS OF EFFICACY OF CURRENT LAW.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the head of any other Federal agency the Secretary of Homeland Security considers appropriate, and child welfare advocates, shall complete an analysis of the efficacy of the law, including regulations, relating to unaccompanied alien children from contiguous countries (in effect as of the date on which the analysis is completed), including the efficacy of such laws in providing access to protection for victims of trafficking and children fleeing persecution.

(2) **REPORT.**—Not later than 60 days after the date on which each analysis required by paragraph (1) is completed, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit a report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the analysis.

(3) **PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.**—Not later than 180 days after the date on which each report is submitted under paragraph (2), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall make the report available to the public on an internet website of the Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 212. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POST-RELEASE SERVICES.

Section 235(c)(3)(B) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(3)(B)) is amended—

(1) by adding at the end the following: “Follow-up services under this clause shall commence not later than the date that is 30 days after the date on which the child concerned is released from the custody of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.”;

(2) in the first sentence, by striking “Before” and inserting the following:

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Before”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) **ACCESS TO POST-RELEASE SERVICES.**—

“(I) **HOME VISITS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which a child is released from the custody of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary shall ensure that the child receives an in-person

home visit to determine the well-being of the child and to assess the suitability and safety of the home in which the child was placed if—

“(aa) except as described in item (bb), a sponsor has agreed to receive such services; or

“(bb) the child, based on all available objective evidence—

“(AA) has been or is at risk of becoming a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;

“(BB) is a special needs child with a disability (as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102));

“(CC) has been or is at risk of becoming a victim of physical or sexual abuse under circumstances that indicate that the child’s health or welfare has been or would be significantly harmed or threatened; or

“(DD) is a child whose sponsor clearly presents a risk of abuse, maltreatment, exploitation, neglect, or labor exploitation to the child.

“(II) ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP SERVICES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall ensure that a child receives additional follow-up services if, in the course of the home visit under subclause (I), it is determined for the first time that the child, based on all available objective evidence—

“(aa) has been or is at risk of becoming a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;

“(bb) is a special needs child with a disability (as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102));

“(cc) has been or is at risk of becoming a victim of physical or sexual abuse under circumstances that indicate that the child’s health or welfare has been or would be significantly harmed or threatened; or

“(dd) is a child whose sponsor clearly presents a risk of abuse, maltreatment, exploitation, neglect, or labor exploitation to the child.”.

SEC. 213. STATE-LEVEL COORDINATORS FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN’S SERVICES.

Section 235(c) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(7) ASSISTANCE TO STATE AND LOCAL ENTITIES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN’S SERVICES.—

“(A) ASSISTANCE TO STATES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may provide funding to each State to appoint a State-level coordinator to fulfill the responsibilities described in subparagraph (C).

“(B) NONGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATOR.—If a State does not appoint a coordinator under subparagraph (A), the Secretary of Health and Human Services may appoint a nongovernmental coordinator to fulfill the responsibilities described in subparagraph (C).

“(C) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibilities described in this subparagraph shall include the following:

“(i) To raise the awareness of governmental and nongovernmental entities with respect to the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied alien children, including Federal oversight mechanisms, such as the Office of the Ombudsperson for Immigrant Children in Federal Custody established under section 102 of the Protecting Unaccompanied Children Act.

“(ii) To coordinate the efforts of such entities so as to meet the educational, medical and mental health care, child welfare, and social services needs of unaccompanied alien children.

“(iii) To work with service providers engaged in the care and custody of unaccom-

panied alien children to identify community services, and to increase access to such services, for unaccompanied alien children.

“(iv) To ensure that schools, recreational facilities, community centers, and similar institutions have information regarding—

“(I) the risks of human trafficking and labor exploitation for vulnerable children; and

“(II) child labor laws, local minimum wage requirements, and mechanisms for reporting violations of such laws and requirements.

“(v) To ensure that information provided under clause (iv)—

“(I) is written in plain, child-accessible language (including in appropriate languages other than English); and

“(II) makes clear that such laws and requirements apply to all children and workers regardless of immigration status.

“(vi) To ensure that language is not a barrier to obtaining the services described in this paragraph.”.

SEC. 214. ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SEPARATED UNDER ZERO TOLERANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an individual shall be eligible for the benefits described in subsection (b), if the individual—

(1) has completed security and law enforcement background checks to the satisfaction of the Secretary of Homeland Security; and

(2)(A) has been paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(d)(5)) pursuant to the implementation of Executive Order 14011, and has not had such parole terminated; or

(B) is eligible, based on a determination by the Secretary of Health and Human Services through reference to the identified members of the classes, and their minor children, in the class-action lawsuits *J.P. v. Barr* (C.D. Cal. 2020) and *Ms. L. v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, 330 F.R.D. 284 (2019), for any assistance, program, benefit, or services described in subsection (b).

(b) BENEFITS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an individual described in subsection (a) shall be eligible for—

(1) resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits available to refugees admitted under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157) to the same extent, and for the same periods of time, as such refugees;

(2) services described under section 412(d)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(d)(2)), subject to subparagraph (B) of such section, if such individual is an unaccompanied alien child (as defined in section 462(g) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279(g))); and

(3) a driver’s license or identification card under section 202 of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (division B of Public Law 109–13; 49 U.S.C. 30301 note), notwithstanding subsection (c)(2)(B) of such section.

Subtitle C—Facilities Housing Unaccompanied Alien Children

SEC. 221. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 235(c)(2) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking “Subject to” and inserting the following:

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) PRESUMPTION OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE SETTING.—The least restrictive setting that is in the best interest of the child is presumed to be a placement that most approximates a family and in which the child’s spe-

cial needs, if any, may be met. Children placed under this subsection shall be placed in the following order of preference:

“(I) Family-based foster care.

“(II) Group home foster care.

“(III) A shelter with capacity for 25 or fewer children.

“(iii) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide technical assistance to nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations that are eligible for grants and contracts awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that children are placed in small scale, community-based settings.”.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress a report on the number of unaccompanied alien children who, during the preceding fiscal year, resided in a facility with a capacity for 25 or fewer children.

(2) DESCRIPTION OF BARRIERS TO OBTAINING HHS CONTRACTS AND GRANTS.—Each report required by paragraph (1) shall describe in detail the barriers for small-scale community-based providers to undergoing the Department of Health and Human Services contracting and granting processes, including staffing limitations, availability, outreach, recruitment of potential providers, other identified barriers to making the transition to small-scale community-based facilities, and recommendations to address such barriers.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In developing each report required by paragraph (1), the Secretary for Health and Human Services shall consult with staff of current small-scale or community-based facilities housing children and other organizations with expertise in child development, child welfare, and serving children with disabilities.

(c) PLAN TO TRANSITION CARE TO FOSTER CARE OR SMALL-SCALE SETTINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall develop a plan to transition all unaccompanied alien children in the custody of the Secretary to—

(A) foster care placements; or

(B) shelters with capacity for 25 or fewer children.

(2) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress the plan developed under paragraph (1).

SEC. 222. STANDARDS AND COMPLIANCE.

Section 235(c)(2) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232), as amended by section 221, is further amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subclause (II), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall ensure that, not less frequently than every 5 years, each covered individual completes a background check to the satisfaction of the Secretary.

“(II) WAIVER FOR DIRECT SERVICES PROVIDERS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may waive the application of subclause (I) in the case of an attorney of record or licensed medical practitioner who provides on-site services at a facility that houses unaccompanied alien children.

“(III) SCOPE.—The scope of a background check required by this clause shall include, at a minimum, the following:

“(aa) A fingerprint check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and State criminal history repositories.

“(bb) A child protective services check with the individual’s State of United States residence for the last 5 years.

“(cc) Background investigation updates at a minimum of every 5 years.

“(IV) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this clause, the term ‘covered individual’ means—

“(aa) an employee or contractor with direct access to unaccompanied alien children in the care and custody of the Secretary of Health and Human Services;

“(bb) an individual with unsupervised, direct access to such children; and

“(cc) a foster parent with whom an unaccompanied alien child is placed, including a transitional or long-term foster parent, and each foster parent household member who is aged 18 years or over.

“(V) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this clause may be construed to supersede applicable State licensing requirements for background checks on employees of programs or facilities involved in the care and custody of children.”; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), in the first sentence, by striking “subparagraph (A)” and inserting “subparagraph (A)(i)”.

Subtitle D—Child Welfare at the Border and Prevention of Family Separation

SEC. 231. CHILD WELFARE TRAINING AT THE BORDER.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COOPERATING ENTITY.—The term “cooperating entity” means a State or local entity acting pursuant to an agreement with the Secretary of Homeland Security.

(2) EXPERT IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT.—The term “expert in child development” means an individual who has significant education and expertise on infant, child, and adolescent development, and on the effects of trauma on children.

(3) EXPERT IN CHILD WELFARE.—The term “expert in child welfare” means an individual who has—

(A) knowledge of Federal and State child welfare laws and standards; and

(B) not less than 5 years of experience in the field of child and adolescent development or child welfare.

(4) EXPERT IN PEDIATRIC MEDICINE.—The term “expert in pediatric medicine” means—

(A) an individual who is board-certified in pediatric medicine in one or more States; and

(B) an individual with an advanced degree in pediatric medicine on the faculty of an institution of higher education in the United States.

(b) GUIDELINES.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, experts in child development, experts in child welfare, and experts in pediatric medicine, shall develop guidelines for the treatment of children in the custody of the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

(c) MANDATORY TRAINING.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall—

(1) require all U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, and cooperating entity personnel, who have contact with a child at a port of entry or Border Patrol station to undergo appropriate training, which shall include live training, on—

(A) the applicable legal authorities, policies, practices, and procedures relating to children; and

(B) child-friendly interviewing techniques, child development, trauma, and the manner in which trauma affects the health and behavior of children; and

(2) require U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, not less frequently than

annually, to undertake continuing training on—

(A) identifying and responding to common signs and symptoms of medical distress in children;

(B) best practices with respect to the guidelines developed under subsection (b); and

(C) changes in the legal authorities, policies, and procedures described in paragraph (1)(A).

SEC. 232. PREVENTING FAMILY SEPARATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN.

Section 235(b) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(5) PREVENTING SEPARATION FROM NON-PARENT RELATIVES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an unaccompanied alien child determined to have entered the United States or have been apprehended with a relative who is neither a parent nor guardian, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security or other appropriate agencies of the government, shall evaluate whether that unaccompanied alien child can be safely released from Federal custody to that relative as a sponsor consistent with the process described in paragraph (3) of this section.

“(B) RELEASE TO RELATIVE.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services makes such a determination, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall release the unaccompanied alien child to that relative unless the circumstances in subparagraph (C) apply.

“(C) CONSIDERATION OF RELATIVE AS SPONSOR.—If an unaccompanied alien child is transferred to the custody of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the non-parent relative described in subparagraph (A) may continue to be evaluated as a potential sponsor to whom the child may be released from Federal custody as described in subsection (c)(3) of this section, as necessary to ensure child well-being and safety.

“(D) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to change the definition of a parent or legal guardian for the purpose of making a determination of whether a child is an unaccompanied alien child pursuant to 462(g)(C) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279(g)(C)).

“(E) FACILITIES REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall ensure that child-appropriate spaces are available to complete the evaluations described in this paragraph. Such space shall accommodate staff of the Department of Health and Human Services, as appropriate.

“(F) RECORDKEEPING.—With respect to each alien over the age of 18 years who has entered the United States with an unaccompanied alien child, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

“(i) maintain an electronic record that includes the familial relationship between the adult and child; and

“(ii) share such record with the Secretary of Health and Human Services as necessary to facilitate the identification of an appropriate sponsor for the child.”.

TITLE III—ENSURING SAFE RELEASE TO SPONSORS

SEC. 301. ENSURING SAFE RELEASE TO SPONSORS WHO ARE NOT PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS.

Section 235(c)(3)(A) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(3)(A)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “or sponsor” after “makes a determination that the proposed custodian”;

(2) by inserting “, address,” after “custodian’s identity”; and

(3) by striking the period and inserting the following: “, in accordance with uniform procedures established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. If a proposed sponsor is not the parent or legal guardian of a child, such procedures shall include criminal background and public records checks for any proposed sponsor or adult member of the proposed sponsor’s household. The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall ensure that information obtained about a sponsor or a household member of a sponsor through such checks is not shared with the Department of Homeland Security or any other Federal agency for the purpose of immigration enforcement.”.

SEC. 302. EXPANSION AND EVALUATION OF HOME STUDIES.

(a) Section 235(c)(3)(B) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(3)(B)), as amended by section 212, is further amended—

(1) in clause (i), by inserting “or custodian clearly” after “whose proposed sponsor”;

(2) by adding at the end the following: “A home study shall also be conducted for a child whose proposed sponsor is a distant relative or unrelated to the child in which verification of relationship cannot be clearly demonstrated.”;

(3) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iv); and

(4) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

“(ii) GUIDELINES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish guidelines for the conduct of home studies under clause (i) that include—

“(I) a deadline for completion of a home study that is not sooner than 15 calendar days after the date on which the home study is requested;

“(II) objective, publicly available criteria for releasing a child following a negative home study recommendation; and

“(III) requirements for individuals who conduct home studies, including at a minimum professional or educational knowledge related to child and adult development, cultural competence, trauma, parenting and family dynamics, and screening and identifying indicators of human trafficking.

“(iii) REPORT.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Protecting Unaccompanied Children Act, and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall report on the effectiveness of home studies conducted under clause (i).

“(II) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subclause (I) shall include the following:

“(aa) An assessment of the effectiveness of such home studies in identifying safety concerns.

“(bb) For the preceding 2-year period—

“(AA) the number of home studies conducted and a description of the outcomes of such home studies, including whether or not each home study resulted in a positive or negative recommendation of the sponsor concerned;

“(BB) the number and type of safety concerns identified through such home studies; and

“(CC) the number of sponsors to whom a child was not released due to safety concerns identified through a home study.”.

SEC. 303. REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD AND SPONSOR CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 235(c)(3) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (8 U.S.C. 1232(c)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(D) CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall maintain a searchable electronic case management system to track the placement of unaccompanied alien children that includes the following information:

“(I) The name and address of each proposed sponsor, including the number of unaccompanied alien children placed with each sponsor and names of household members of a proposed sponsor.

“(II) Reported safety concerns, including reports of trafficking or exploitation, identified for sponsors of unaccompanied alien children, or identified for adult members of household at a specific address.

“(III) Vulnerabilities of unaccompanied alien children while in the care and custody of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, including whether the child is a priority for post-release services.

“(IV) Reports of trafficking or exploitation made by unaccompanied alien children, including reported information about geographic area (such as a neighborhood) where such trafficking occurred and where employers implicated in such reports are located.

“(ii) CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.—

“(I) POTENTIAL DUPLICATE RECORDS.—In the event that the case management system detects a potential duplicate record, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services and grantees or contractors acting on behalf of the Department, shall verify the records and, if necessary, consolidate duplicate records.

“(II) EXCLUSION OF INFORMATION ON IMMIGRATION STATUS.—The case management system shall not include information with respect to the immigration status of any sponsor or adult member of a sponsor’s household.

“(III) NONDISCLOSURE FOR ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES.—The information contained in the case management system shall not be disclosed to the Secretary of Homeland Security for the purpose of immigration enforcement.

“(iii) PRIVACY PROTECTIONS.—Any record collected, stored, received, or published under this subparagraph shall be—

“(I) collected, stored, received, or published in a manner that protects the privacy of any individual whose information is included in such data;

“(II) de-identified or anonymized in a manner that protects the identity of any individual whose information is included in such data; and

“(III)(aa) limited in use for the purpose of carrying out the duties of the Office of the Ombudsperson; and

“(bb) protected from any other—

“(AA) internal use by any entity that collects, stores, or receives the record; or

“(BB) inappropriate use.”

TITLE IV—PROTECTIONS AND ACCESS TO CERTAIN SERVICES FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILES AND OTHER VULNERABLE IMMIGRANTS

SEC. 401. ELIMINATING ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT-BASED VISA CAPS FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILES.

(a) ALIENS NOT SUBJECT TO DIRECT NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—Section 201(b)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151(b)(1)(A)) is amended by striking “subparagraph (A) or (B)” and inserting “subparagraph (A), (B), or (J)”.

(b) PREFERENCE ALLOCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRANTS.—Section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(4)) is amended by striking “subparagraph (A) or (B)” and inserting “subparagraph (A), (B), or (J)”.

SEC. 402. ELIMINATION OF ANNUAL NUMERICAL LIMITATION ON U VISAS.

Section 214(p) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(p)) is amended by striking paragraph (2).

SEC. 403. ACCESS TO MEDICAID FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN GRANTED STATUS.

(a) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 402(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1612(b)(2)(A)(i)) is amended—

(1) in subclause (IV), by striking “or” at the end;

(2) in subclause (V), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(VI) an alien is granted special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27)(J) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(J));

“(VII) an alien under the age of 21 is granted status under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)); or

“(VIII) an alien is eligible for deferred action pursuant to the June 15, 2012, Department of Homeland Security Memorandum entitled ‘Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children’, or any successor policy.”

(b) MODIFICATION TO DURATION OF ATTRIBUTION.—Section 421(b) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1631(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “or” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) is granted special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27)(J) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(J));

“(4) in the case of an alien under the age of 21, is granted status under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)); or

“(5) is eligible for deferred action pursuant to the June 15, 2012, Department of Homeland Security Memorandum entitled ‘Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children’, or any successor policy.”

TITLE V—STOPPING CHILD LABOR TRAFFICKING

SEC. 501. VICTIMS OF SERIOUS LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT VIOLATIONS OR CRIME.

(a) PROTECTION FOR VICTIMS OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT VIOLATIONS.—Section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i)—

(A) by striking subclause (I) and inserting the following:

“(I) the alien—

“(aa) has suffered substantial physical, emotional, or mental abuse or harm as a result of having been a victim of criminal activity described in clause (iii);

“(bb) has suffered substantial physical, emotional, or mental abuse or harm related to a violation described in clause (iv);

“(cc) is a victim of criminal activity described in clause (iii) and would suffer extreme hardship upon removal; or

“(dd) has suffered a violation described in clause (iv) and would suffer extreme hardship upon removal.”

(B) in subclause (II), by inserting “, or a labor or employment violation resulting in a workplace claim described in clause (iv)” before the semicolon at the end;

(C) in subclause (III)—

(i) by striking “or State judge, to the Service” and inserting “, State, or local judge, to the Department of Homeland Security, to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to the Department of Labor (including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration), to the National Labor Relations Board, to the head official of a State or local government department of labor, workforce commission, or human relations commission or council”;

(ii) by striking “investigating or prosecuting” and inserting “investigating, prosecuting, or seeking civil remedies for”; and

(iii) by inserting “, or investigating, prosecuting, or seeking civil remedies for a labor or employment violation related to a workplace claim described in clause (iv)” before the semicolon; and

(D) in subclause (IV)—

(i) by inserting “(aa)” after “(IV)”;

(ii) by inserting “or” after the semicolon at the end; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(bb) a workplace claim described in clause (iv) resulting from a labor or employment violation.”

(2) in clause (ii)(II), by striking “and” at the end;

(3) in clause (iii), by striking “or” at the end and inserting “and”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) in the labor or employment violation related to a workplace claim, the alien has filed, is a material witness in, or is likely to be helpful in the investigation of, a bona fide workplace claim (as defined in section 274A(e)(10)(B)(iii)(II)); or”.

(b) TEMPORARY PROTECTION FOR INJURED WORKERS AND VICTIMS OF CRIME, LABOR, AND EMPLOYMENT VIOLATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Homeland Security may permit an alien to temporarily remain in the United States, shall not remove the alien from the United States during the permitted period, and shall provide the alien with the alien employment authorization, if the Secretary determines that the alien—

(1) has filed for relief under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)) or section 101(a)(15)(T) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(T));

(2)(A) has filed, or is a material witness to, a bona fide workplace claim (as defined in paragraph (10) of section 274A(e) of such Act, as added by section 502(b) of this Act) or has filed, or is a material witness to, a civil claim arising from criminal activity (as defined in paragraph (10) of section 274A(e) of such Act, as added by section 502(b) of this Act); and

(B) has been helpful, is being helpful, or is likely to be helpful to—

(i) a Federal, State, or local law enforcement official;

(ii) a Federal, State, or local prosecutor;

(iii) a Federal, State, or local judge;

(iv) the Department of Homeland Security;

(v) the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission;

(vi) the Department of Labor, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration;

(vii) the National Labor Relations Board;

(viii) the head official of a State or local government department of labor, workforce commission, or human relations commission or council; or

(ix) other Federal, State, or local authorities; or

(3) has filed a workers’ compensation claim or is undergoing treatment for a workplace injury or illness.

(c) REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO U VISAS.—Section 214(p) of the Immigration

and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(p)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “or investigating, prosecuting, or seeking civil remedies for workplace claims described in section 101(a)(15)(U)(iv)” after “section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii)” each place such term appears; and

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting “or workplace claims described in section 101(a)(15)(U)(iv)” after “described in section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii)”; and

(B) by inserting “or workplace claim” after “prosecution of such criminal activity”.

(d) **ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS FOR VICTIMS OF CRIMES.**—Section 245(m)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1255(m)(1)) is amended, in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “or an investigation or prosecution regarding a workplace claim” after “prosecution”.

(e) **ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS AND FEES.**—Section 245(l)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1255(l)(7)) is amended by striking “permit aliens to apply for a waiver of” and inserting “not require the payment of”.

(f) **CHANGE OF NONIMMIGRANT CLASSIFICATION.**—Section 384(a)(1) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1367(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by striking “physical or mental abuse and the criminal activity” and inserting “abuse and the criminal activity or workplace claim”;

(2) in subparagraph (F)—

(A) by striking “(8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(51))” and inserting “(8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(51))”; and

(B) by adding “or” at the end; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following:

“(G) the alien’s employer.”.

(g) **CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION.**—Section 384(b)(2) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1367(b)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “However, neither the Secretary of Homeland Security nor the Attorney General may use the information furnished pursuant to any application under section 101(a)(15)(T), 101(a)(15)(U), 101(a)(27), 101(a)(51), 106, 240A(b)(2), or 244(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(T), 1101(a)(15)(U), 1101(a)(27), 1101(a)(51), 1105a, 1229b(b)(2), or 1254a(a)) or section 107(b)(1)(E)(i)(II)(bb) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1)(E)(i)(II)(bb)), for purposes of initiating or carrying out a removal proceeding.”.

SEC. 502. LABOR ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.

(a) **REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS.**—Section 239(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “In cases where” and inserting “If”; and

(B) by inserting “or as a result of information provided to the Department of Homeland Security in retaliation against individuals for exercising or attempting to exercise their employment rights or other legal rights” after “paragraph (2)”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

“(C) At a facility about which a workplace claim has been filed or is contemporaneously filed.”.

(b) **UNLAWFUL EMPLOYMENT OF ALIENS.**—Section 274A(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324a(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(10) **CONDUCT IN ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.**—

“(A) **ENFORCEMENT ACTION.**—If the Secretary of Homeland Security undertakes an

enforcement action at a facility about which a workplace claim has been filed or is contemporaneously filed, or as a result of information provided to the Department of Homeland Security in retaliation against employees for exercising their rights related to a workplace claim, the Secretary shall ensure that—

“(i) any aliens arrested or detained who are victims of or material witnesses to workplace claim violations or criminal activity (as described in subparagraph (T) or (U) of section 101(a)(15)) are not removed from the United States until after the Secretary—

“(I) notifies the appropriate agency with jurisdiction over such violations or criminal activity; and

“(II) provides such agency with the opportunity to interview such aliens; and

“(ii) no aliens entitled to a stay of removal or abeyance of removal proceedings under this section are removed.

“(B) **PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME, LABOR, AND EMPLOYMENT VIOLATIONS.**—

“(i) **STAY OF REMOVAL OR ABEYANCE OF REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS.**—An alien against whom removal proceedings have been initiated under chapter 4 of title II, who has filed a workplace claim, who is a material witness in any pending or anticipated proceeding involving a bona fide workplace claim or civil claim arising from criminal activity, or who has filed for relief under section 101(a)(15)(U), shall be entitled to a stay of removal or an abeyance of removal proceedings and to employment authorization until the resolution of the workplace claim or the denial of relief under section 101(a)(15)(U) after exhaustion of administrative or judicial appeals, whichever is later.

“(ii) **DURATION.**—Any stay of removal or abeyance of removal proceedings and employment authorization issued pursuant to clause (i) shall remain valid until the resolution of the workplace claim or the denial of relief under section 101(a)(15)(U) after the exhaustion of administrative or judicial appeals, and shall be extended by the Secretary of Homeland Security for a period of not longer than 10 additional years upon determining that—

“(I) such relief would enable the alien asserting a workplace claim or civil claim arising from criminal activity, or assisting in investigation or prosecution of criminal activity, to pursue the matter to resolution, according to any agency administering any statute underlying these claims or any other credible evidence;

“(II) the deterrent goals of any statute underlying a workplace claim, criminal activity, or civil claim arising from criminal activity would be served, according to any agency administering such a statute or any other credible evidence; or

“(III) such extension would otherwise further the interests of justice.

“(iii) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this paragraph:

“(I) **CIVIL CLAIM ARISING FROM CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.**—The term ‘civil claim arising from criminal activity’ means any written or oral claim, charge, complaint, or grievance filed with, communicated to, or submitted to a Federal, State, or local agency or court related to the violation of applicable Federal, State, and local laws arising from criminal activity described in section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii).

“(II) **MATERIAL WITNESS.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the term ‘material witness’ means an individual who presents a declaration from an attorney investigating, prosecuting, or defending the claim or from the presiding officer overseeing the claim attesting that, to the best of the declarant’s knowledge and belief, reasonable cause exists to believe that the testimony of the individual will be relevant to the outcome of the workplace claim.

“(III) **WORKPLACE CLAIM.**—The term ‘workplace claim’ means any written or oral claim, charge, complaint, or grievance filed with, communicated to, or submitted to the employer, a Federal, State, or local agency or court, or an employee representative related to the workplace injury or illness or to the violation of applicable Federal, State, and local labor laws, including laws concerning wages and hours, labor relations, family and medical leave, occupational health and safety, civil rights, or nondiscrimination.”.

(c) **CONTINUED APPLICATION OF WORKFORCE AND LABOR PROTECTION REMEDIES.**—Section 274A(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324a(e)), as amended by subsection (b), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(11) **RIGHTS, REMEDIES, AND RELIEF.**—Notwithstanding an employee’s status as an unauthorized noncitizen during the time of relevant employment or during the back pay period or the failure of the employer or employee to comply with the requirements under this section or with any other provision of Federal law relating to the unlawful employment of noncitizens—

“(A) all rights, remedies, and relief provided under any Federal, State, or local law relating to workplace rights, including reinstatement and back pay, are available to such employee; and

“(B) a court may not prohibit such an employee from pursuing other causes of action giving rise to liability in a civil action.”.

TITLE VI—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 601. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 602. SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION.

In any month in which the number of unaccompanied children referred to the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279) and section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232) exceeds 10,000, as determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, an additional \$30,000,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for obligation for every 500 unaccompanied children above that level (including a pro rata amount for any increment less than 500), for carrying out such sections 462 and 235 and the activities authorized by this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 427—CALLING ON CONGRESS, SCHOOLS, AND STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF DYSLEXIA THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED, AND DESIGNATING OCTOBER 2023 AS “NATIONAL DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KING, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 427

Whereas dyslexia is—

(1) defined as an unexpected difficulty in reading for an individual who has the intelligence to be a much better reader; and

(2) most commonly caused by a difficulty in phonological processing (the appreciation of the individual sounds of spoken language), which affects the ability of an individual to speak, read, spell, and, often, the ability to learn a second language;

Whereas the First Step Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–391; 132 Stat. 5194 et seq.) included a definition of dyslexia as part of the requirement of the Act to screen inmates for dyslexia upon intake in Federal prisons;

Whereas the definition of dyslexia in section 3635 of title 18, United States Code, as added by section 101(a) of the First Step Act of 2018, is the first and only definition of dyslexia in a Federal statute;

Whereas dyslexia is the most common learning disability and affects 80 to 90 percent of all individuals with a learning disability;

Whereas dyslexia is persistent and highly prevalent, affecting as many as 1 out of every 5 individuals;

Whereas dyslexia is a paradox, in that an individual with dyslexia may have both—

(1) weaknesses in decoding that result in difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition; and

(2) strengths in higher-level cognitive functions, such as reasoning, critical thinking, concept formation, and problem solving;

Whereas great progress has been made in understanding dyslexia on a scientific level, including the epidemiological, cognitive, and neurobiological bases of dyslexia;

Whereas the achievement gap between typical readers and dyslexic readers occurs as early as first grade; and

Whereas early screening for, and early diagnosis of, dyslexia are critical for ensuring that individuals with dyslexia receive focused, evidence-based intervention that leads to fluent reading, the promotion of self-awareness and self-empowerment, and the provision of necessary accommodations that ensure success in school and in life: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls on Congress, schools, and State and local educational agencies to recognize that dyslexia has significant educational implications that must be addressed; and

(2) designates October 2023 as “National Dyslexia Awareness Month”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 428—RECOGNIZING WOMEN’S COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS AND THE RECORD-SETTING VOLLEYBALL DAY IN NEBRASKA EVENT ON AUGUST 30, 2023

Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. RICKETTS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 428

Whereas Volleyball Day in Nebraska was held in Memorial Stadium in Lincoln, Nebraska, on August 30, 2023, with 92,003 people in attendance;

Whereas Volleyball Day in Nebraska set a new world record for attendance at a women’s sporting event, exceeding the previous record of 91,648 at the 2022 soccer match between Barcelona and Wolfsburg;

Whereas Volleyball Day in Nebraska included student-athletes from 4 teams representing the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and Wayne State College;

Whereas Volleyball Day in Nebraska set a new record for National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this resolution as

the “NCAA”) women’s volleyball attendance, exceeding the previous record of 18,755 and the NCAA women’s volleyball regular-season record of 16,833;

Whereas Volleyball Day in Nebraska also set a new record for attendance in Nebraska’s Memorial Stadium, exceeding the previous record of 91,585 set in 2014;

Whereas the University of Nebraska volleyball program started in 1975, led by Coach Pat Sullivan;

Whereas Coach Terry Pettit built the University of Nebraska volleyball program from 1977 to 1999, accumulating a 694-148-12 record, winning 21 conference championships, and winning the 1995 national championship;

Whereas, since 2000, Coach John Cook has sustained excellence in the University of Nebraska volleyball program by accumulating a 656-98 record, winning 4 national championships, obtaining 3 national runner-up finishes, and appearing in 22 consecutive NCAA tournaments;

Whereas the University of Nebraska volleyball team has over 300 consecutive sellouts, the longest sellout streak of any NCAA women’s sport;

Whereas the University of Nebraska athletic programs create pride and joy both on the fields of play and in the hearts of alumni and fans, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln leads the United States with 351 Academic All-Americans;

Whereas more than 200,000 alumni residing in all 50 States and in countries around the world are proud to call the University of Nebraska their alma mater; and

Whereas there is no place like Nebraska: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Nebraska, women’s volleyball players, and their supporters in setting these records on Volleyball Day in Nebraska;

(2) recognizes the impact of the record-setting Volleyball Day in Nebraska on young women, inspiring them to pursue their aspirations as athletes and individuals; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate send—

(A) 1 copy of this resolution to Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen;

(B) 1 copy of this resolution to University of Nebraska System President Ted Carter and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Rodney Bennett; and

(C) 1 copy of this resolution to University of Nebraska-Lincoln Vice Chancellor for Athletics Trev Alberts, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Volleyball Coach John Cook, former University of Nebraska-Lincoln Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit, and former University of Nebraska-Lincoln Volleyball Coach Pat Sullivan.

SENATE RESOLUTION 429—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE IN SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY’S (IAEA) NUCLEAR SECURITY ROLE

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

S. RES. 429

Whereas the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), created in 1957 for the purpose of assisting states in the development and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, plays a critical role in the global nuclear security regime;

Whereas the agency’s activities in nuclear security date back to the 1970s, when the

agency began providing ad hoc training courses in physical protection;

Whereas these responsibilities expanded following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, reports of nuclear smuggling in the late 1990s, and again after the devastating terror attacks on September 11, 2001;

Whereas the agency established the Nuclear Security Fund to assist countries in protecting their nuclear and radiological materials and facilities;

Whereas the agency’s nuclear security efforts are sustained by its technical expertise, experience, transparency, and confidentiality;

Whereas rogue regimes and clandestine organizations continue to exhibit the ambition to acquire nuclear materials that can be used to build crude radiological and nuclear weapons;

Whereas the IAEA Office of Nuclear Security relies almost exclusively on voluntary funding, which is inherently unpredictable and inconsistent; and

Whereas the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., issued an Action Plan on April 1, 2016, citing the agency’s need for “reliable and sufficient resources”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) maintains that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays an indispensable role in strengthening nuclear security and safety around the globe;

(2) reaffirms that the United States has a vital interest in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and securing nuclear materials; and

(3) encourages the United States and other member states of the IAEA to take steps to ensure that the IAEA has the resources needed to successfully carry out its duties, including—

(A) supporting the IAEA to continue convening ministerial meetings on nuclear security to promote political commitment;

(B) contributing to the implementation of the IAEA’s Nuclear Security Plan through reliable and sufficient resources; and

(C) providing appropriate political, technical, and financial support to the Nuclear Security Fund.

SENATE RESOLUTION 430—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 20, 2023, AS “NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY AWARENESS DAY”

Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 430

Whereas many children from families with low incomes begin school already far behind children from families with higher incomes;

Whereas research shows that children from families with low incomes are less likely to have interactions that are critical for language development, including—

(1) being read to or spoken to regularly;

(2) having access to books;

(3) having a literacy-rich environment; and

(4) accessing high-quality early childhood education programs;

Whereas language development is an important precursor to literacy;

Whereas access to high-quality early childhood education programs can support early childhood language development and literacy;

Whereas, as early as 3 years of age, the vocabulary of a child can predict the future third-grade reading proficiency of the child;

Whereas, during the first 3 years of life, children from families with low-incomes can

hear as many as 30,000,000 fewer words than children from more affluent families;

Whereas, in 2022, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (referred to in this preamble as “NAEP”) reported that—

(1) 66 percent of fourth-grade public school students nationally performed below the NAEP proficient level in reading; and

(2) 37 percent of fourth-grade public school students nationally performed below the NAEP basic level in reading; and

Whereas awareness of early childhood literacy issues must be heightened to encourage greater support to help children achieve reading proficiency: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 20, 2023, as “National Early Childhood Literacy Awareness Day”;

(2) encourages States, localities, schools, early childhood education programs, and nonprofit organizations to observe the day with appropriate programs and activities, with the goal of increasing public awareness about early childhood literacy issues;

(3) recognizes the need to make early childhood literacy a public priority;

(4) supports the efforts of businesses, State and local governments, early childhood education programs, nonprofit organizations, educators, and volunteers dedicated to increasing childhood literacy rates;

(5) applauds the initiatives of businesses, State and local governments, early childhood education programs, nonprofit organizations, educators, and volunteers that—

(A) use time and resources to address early childhood literacy issues, the causes of poor reading scores, and potential solutions to those issues; and

(B) work to promote the love of reading among children; and

(6) encourages parents, other family members, and caregivers to introduce children to the world of books and other literacy activities in different ways, including by—

(A) reading to children;

(B) telling stories;

(C) teaching letters and words; and

(D) visiting libraries.

SENATE RESOLUTION 431—RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2023 AS “NATIONAL WOMEN’S SMALL BUSINESS MONTH”

Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RISCH, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. BRITT, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BUDD, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WARNER, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Ms. BUTLER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 431

Whereas there are more than 12,000,000 women-owned businesses in the United States;

Whereas women-owned businesses generate \$1,800,000,000 in total revenue;

Whereas women-owned businesses employ more than 9,230,000 workers;

Whereas 38 percent of small businesses are women-owned;

Whereas women entrepreneurs continue to face challenges in Federal contracting, mentorship, and access to capital; and

Whereas the celebration of “National Women’s Small Business Month” would honor the efforts of women business owners and women entrepreneurs and recognize the significance of the contributions of these business owners and entrepreneurs to the small business community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the month of October 2023 as “National Women’s Small Business Month”;

(2) honors the vital role of women small business owners and women entrepreneurs in the United States during “National Women’s Small Business Month”;

(3) recognizes the significant contributions of women small business owners and women entrepreneurs to the small business community;

(4) supports and encourages young women entrepreneurs to pursue their passions and create more start-up businesses;

(5) recognizes the importance of creating policies that promote a business-friendly environment for small business owners that is free of unnecessary and burdensome regulations and red tape; and

(6) supports efforts to—

(A) encourage consumers to shop locally; and

(B) increase awareness of the value of locally-owned small businesses and the impact of women-owned small businesses on the economy of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 432—RECOGNIZING THE FIFTH COMMEMORATION OF THE ANTISEMITIC ATTACK THAT OCCURRED ON OCTOBER 27, 2018, AT A SYNAGOGUE IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. FETTERMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 432

Whereas, on October 27, 2018, a mass shooting took place at the Tree of Life synagogue in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where members of the Tree of Life, Dor Hadash, and New Light congregations were engaged in Shabbat morning services;

Whereas 11 innocent worshippers were killed, 2 congregants were critically injured, and 5 law enforcement officers were injured while attempting to rescue victims and apprehend the perpetrator in the deadliest antisemitic attack in the history of the United States;

Whereas the 11 innocent worshippers killed in the attack included—

- (1) Joyce Fienberg;
- (2) Richard Gottfried;
- (3) Rose Mallinger;
- (4) Jerry Rabinowitz;
- (5) Cecil Rosenthal;
- (6) David Rosenthal;
- (7) Bernice Simon;
- (8) Sylvan Simon;
- (9) Daniel Stein;
- (10) Melvin Wax; and
- (11) Irving Younger;

Whereas the perpetrator of the attack espoused antisemitic views and targeted the

individuals worshipping at the Tree of Life synagogue because of their religious beliefs;

Whereas, on June 16, 2023, a Federal jury in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, found the perpetrator of the attack guilty on 63 counts, including hate crimes and the obstruction of the free exercise of religion resulting in death;

Whereas the people of the United States commend the service of those jury members, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, the Allegheny County Police, all other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies who assisted with the investigation, and the prosecution team from the United States Attorney’s Office in the Western District of Pennsylvania and the Department of Justice that worked to bring the perpetrator to justice;

Whereas antisemitism remains an evil and destructive form of identity-based hate that destroys lives and runs contrary to the values of the United States; and

Whereas the Anti-Defamation League recorded 3,697 incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism and assault throughout the United States in 2022, representing a 36 percent increase in antisemitic incidents from 2021, and the largest number of antisemitic incidents on record since the Anti-Defamation League began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the memory of the victims who were killed in the horrific, antisemitic attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on October 27, 2018, and expresses the hope that their memory may continue to be a blessing to their families and community;

(2) honors the selfless and dedicated service of—

(A) the law enforcement and emergency response officials who responded to the attack;

(B) the medical professionals who provided and continue to provide care for the victims; and

(C) the law enforcement agencies and Federal prosecutors who worked to investigate and hold the perpetrator accountable in Federal court for his hateful, antisemitic attack on the Jewish community;

(3) expresses continued solidarity and support to the Tree of Life, Dor Hadash, and New Light congregations, the Pittsburgh Jewish community, and the families, friends, and loved ones affected by the tragedy;

(4) commends the Tree of Life community for, in the wake of tragedy, dedicating itself to efforts to eliminate antisemitism and other forms of identity-based hate;

(5) condemns rising antisemitism and stands with the Jewish communities in Pittsburgh, the United States, and around the world; and

(6) reaffirms the commitment of the United States—

(A) to condemn antisemitism in all its forms;

(B) to protect the right of the people of the United States to freely exercise their religious beliefs; and

(C) to ensure the safety and security of all people of the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1357. Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 662, to amend the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 to improve disaster relief funding for agricultural producers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1357. Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 662, to amend the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 to improve disaster relief funding for agricultural producers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Block Grant Assistance Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. DISASTER RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023, AMENDMENT.

Title I of the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (division N of Public Law 117–328; 136 Stat. 5201), is amended, in the matter under the heading “DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS—PROCESSING, RESEARCH AND MARKETING—OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY”, by inserting “: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Agriculture may provide assistance for losses described under this heading in this Act in the form of block grants to eligible States and territories” before the period at the end.

SEC. 3. EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.

Amounts repurposed under the amendment made by section 2 that were previously designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4001(a)(1) of S. Con. Res. 14 (117th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2022, and section 1(e) of H. Res. 1151 (117th Congress), as engrossed in the House of Representatives on June 8, 2022, are designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(i)).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I have 10 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 FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the ses-

sion of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 10 a.m.

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, October 25, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 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, October 25, 2023, at 3:30 p.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 Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

The Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS, FORESTS, AND MINING

The Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I would ask unanimous consent that John Schmidt, a detailee in my office,

be granted floor privileges until December 31 of this year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 26; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 198, H.R. 4366, as provided under the order of October 24; further, that if Senator PAUL makes a motion to discharge S.J. Res. 44 from the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Senate vote on the motion at 11:30 a.m.; further, that if the motion to discharge is not agreed to, the Senate vote on the Braun amendment No. 1182 to H.R. 4366; finally, that upon disposition of the Braun amendment, the Senate move to consideration of S.J. Res. 42; that there be up to 30 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the joint resolution be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:02 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate October 25, 2023:

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

JESSICA LOOMAN, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.