United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024 *No. 37*

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord, our God, wonderful in glory, who keeps Your promises to those who serve You, consecrate with Your presence the path You desire our lawmakers to take.

Lord, kindle in the hearts of our Senators the true love of peace, and guide them with Your wisdom. May the faith they confess with their lips put such courage and hope in their hearts that they may live each day in the spirit of Your love. Cleanse them from every thought displeasing to Your goodness; that with pure hearts, clear minds, and calm hope, they may honor You.

And, Lord, have mercy upon our war-torn world.

We pray in Your powerful 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, February 29, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, congressional leaders announced that we have come to an agreement to avoid a shutdown this weekend. So we can finish our work to fund the Federal Government for the rest of the year.

The House is set to vote today on extension of government funding until March 8 and March 22.

Once the House acts, I hope the Senate can pass the short-term CR as soon as tonight, but that will require all of us working together. There is certainly no reason this should take a very long time. So let's cooperate and get it done quickly.

I am very glad we got this done before Friday's deadline. I worked very hard with Chair MURRAY, Vice Chair COLLINS, and all the appropriators to reach this agreement. It is consistent with the top-line agreement I reached with the Speaker back in January, without the unacceptable poison pill riders that we said would not fly.

As I said directly to the Speaker over and over and over again, the only way to get things done here is with bipartisanship, and this agreement is another proof point.

This agreement is proof that when the four leaders work together, when bipartisanship is prioritized, when getting things done for the American people takes a high priority, good things can happen even in divided government. And I hope this sets the stage for Congress to finish the appropriations process in a bipartisan way very soon.

On top of all that, I am very glad the American people won't have to deal with the pain of a government shutdown. Even a partial shutdown would have threatened services for moms and children, would have hurt our veterans, would have hurt farmers, home buyers, law enforcement, and so much more. Thankfully, we are on track to avoiding all of that.

If there is anything that this appropriations process has made abundantly clear, it is this: When serious-minded Democrats and serious-minded Republicans engage each other with a desire to get things done, good things happen even in divided government. We avoid shutdowns. We invest in the American people. And we make our country stronger.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, now on the border, today, President Biden will visit the

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

U.S. border at Brownsville, TX, where he will meet with local leaders and border enforcement agents. Three hundred miles up the Rio Grande, Donald Trump is expected to visit the border at Eagle Pass, TX.

When President Biden and Donald Trump visit the border today, Americans will see a glaring contrast between the sitting President who negotiated the strongest border bill we have seen in years and a former President exploiting the border for political gain and making sure nothing gets done.

President Biden knows the border is a serious problem. So look at what he has done: He sat down with Republicans to draft the strongest, most comprehensive border security bill America has seen in decades. And we worked with him here in the Senate to make that happen.

Let me say that again: President Biden knows the border is a serious problem, and that is why he sat down with Republicans to draft the strongest, most comprehensive border bill America has seen in decades.

But what did Donald Trump do? Donald Trump deliberately sabotaged the very same border reforms he spent years calling for because he wants to exploit the border for the campaign trail. He explicitly took credit for the bill going down. ''Please, blame it on me''—those were his words.

It was Donald Trump who sabotaged the bill with dramatic updates to asylum. It was Donald Trump who sabotaged a bill that reformed parole authority. It was Donald Trump who sabotaged the bill that provided new resources to Border Patrol agents. And it was Donald Trump who sabotaged the bill endorsed by the Border Patrol union, the Wall Street Journal editorial page, and the Chamber of Commerce—hardly liberal groups.

So when Donald Trump goes in front of the cameras to lament the mess at the border, he should look in the mirror—he should look in the mirror—because he is the one who tanked the best chance we have seen in ages to fix it. Until Donald Trump said ''oppose it,'' it would have passed here in the Senate and even in the House. And when Republicans in Congress say they will shut the government down or bring this legislative process to a halt unless we fund the border, that is bull, because they are the ones who blocked the deal.

Republicans are the ones exacerbating the border by pushing things like H.R. 2, which not only did not get a single Democratic vote, it wouldn't even solve the problem—it wouldn't even solve the problem.

And, again, as I have reminded Speaker JOHNSON over and over again, he can't do anything without bipartisanship when we have divided government. So to simply write what you want and put it for a vote when it gets no Democratic votes is a path to not solving the problem but, in a sense, doing the same thing Donald Trump did: use it for political purposes, say the problem isn't solved for political purposes when you are the ones who prevented the problem from being solved.

Republicans cannot—cannot—claim to be serious about fixing the border while voting against the very same border policies they have spent years calling for. Republicans can't can be serious about fixing the border when they say it is an emergency, and then when they have a chance to stop it, they refuse for crass political purposes.

That is what happened in the last few weeks, and Democrats will make sure the American people know it.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, now, on Ukraine, in the meeting with President Biden and congressional leaders earlier this week, I relayed what President Zelenskyy told me when I visited Ukraine: If Ukraine gets the aid they need, they will win the war. If they don't get those armaments, they will almost certainly lose.

Russia's recent advancements haven't been because of a lack of a Ukrainian plan or lack of a will to fight or a lack of courage or strength or dedication on behalf of the Ukrainian President and the Ukrainian people. I can assure you that after meeting with President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people, their resolve to win the war is stronger than ever. Russia's advancements have come simply because the Ukrainians are running out of ammunition.

If we don't provide this aid ASAP, not only will Ukraine lose the war but the United States will lose out to the Putins, the Xis, and the other autocratic heads of state. We will lose out. The American people will lose out over the next decades economically, militarily, diplomatically, and politically.

So I say to Speaker JOHNSON, this is a true turning point for America—for our strength, for our credibility on the world stage, for our national security. Speaker JOHNSON, please don't shrink from this moment. Let the supplemental bill, which passed with 70 votes here in the Senate, move forward. History—history—is watching you.

(The remarks of Mr. SCHUMER pertaining to the introduction of S. 4 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

REMEMBERING JIM KETCHUM

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, to the Senate Curator, last week, I was saddened to hear about the passing of the first permanent Senate Curator, Jim Ketchum.

Very few in the history of the U.S. Senate have been tasked with the immense responsibility of preserving the history of this storied institution. Jim was one of them, and the very best.

A proud son of New York, Jim's career took him on a tour through some of America's greatest national landmarks, including the Arlington National Cemetery, the White House, and, of course, the U.S. Capitol.

At the White House, Jim served as Curator for not one, not two, but three administrations: Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon. When President Kennedy first appointed him at the ripe age of 24, he was concerned he was ''too young'' to hold the post, to which Jackie Kennedy responded: ''That's what they told Jack.'' So Jim was truly special, and everyone saw it.

Here in the Senate, Jim led a long list of initiatives to preserve the Capitol Building, not just as a museum of American history but as a bustling beacon of democracy.

It is thanks to Jim that the Old Senate and Supreme Court Chambers were restored and now welcome millions of visitors every year. It is thanks to Jim that countless paintings, artifacts, and pieces of furniture documenting our history were recovered and preserved. And it is thanks to Jim that we all have a better understanding today of this building, this institution, and our place in history.

So Jim will be deeply missed. But I think it is safe to say that Jim will live on in this institution he worked so doggedly to preserve.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The 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, as I said earlier this week, government shutdowns never produce positive outcomes. That is why Congress is going to avoid one this week. Leaders in both parties and both Houses have agreed to a plan that would keep the lights on while appropriators complete their work and put annual appropriations bills on a glide path to becoming law.

I appreciate our colleagues' commitment to see this process through and make good on this essential governing responsibility, and I expect the Senate to act swiftly on a first step this week.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. President, on another matter, the serious challenges facing America's national security today illustrate some pretty timeless lessons about how the world works—basic realities about geopolitics that were true before I got a front row seat to President Reagan's foreign policy 40 years ago and which are just as true today.

The first lesson is the value of alliances. America is the world's preeminent superpower—economically and militarily. But our influence and prosperity are facilitated by a network of partnerships. I don't mean this so-called international community of

multinational debating societies; I mean the hard power of America's military alliances and partnerships. The strength of these alliances rests on the credibility of the commitments we make to our friends.

The second lesson is peace through strength. Those who wish us harm speak the language of power, and we have to be able to speak it as well. In other words, our deterrent capabilities here have to be as credible to our adversaries as our commitments are to our allies.

Congress's most fundamental constitutional obligation is to provide for the common defense. That is why I urged the Senate so forcefully to pass a national security supplemental and why I believe passing full-year defense appropriations is absolutely critical.

When America is strongest, Congress provides sufficient funding to preserve America's military primacy. And our adversaries and allies alike actually trust that the Commander in Chief is prepared to use force decisively.

The last lesson is the importance of clear strategy. Even the most capable force—the most formidable hard power—is only as effective as the strategy it serves. Understanding our interests is a prerequisite to actually advancing our interests.

The challenges we face today test whether and how well America understands these lessons. The threats to our personnel, our interests, and our allies in the Middle East are particularly illustrative.

Since October 7, America's closest ally in that region has been engaged in a serious fight to rescue its people and restore its security against Iran-backed terror. As I said repeatedly since that day, we owe it to Israel—a fellow democracy under assault by savage terrorists—to provide the time, the space, and the support necessary for them to destroy the threat posed by Hamas.

To prioritize a cease-fire at all costs is to actually ignore that the terrorists exploited precisely such a cease-fire to slaughter innocent Israelis on October 7. To blame Israel for conducting operations to free hostages and kill terrorists in hospitals and schools is to excuse Hamas for violating laws of war and exploiting civilians by militarizing such civilian infrastructure in the first place.

As negotiators work on further hostage releases, it is critical that Israel operates from a position of strength backed by a rock-solid ally whose policies are driven by our Nation's interests, not influenced by one party's perceived political interest.

I hope that President Biden will demonstrate enough political courage to stand up to those in his party who want him to tie Israel's hands or put his own hands on the scales of Israel's domestic politics.

Meanwhile, the chief architect of chaos in the Middle East—the world's most active state sponsor of terrorism—speaks the language of power. Plain and simple, America has to invest in rebuilding our arsenal, but we also have to show Iran that we are not afraid to actually use it. Flattening a few warehouses in response to hundreds of Iran-backed attacks on U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria, frankly, is not a meaningful exercise of strength. Nor is wasting expensive precision weapons to intercept expendable drones launched by Iran's expendable proxies.

The commander of the U.S. task force contending with Houthi terrorism in the Red Sea acknowledged recently that even though his forces were succeeding tactically, the Houthis and their Iranian patrons were simply not deterred. Frankly, tactical proficiency and hitting Houthi targets with F–35s and Tomahawk missiles should be a low bar of the world's most advanced military. It is also beside the point.

In reality, unless these tactics are nestled in an effective strategy to change an adversary's calculus to sufficiently degrade his ability to threaten our interest, it doesn't matter how tactically proficient our efforts are.

So this isn't a matter of dense, academic theories of international relations. The questions we need to ask ourselves are really quite basic: Are we being reliable allies to our friends? Do we credibly strike fear into the hearts of our enemies? Are our tactics aligned with a coherent strategy? If not, what are we doing here?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Republican whip.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday, we learned that Leader MCCONNELL, the longest serving party leader in Senate history, will be stepping down from his leadership role next January. There will be time later for a fuller discussion of all his contributions to our party and to this institution, but for today, I just want to express my gratitude for his service.

Had he done nothing else, his successful efforts to build up the judiciary with judges who are committed to the rule of law and to the Constitution would secure his place in the history books.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve with him.

ECONOMY

Mr. President, 3 years ago around this time, the Senate was considering Democrats' so-called American Rescue Plan Act. With a $1.9 trillion pricetag, this reckless spending bill was packed with liberal priorities and progressive giveaways.

Before it even passed, Democrats were warned that it was too big. They were warned even by liberal economists that that kind of spending risked setting off an inflation crisis, but they chose to go ahead anyway. Inflation almost immediately—immediately—began accelerating, and 3 years later, we are still dealing with the crisis the Democrats helped create.

In the last 3 years, inflation reached levels not seen since the early 1980s. While inflation may have descended from those stratospheric heights, we are still—and I say ''still''—stuck with an inflation rate well above the Federal Reserve's target rate of 2 percent.

Three years of persistent price hikes have taken a serious toll on Americans' budgets. Working families have had to scrimp and save to stretch their dollars. Many Americans have had to turn to their credit cards to cope with higher and higher costs. Families have had to cut back on saving and investing for the future.

Today, it costs a typical family $1,000 more per month to maintain the standard of living it had when President Biden took office—$1,000 more per month just to tread water. And it is no wonder. Energy costs are up 31.7 percent. Housing costs are up 19.4 percent. Car repairs are up 27.5 percent. And the list goes on.

Where inflation has really hit many Americans is at the grocery store. Grocery prices are up 21 percent under President Biden. The cost of food now takes up a larger share of Americans' disposable income than it has at any point in more than 30 years.

Faced with higher prices, shoppers have had to adjust. Families are opting for cheaper alternatives. They are putting items back on the shelves, and they are hunting for deals at multiple stores. Tighter budgets have become a fact of life in the Biden economy.

As I said, many Americans have had to turn to credit cards to cope with higher prices, and with the Federal Reserve having to keep interest rates elevated to fight inflation, paying off that debt has gotten harder.

High interest rates have also put the American dream of owning your own home increasingly out of reach. The average mortgage rate has more than doubled since the President took office.

The Biden inflation crisis has made life harder for a lot of people. It is harder to save. It is harder to get ahead, harder to make ends meet. Yet President Biden still tries to claim his economic policies are working, that the economy somehow is doing well.

Well, Americans disagree. A January poll found that 63 percent of Americans believe economic conditions are getting worse. Another poll found that 54 percent of voters rate their personal economic situation as fair or poor, and 7 out of 10 voters in the same poll also said they expect that higher prices are here to stay.

For the last 3 years, the White House has attempted to disclaim responsibility for the inflation crisis that has done so much to harm family budgets. Despite economists agreeing that the President's reckless spending led to higher inflation, the White House has taken every opportunity to pin the blame somewhere else.

The latest strategy? Complaining about ''shrinkflation,'' which refers to instances where goods have gotten smaller but the price has stayed the same.

The President even released a video on Super Bowl Sunday lambasting snack companies for shrinking their packaging and ''ripping off'' consumers. It is a tactic that fits well with the President's previous attempts to blame price gouging for higher prices, but these arguments are political spin and not serious explanations.

Jason Furman, an economist who served in the Obama administration, previously ''described the focus on price gouging as a distraction from the real causes and solutions'' of inflation, to quote one article where he was quoted. And the New York Times referred to the President's focus on shrinkflation as ''a blame-shifting message.''

I expect we will get more blame shifting from President Biden in the State of Union Address next week, as well as more of the same reckless spending proposals that helped create the crisis in the first place. Meanwhile, the American people will continue to suffer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ISRAEL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today in pursuit of peace in the Middle East. After nearly 5 months of war in Gaza, the human suffering must end. Just today, Americans woke up to the news that Israeli troops had opened fire on Palestinians desperate for humanitarian aid, killing dozens and adding to the more than 30,000 people in Gaza who have been killed during this conflict.

Hamas's October 7 terrorist attack on Israel took more than a thousand lives. Israel, like every nation, has the right to defend itself and the right to prevent another terrorist attack like this one from ever occurring again.

Other rights are important as well. The people who live in the Middle East deserve a lasting peace and deserve to live their lives with dignity and self-determination.

For decades, the United States Government has supported a two-state solution to guarantee those rights for both Israelis and Palestinians—two states for two people. For years, I have spoken out against the diminishing prospects for a two-state solution. For years, Palestinians have been poorly served by their leaders, both in the West Bank and in Gaza. For years, even before October 7, Hamas's governance of Gaza was a major impediment to peace. And also for years, I have believed that Israel's long-term strategic interests were endangered by Prime Minister Netanyahu's leadership.

Since October 7, it has only gotten worse. Prime Minister Netanyahu and his rightwing war cabinet have created a massive humanitarian disaster, pushing the region even further away from a two-state solution. Indiscriminate bombings in Gaza have killed tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, wiping out entire families and leaving thousands of children orphaned. Nearly 2 million people have been displaced, and 45 percent of the residential buildings in Gaza have been destroyed. The Israeli Government's refusal to allow adequate humanitarian aid into Gaza has left hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of starvation.

And still, more than 100 hostages are held by Hamas. The Israeli Government's top priority should have been to bring those hostages home, but, instead, Prime Minister Netanyahu focused on revenge. He publicly invoked the plight of hostages to justify indiscriminate bombing that thwarts the negotiations that would bring them home. This is a betrayal of the families whose loved ones are still held hostage by Hamas.

Netanyahu's opposition to a two-state solution is fierce and long-standing. For decades, he has undercut Palestinian independence. He has deliberately propped up Hamas to try to keep the Palestinian people divided. He approved Qatar's payments to Hamas—payments that may have been used for Hamas's military operations. He expanded settlements in the West Bank, turning the region into a patchwork of disconnected parts that undermine Palestinian hopes for a united homeland.

The result has been a vicious cycle of violence. That is why, for years, I have advocated that U.S. military aid should help Israel and Palestine move toward peace, not subsidize policies that move peace further out of reach.

Today, Netanyahu is doubling down on his opposition to peace. The Prime Minister has openly and directly rejected U.S. policy. He has promised he will not compromise and he will hold fast to his rejection of a Palestinian State.

Under his leadership, the Knesset has backed him to the hilt. The Prime Minister has also tried to pressure Egypt and other countries in the region to accept Gazan war refugees, raising the specter that his government is working toward permanently expelling Palestinians from their homes. He has insisted that Israel and Israel alone must control the entire area of the Jordan River, leaving no room for a Palestinian State.

And the fallout from his bombing campaigns is not limited to Gaza. He has given cover for Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other terrorist groups to expand the conflict.

The bottom line is clear: Netanyahu's leadership in this war has been a moral and strategic failure that is in direct opposition to American policy and American values.

Netanyahu cannot bomb his way to the return of the hostages. Netanyahu cannot bomb his way to security in the region. Netanyahu cannot bomb his way to peace.

The only path to protect Israel's long-term security and to ensure that Palestinians have equal rights, equal freedom, and the self-determination they deserve is a two-state solution—two states for two peoples.

This has been the stated policy of the U.S. Government dating back decades, and if this far-right Israeli Government does not share that goal, then it is our responsibility to make clear that the Netanyahu government does not get a blank check for U.S. aid.

That is why I have been fighting to condition aid to Israel and protect civilians in Gaza. Over the last few months, I have called for Israel to prevent harm to civilians and for accountability when U.S. weapons are used to target refugee camps and safe zones. I have challenged the administration's decision to bypass Congress in approving arms transfers to Israel. I have worked with my colleagues, led by Senator VAN HOLLEN, on an amendment to condition aid to Israel.

Earlier this month, President Biden delivered a critical step, issuing a national security memorandum that makes clear that any country that receives aid from the United States must follow international law, including Israel. This is a good policy, but enforcement is crucial. Oversight of its implementation is necessary to ensure that it is a meaningful step and not just lip service.

Netanyahu has made clear he plans to launch a military offensive in Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians with nowhere safe to go are currently taking refuge. The administration has warned that expanding operations to Rafah would be a ''disaster'' that the U.S. Government does not support.

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid remains strangled and hunger and disease are sweeping Gaza.

Netanyahu is on dangerous ground. Every day that he continues, more innocent civilians in Gaza suffer and are killed, and thousands more Americans say ''enough'' and call on our government to end U.S. aid for such actions.

President Biden has indicated that we are on the verge of a cease-fire that would free the hostages and would allow desperately needed humanitarian aid in. I hope that is true, and it is a meaningful step toward an enduring peace.

But until then, the United States has a responsibility to ensure that our weapons aren't used to target innocent children and families in Gaza. We also have a responsibility to ensure that our support is used to advance long-term peace and stability in the region.

We recognize that it takes two parties to negotiate a meaningful peace, and we should also urge the allies of the Palestinians to do the same. All nations should push in the same direction: Condition aid, return the hostages, resume the cease-fire, and advance peace through a two-state solution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks, in the Hawaii Legislature, there was a common custom to ask the presiding officer that the previous speaker's remarks were adopted

as if they were my own. And although I didn't listen to the entirety—I am not prepared to do that because I only got the back end—I just wanted to commend the senior Senator from Massachusetts for her moral clarity about the conduct of the war in Israel and the fact that it is a strategic and moral failure, and that the Prime Minister of Israel must be held to account for the fact that so many people are suffering so unnecessarily.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Mr. President, overturning Roe v. Wade, as outrageous and devastating as it was, was never going to be the end for Republicans. They knew that, and we knew that because they weren't exactly keeping it a secret.

Except there was a set of sort of center-right and even center-left Republicans and pundits who swore privately that it wouldn't open the floodgates to an even greater assault on women's reproductive freedoms. They scoffed at even the possibility of the very kinds of outcomes that we are seeing playing out across the country today—like last week, when the Alabama Supreme Court effectively banned IVF and left people who are trying to start a family with nowhere to turn.

It turns out people were right to be worried, and one of the worst infirmities in this town is that somehow—somehow—you are considered savvy, thoughtful, a centrist, an institutionalist if you never, ever freak out.

''Everything is going to be fine.''

Everything is always going to be fine. He is not going to try to overturn the results of this election. They are not going to go through with overturning Roe v. Wade. Every savvy person at every cocktail hour that I don't attend is always telling us to chill out.

But now it is happening. They went through with it. They repealed Roe, and all of the worst-case scenarios from all of the organizations that pushed for reproductive freedom were deemed right.

I still remember the great Senator from the State of Colorado who made as an emphasis in his reelection campaign women's reproductive freedom. Do you know what everybody called him on the Republican side? Not Mark Udall—Mark Uterus. They thought that was hilarious. Look at this weird focus on women's reproductive freedoms. And he sat there and said: But look, if the Supreme Court changes hands, then Roe is in peril.

Everyone was told to chill out. They made fun of this U.S. Senator for predicting the future.

People were right to be worried. Extreme Republicans are going after women and reproductive freedoms through every way that they can—in Congress, in statehouses, in the Supreme Court, and in State courts.

Gutting Roe was never going to be enough; it was a gateway to all-out war. Right now, millions of women in America are paying the price. They are terrified of what they can and cannot do and what may or may not land them in prison. It is not a crime to start a family, but now it is. It is not a crime to dispose of a nonviable embryo in a lab, but Republicans have made sure that it is a crime.

Do you know how hard it is to do IVF? Everybody who is at least my age knows somebody who had a struggle getting pregnant, and that thing is emotionally and physically and financially exhausting. I have never thought of IVF through a partisan lens. I honestly hadn't. It didn't occur to me that they were going to go after people actually trying to get pregnant.

This is not about babies and life and families. This is about punishing women. This is about taking away their autonomy. This is their objective.

You know, 5 years ago, you might have come to me, and if I had made this kind of speech, you would have been like: Whoa, that is a little much, buddy. They are not going to do that.

They did that. They are still doing that. Republicans in Congress were quick to dismiss it. They even got a memo from their campaign committee to distance themselves from the very policies that they enabled for literally decades. They will try to on the one hand say they are for IVF but on the floor block legislation to enable IVF, and support fetal personhood legislation and block bills to protect IVF federally. They did it yesterday. So no one is fooled.

I know—and the Senator from Connecticut and I have been talking about this—sometimes it is very difficult to see through the fog on policy. On this one, it is not unclear who did what and what they are in the middle of doing. There is nothing pro-life about ripping away the only options available for someone trying to have a kid. There is nothing pro-life about jeopardizing a woman's life by forcing her to carry a nonviable pregnancy to term. That is not a principled belief; that is insanity. It is actively harming an innocent person.

In the wake of last week's decision, fertility clinics in Alabama are abruptly pulling the plug on IVF treatments because they are afraid of being prosecuted. That is leaving people wondering if they will be able to have a kid or not.

Not only can they not go through the process in Alabama, they can't even move their embryos because they are afraid of getting in legal trouble. They can't even move their embryos, right? Like, this was supposed to be—in the most optimistic scenario as well, laboratories of democracy, States can do whatever they want. You can't even take your own embryos and move them to another place where IVF is legal. Say you are a couple in Birmingham close to completing the IVF process. Suddenly, you can't continue it in your home State, and you don't have the ability to finish it somewhere else either. Overnight, these patients are left without options, with no notice and no recourse.

The human implications of the Alabama Supreme Court decision are as obvious as they are devastating, but it is also important to be crystal clear about how we got here politically, because this decision is not an anomaly. It is not a fringe view held by a few whacky judges in a single State. It is the direct result of a decades-long, organized, national effort by Republican hardliners to dismantle reproductive freedoms that were, until recently, the law of the land. They have shown zero restraint in going after people's rights, and there is no reason to believe that they are going to stop anytime soon. They will not. They did this, and they want more, and they have a plan. This is on them. This record is theirs to own.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, before I close, I want to briefly address the ongoing appropriations process. I am glad that we are avoiding a needless and harmful shutdown as we work to finalize the spending bills, including one from the subcommittee I chair overseeing transportation, housing, and urban development.

Our subcommittee, along with our House counterparts, worked on a bipartisan basis to deliver a bill that both adheres to top-line funding levels and provides resources for vital programs that millions of Americans rely on every day. That includes supporting affordable housing, helping to alleviate homelessness, improving roads and highways in communities big and small so that people can get around, and hiring air traffic controllers and rail safety inspectors to make sure our flights and our trains are safe and on time.

It is not a perfect bill. Everyone did not get what they wanted. But I can tell you that Democrats and Republicans worked in good faith and made the most of the funds we had available. I am glad we are near the finish line on our bill and really hope we can find bipartisan agreement on all of the bills so that we can finally fully fund the government. This funding cannot wait any longer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senators Stabenow and Wyden be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each prior to the scheduled vote.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MURPHY. So here is a snapshot of what happened. Republicans said that fixing the border was their top priority. They appointed a hardline conservative, my friend Senator JAMES LANKFORD, to come up with a bipartisan bill to fix the border. They said that if Lankford can get the deal, they would support it.

We got that deal. If it had passed, it would have been the toughest border

security bill in our lifetime. Arguably, it would have been the toughest border security bill ever—$20 billion for border security, more detention beds, more patrol officers, more asylum officers, more equipment to intercept fentanyl, a new power for the President to close parts of the border when crossings get too high, an end to the era in which an asylum applicant could spend 10 years in the country before their application was heard.

It was tough. It would have helped to fix the border. It was a compromise. Get this: It was supported by the conservative pro-Trump Border Patrol union and the left-leaning association of immigration attorneys. The Washington Post was for it, and the Wall Street Journal was for it.

It was a true compromise, but within hours of the bill's release, Republicans killed it. When it came to the floor, only four Republicans voted for the bill they asked for.

It has now been 22 days since Republicans killed the toughest border security bill of our lifetime—a bipartisan bill that would have helped us control the border. Why did Republicans do this? Because Republicans do not want to fix the border. The secret is out. For Republicans, the border is a moneymaking grievance machine, and if we passed our border bill and fixed the problem, Republicans literally wouldn't know what to do with their days. FOX would lose ratings. Republican Senators would lose clicks and donors. Donald Trump would lose an issue to campaign on. What would some of my Republican Senate colleagues do with their weekends if they couldn't go down to the border and dress up as Border Patrol officers and scream about fake outrage? If the border bill passed, if the border was under control, Republicans might have to get hobbies.

If the bipartisan bill to control our border had passed, our border would be more orderly, our immigration system would be vastly improved, and America would be better off and more secure, but, yes, Republicans would lose their moneymaking grievance machine—the broken border.

That is what happened. Republicans killed the toughest bipartisan border bill that they have ever seen because they don't want to fix the border. They want to keep it a mess because they think it helps them politically.

Twenty-two days since Republicans killed the toughest bipartisan border security bill in over a decade.

Do you know who does want to fix the border? President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress. Joe Biden asked for those additional resources to hire more Border Patrol Agents, to build more detention capacity, and to install more technology at the border to interrupt the fentanyl trade. Joe Biden helped write the bipartisan border bill which gave him those new powers I talked about.

Today, Joe Biden is going to be at the border to talk about his agenda to put border security first but also to make other badly needed changes to our immigration system, like improving our asylum system and getting a pathway to citizenship for people who have been living in the shadows of our society for far too long.

Donald Trump is going to be at the border today, too, but for a different reason. Donald Trump does not see the border as a problem that needs to be fixed; Donald Trump sees the border as a problem to be exploited. He openly brags about instructing his followers here in the U.S. Senate to kill the bipartisan border bill because its passage would have been good for Joe Biden and the country.

To Joe Biden, the border is a serious issue that he wants to fix, and he has a plan to do it. For Donald Trump and Republicans, the border is just a moneymaking grievance machine that they refuse to solve.

The problem is, nothing can pass in Washington without Republican support. I know there are Republicans who voted for the bipartisan bill—only four—but the rule is that Republicans refuse to support more resources, more patrol officers, more detention beds, and the rule is that they will vote against any bipartisan legislation to make the border more secure.

So 22 days since Republicans killed the toughest border security bill during our time in the Senate, and unfortunately the border is going to remain unresolved so long as Republicans don't want to solve it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank Senator MURPHY for his extraordinary leadership. He and Senator LANKFORD and Senator SINEMA came together, leading an effort that was amazing—intense, hard-fought negotiations on something so very, very important. And they got it done. They got it done—a bipartisan border security bill, the toughest in our generation.

I want to thank Senator MURPHY for that and for his continual advocacy and putting a spotlight on the fact that we can still do this. We have this bill. We have this bill in front of us.

The President of the United States, President Biden, has gone to the border to say: Pass the bill, the bipartisan bill.

Donald Trump has gone to the border to say: Yay, more chaos. Keep it coming.

The truth is—and we hear it all the time; I have heard it my whole time in the Senate—Republicans like to portray themselves as being the party of national security. If you want your family to be safe, you need to vote for Republicans.

Well, 22 days ago and counting—we will see how high this number gets—22 days ago, we had a chance to boost our national security by voting for the strongest border security bill in our lifetime; and 22 days ago, they killed it. That is a fact, and we all know why. Donald Trump told them to do it, and if Donald Trump tells Republicans to jump, the only question they ask is, How high, sir?

Democrats are committed to solving the challenges at the border. There are multiple issues that need to be addressed and that are addressed in this bill, and we know it is critical that we give President Biden the tools he has been asking for, ever since he came into office, to be able to resolve these issues. Again, that is exactly what this legislation would do. It is bipartisan. It meets all of the tests that people have been asking for for months.

And, if it passed, it would significantly improve our Nation's security in a number of important ways. It would reform our broken asylum system so that decisions would be made more quickly on who should be allowed to remain in the country and who should be deported. Those allowed to stay would be provided authorization to work so that they could take care of themselves and their families and fill crucial jobs in our economy while waiting for their cases to be resolved.

The legislation would create a new emergency authority that would allow the President of the United States to pause the processing of asylum claims of migrants who arrive between ports of entry when cases rise beyond a certain number.

The legislation provides important resources to increase our border security: more border security agents and more equipment that our agents have been asking for over and over again and that the President has asked for over and over again. This is one of the reasons that the border security union strongly supports this as a major step forward that will make a major difference in solving the problems at the border.

And, so importantly, this legislation included the FEND OFF Fentanyl Act, which would make our communities safer by helping government Agencies more effectively disrupt the flow of opioids and penalize traffickers. By the way, that is the whole country impacted by that. People in Michigan, families in Michigan, are impacted by that, not just those at the border. Oftentimes, people forget that Michigan is, in fact, a border State. We are a border State.

This bill would provide up to $75 million in grants that are critically needed for our State and local communities and Tribal law enforcement Agencies to help secure our northern border.

You know, Republicans say they care about our national security, but actions speak otherwise. Growing up, I had heard over and over again from my mom, ''Actions speak louder than words,'' and it has never been more true than on this issue of border security.

Democrats stand ready. We have been ready. We are ready. We are ready tomorrow. We are ready next week to

pass this critical legislation to improve our border security and keep our communities safe. Now, 22 days have gone by—22 days have gone by—since the Republicans said no. Let's come together and do the right thing. It is not about just talk; it is about action. The American people deserve action, and we are ready to act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF MARJORIE A. ROLLINSON

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in a few minutes, the Senate will vote on the confirmation of Marjorie A. Rollinson to serve as Chief Counsel of the Internal Revenue Service, and I want to make a few key points about her.

First, she has exactly the right experience to do the job. She has decades of tax and management experience in both the private sector and the public sector. She spent several years at the IRS Office of Chief Counsel. She has also been the Technical Deputy Associate Chief Counsel and the Associate Chief Counsel—both times on international tax issues—so she has real expertise on these issues. That is a big reason she got bipartisan support in the Finance Committee.

And this is a crucial time for the Agency in terms of implementing and enforcing tax laws, and I will just give colleagues a couple of quick examples that I know Members feel strongly about, and I would like to start with energy.

One of the big implementation jobs in the works—something that I have been very involved in and I know Members on both sides have—deals with a key part of the Inflation Reduction Act, specifically the area of incentives for energy production. This was the centerpiece of the Finance Committee's Clean Energy for America Act, a bill that I first introduced in 2015.

What motivated that legislation—and I see a number of my Finance Committee colleagues here—is we said that, for the future, to tackle climate in the right way, we had to set aside the old system of picking winners and losers and just propping up the old, carbon-intensive technologies and, in effect, go to a new system—a brandnew system—of technological neutrality—in effect, giving all the energy sources in America the opportunity to compete and compete in a way where there are no mandates—in effect, private sector style competition—with one goal: reducing carbon emissions.

The Senate Finance Committee—and there are several members on the floor right now—understands this. Our committee had never done anything like this in 100 years—to create this kind of market incentive, a market incentive to actually reduce carbon emissions.

Now, the administration has been working through, right now, a number of challenging rules. Technology neutrality is the next big one for them. It is essential to get this guidance out there so that taxpayers and clean energy producers can take full advantage of the law and, particularly, be part of this new system, this new approach, that we call technological neutrality. It will give every Member of this body—and I see additional members of the Finance Committee coming in—an opportunity to be part of this very new world in energy, and Ms. Rollinson will play a chief role as IRS Chief Counsel once she is confirmed.

If she is confirmed, she is going to play another important role in terms of tax enforcement. Every member of the Finance Committee feels strongly about making sure audits are dealt with in a responsible way. We want to do it by the book so it is not just low-income families who get audited. Everybody who is skirting the law should be subject to equal treatment under the law, and we ought to crack down on the sophisticated, wealthy tax cheats who pay for the best tax lawyers and accountants. It is a matter of basic fairness with respect to audits, and Ms. Rollinson will handle that in the right fashion.

I will close by saying I think Ms. Rollinson is an excellent pick for the job. This is a crucial time for this position. They are going to be implementing a very new energy world, a world based on technological neutrality and marketplace competition, and they are going to have the responsibility of ensuring the enforcement of tax law in a fair way, particularly as it relates to audits. That is why she got bipartisan support in the Finance Committee. It is why she deserves bipartisan support today.

I urge my colleagues now to approve the Rollinson nomination.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON ROLLINSON NOMINATION

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

Mr. RUBIO. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 60 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Cassidy	Hickenlooper
Bennet	Collins	Hirono
Blumenthal	Coons	Kaine
Booker	Cortez Masto	Kelly
Brown	Duckworth	King
Butler	Durbin	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Fetterman	Luján
Cardin	Gillibrand	Manchin
Carper	Hassan	Markey
Casey	Heinrich	Menendez
Merkley	Rosen	Tillis
Murkowski	Rounds	Van Hollen
Murphy	Schatz	Warner
Murray	Schumer	Warnock
Ossoff	Shaheen	Warren
Padilla	Sinema	Welch
Peters	Smith	Whitehouse
Reed	Stabenow	Wyden
Romney	Tester	

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—3

Barrasso	Moran	Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). 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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION RELATING TO ''WAIVER OF BUY AMERICA REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS''—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and proceed to the consideration of the veto message with respect to S.J. Res. 38, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message, a joint resolution (S.J. Res. 38) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Highway Administration relating to ''Waiver of Buy America Requirements for Electric Vehicle Chargers''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes prior to the vote.

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

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today in strong opposition to override President Biden's veto on S.J. Res. 38, a Congressional Review Act resolution to disapprove of the Biden administration's phase-in of ''Buy American'' requirements for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

We continue to see almost daily reminders that our planet is on fire. Scientists tell us we are running out of time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the worst of the climate crisis. The world is looking to the

United States for leadership right here on this floor.

If we override the veto of the President, Senator RUBIO's resolution would undermine domestic production of EV chargers. This resolution would create greater uncertainty for our domestic EV charging industry, directly contradicting our goal of having this equipment made and assembled right here in America. That is why groups like the AFL–CIO and the United Steelworkers oppose the Rubio resolution. It would mean shipping jobs overseas instead of building our supply chain right here at home.

This resolution would actually weaken ''Buy American'' requirements. It would result in more EV charging projects being built overseas, not less. It would undermine American workers and our Nation's ability to be global leaders in electric vehicles.

Put simply, a vote to override the veto is a vote against American manufacturing of EV chargers.

That is why I oppose this resolution and encourage my colleagues to do so as well. Thirty-five percent of our emissions in this country for global warming come from our mobile sources—35 percent. It is imperative we continue to work on that and go after that as our target.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON VETO MESSAGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 38) pass, the objections of the President of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding?

The yeas and nays are required under the Constitution.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 61 Leg.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—3

Barrasso	Moran	Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote the yeas are 50, the nays are 47.

Two-thirds of the Senators voting, having not voted in the affirmative, the joint resolution under consideration fails to pass over the President's veto.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session to proceed to the consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Ronald T. Keohane, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Ms. BUTLER. Mr. President, I rise today on the final day recognizing Black History Month to bring attention to this Chamber and to the American people watching the very harmful and anti-democratic practice of book banning happening or being attempted in States all over our country.

The First Amendment in our Constitution is clear:

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

This amendment gives all Americans the right to speak, publish, and read what they wish, free from government censorship. But a nationwide campaign in States like Florida, Texas, Utah, North Dakota, and even California has been deployed to limit our children's learning and enforce restrictions on one of our most fundamental freedoms.

Right now extremist politicians are working overtime to strip our Nation's bookshelves of essential literature that helps to tell the complete story of America, including the stories of great sacrifice, contribution, and pain of Black Americans. These include stories of struggle and triumph against hatred and bigotry. They recount efforts to reconcile the promise of American ideals with the reality of our most pervasive challenges. Authors who have long been recognized as chroniclers of our Nation's journey have been written off by lawmakers who seek to narrow the scope of what our children can learn about our history.

Now, the organizers of these State-by-State battles would have you believe that they are upholding parents' choice, that imposing these book bans would somehow protect the innocence of our children. But I and so many others who have been watching this contend that the mass effort to shield young learners is an utter slap in the face to communities who too long had to fight to have their very stories told.

Our Nation's most ethnically and racially diverse generation have seen themselves reflected in these pages, and for these extremist adults to deem these stories inappropriate is a direct attack on their experience and their very existence.

Over the past 2 years, these blanket attacks on our books have become more organized and well funded. In 2022, more than 2,500 books were targeted. According to the American Library Association, the majority of those books were about Black or LGBTQ-plus people.

As only the 12th Black Senator to serve in this Chamber and the first openly LGBTQ Black Senator to serve, I will not stand by silently as our stories get erased. That is why I will be joining the Freedom Readers and their efforts to ensure the freedom to learn by regularly taking to the Senate floor and inviting my colleagues to join me to read excerpts of books that tell the story of our Nation, its legacy, and the people who contribute to America's character of imperfection, of resilience, and of progress.

''SISTER OUTSIDER''

I will start today by offering excerpts from an essay in a book titled ''Sister Outsider,'' by Audre Lorde. Anyone who is remotely familiar with Lorde's exceptional body of work can contest to her genius as a writer, a poet, a philosopher, and a civil rights activist.

Her book ''Sister Outsider'' is a collection of speeches and essays in which Ms. Lorde explores the questions surrounding race, identity, life, community, and meaning from her lens as a Black queer woman from Harlem, encouraging readers to do their own self-reflection and inviting them to draw new conclusions about the world around them, and to speak and take action.

Ms. Lorde's work ''The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action'' first appeared in the Cancer Journal, where she shares her journey of having breast cancer, which ultimately led to a mastectomy. It reads, in part:

> In becoming forcibly and essentially aware of my mortality, and of what I wished and wanted of my life, however short it may be, priorities and omissions became strongly etched in a merciless light, and what I most regretted were my silences. Of what had I ever been afraid of? To question or to speak as I believed could have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many different ways, all the time, and pain will either change or end. Death, on the other hand, is

the final silence. And that might be coming quickly, now, without regard for whether I had ever spoken what needed to be said, or had only betrayed myself into small silences, while I planned someday to speak, or waited for someone else's words. And I began to recognize a source of power within myself that comes from the knowledge that while it is most desirable not to be afraid, learning to put fear into perspective gave me great strength.

She writes:

Within those weeks of acute fear came the knowledge—within the war we are all waging with the forces of death, subtle and otherwise, conscious or not—I am not only a casualty, I am also a warrior.

What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am woman, because I am Black, because I am lesbian, because I am myself—a Black woman warrior poet doing work—who has come to ask you, are you doing yours?

Ms. Lorde continues:

And it is never without fear—of visibility, of the harsh light of scrutiny and perhaps judgment, of pain, of death. But we have lived through all of those already, in silence, except death. And I remind myself all the time now that if I were to have been born mute or had maintained an oath of silence my whole life long for safety, I would still have suffered, and I would still die. And where the words of women are crying to be heard, we must, each of us, recognize our responsibility to seek those words out, to read them and share them and examine them in their pertinence to our lives. That we not hide behind the mockeries of separations that have been imposed upon us and which so often we accept as our own.

We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired. For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us.

The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken.

In closing, the writings of Ms. Lorde's in ''The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action'' are not only a beautiful articulation in examining the cost of being silent in the face of what could have been for her a terminal illness, she gives us an even better gift: She invites us to acknowledge our commonalities as well as our differences in order to give them voice and to deepen our understanding and expand the power of our words and turn those words into action.

While Ms. Lorde first wrote and delivered this essay in 1977, I think we could all agree that it could easily have been written just yesterday.

Shamefully enough, school administrators in Tennessee took steps to target this book and to issue educational gag orders with a goal to suppress hundreds of other stories from being told.

Now more than ever, we must heed Ms. Lorde's call to speak into the silence, to raise our voices and reject the intimidation of those who would have the history of our Nation, the beauty of our differences, and the complexity of our humanity disappear from generations of learners to come.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me as Freedom Readers, to challenge those who attempt to undermine our history, and uplift the diversity of our stories against the attacks to erase them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

BICENTENNIAL OF VERMILLION COUNTY, INDIANA

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise today to salute Vermillion County, IN, on the occasion of its bicentennial, which occurred earlier this month.

I begin this tribute thousands of miles and an ocean away from West Central Indiana, in Iejima, which is an island off the coast of Okinawa. There in Iejima, in a park by the side of a road, stands a small monument made of white stone. There is a bronze plaque that is placed near its base, and it reads:

At this spot the 77th Infantry Division lost a buddy, Ernie Pyle, 18th April 1945.

They weren't the only ones who lost a friend that day. No other writer so vividly captured the experiences of the American soldier or better chronicled the war that they fought during World War II than Ernie Pyle. The warmth and directness of Ernie Pyle's columns channeled the voice of the GI and communicated it clearly to the countrymen back home.

Pyle was by so many accounts America's greatest war correspondent. He was a shy farm boy from the town of Dana in Vermillion County. In fact, the house he was born in is still there. His writing style reflected his upbringing in the warmth of smalltown America and Hoosier common sense.

That monument that I mentioned near the spot he died is just one of the incredible things that Vermillion County's people have accomplished and how the values instilled there made them possible.

Now, I will allow that not all Americans have heard of this part of Indiana. After all, it is a small spot on the map, bounded to the east by the Wabash River—7 miles wide, 37 miles long—home to less than 16,000 citizens, but as Ernie Pyle's life demonstrates, we are all, each and every one of us, better off because of the Hoosiers who have called Vermillion County home.

They have done great things, and they have done them quietly, in and far away from their own communities. In fact, when our Union was in peril, our freedoms threatened, Vermillion County's residents answered the call again and again and again.

They fought in the siege of Vicksburg, suffered in the misery of Andersonville. Their bodies rest far from Vermillion County's Hoosier soil. They are in American cemeteries abroad. Their names can be found on the tablets of the lost. Their families still hold the Purple Hearts and hang the Gold Star banners.

These Hoosiers have not only defended America, but with their industriousness and creativity, they have contributed to all of our walks of life.

The area's first settlers discovered the richness of Vermillion County soil. Two centuries later, their descendants still work the land. In fact, hundreds of farms—many of them family-owned—help drive the local economy and feed our Nation.

Vermillion County has provided much else, though: leaders—leaders who have risen to Indiana's highest offices; but not just leaders—explorers, actors, athletes, engineers, and, of course, one legendary journalist who was the voice of the American soldier and won the Pulitzer Prize.

The rich history of Vermillion County isn't simply characterized by a list of outbound citizens, though. It is also characterized by hopeful new arrivals.

At the end of the 19th century, the town of Clinton was a destination for Italian immigrants seeking employment in the nearby coal mines. They embraced their new home and their country, and they left a legacy in Vermillion County that is still visible and recalled every September. The Little Italy Festival is a 4-day celebration of Clinton's Italian heritage held almost every Labor Day since 1966. It is one of the most cherished local traditions.

With its small towns, their historic buildings, family businesses, its beautiful landscapes, and beloved covered bridges, Vermillion County is quintessential Indiana and quintessential America. But it is the Hoosiers who live there that we can celebrate on this anniversary.

A story Ernie Pyle recorded from ''good old Dana''—as he put it—catches their spirit just as clearly as his reports from the front gave voice to the GIs. You see, when Pyle's mother suffered a stroke, she badly needed a hospital bed. There was only one in the entire county. It was the property of a family living 8 miles away. They were happy to loan it, but the Pyles had no way to transport their bed to their home. When he heard about this dilemma, one Claude Lockeridge, who lived just down the road from the Pyles, fired up his old Model T truck and drove 16 miles in the snow to fetch the bed.

It is a little gesture of kindness, perhaps, but a million of these are what makes America—and I would argue, it is what makes America great.

The occasion of its 200th anniversary is a fitting time not simply to honor Vermillion County but to remember—to remember how much our small towns and our local communities matter and how essential the decency, kindness, and patriotism found in places like Vermillion County is to our Republic.

To the people of Vermillion County, we join you in the celebration of your

bicentennial; we thank you for all you have done for our State and our country; and we look forward to the days ahead.

God bless.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

TRIBUTE TO RON WANEK

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I have the honor of recognizing Mr. Ron Wanek, a great business leader, innovator, and philanthropist from the great State of Wisconsin, as he, his family, and his company celebrate his induction into the Wisconsin Manufacturing Hall of Fame.

Wisconsin has a long history of being the home of many successful manufacturing businesses. With his induction into the Manufacturing Hall of Fame, Mr. Wanek joins the ranks of past inductees, such as Jerome Case, Patrick Cudahy, Sam Johnson, Walter Kohler, Oscar Mayer, Frederick Miller, and Gustave Pabst, just to name a few of the 78 iconic titans of business who helped to make Wisconsin a proud manufacturing State.

For his part in continuing the long legacy of Wisconsin manufacturing, Ron Wanek founded Arcadia Furniture in the small town of Arcadia, WI, back in 1970. Back then, Mr. Wanek employed just a total of 35 people. Through hard work and innovation, in 1982, Arcadia Furniture merged with Ashley Furniture Cooperation and became Ashley Furniture Industries.

During these last 42 years, Ashley Furniture has grown into the world's largest manufacturer of home furnishings, with over 30 million square feet of worldwide manufacturing and distribution capability, with retail locations throughout the United States and in 67 countries worldwide. Ashley proudly employs 16,000 people in the United States, including 3,000 hard-working Wisconsinites.

Throughout his successful professional career, Mr. Wanek has become the personification of the phrase ''business is a force for good.'' With his focus on philanthropy, the Ronald & Joyce Wanek Foundation has contributed tens of millions of dollars in support for important charitable causes in Wisconsin and across the country.

Through his charitable work, Mr. Wanek has become an unmatched supporter of technical and STEM education at both the K–12 and postsecondary levels. Through his various programs, partnerships, and scholarships, the Ronald & Joyce Wanek Foundation aims to encourage students to pursue careers in STEM fields and improve the quality of life in their own communities.

In addition, Mr. Wanek is an ardent supporter of America's veterans. His establishment of the beautiful Soldiers Walk at Memorial Park in Arcadia, WI—a premier war memorial in the United States, with 29 monuments and statues honoring all of those who have served our country—is just one example of his dedication to those who have sacrificed and, in some cases, paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedoms Wisconsinites and Americans enjoy every day. Some would say the Arcadia Soldiers Walk rivals the magnificence of the war memorials around our Nation's Capital.

Finally, Mr. Wanek is not only a great personification of the American dream, but he actively and enthusiastically supports a steadfast American free enterprise system—a system which has made this country the economic engine of the world.

I congratulate Ron Wanek on his recent induction into the Wisconsin Manufacturing Hall of Fame. It is well-deserved.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Michigan.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, when my three children were born, it was unlike anything else I have ever, ever experienced before. Those 3 days were the best in my life, and it is hard to put into words how beautiful and how daunting it is to have a child.

Every American who wants to be a parent should have that opportunity, and when they are faced with medical challenges while starting a family, they should have the right to pursue every resource to help them navigate that process. IVF is one of those tools, and it has helped countless Americans. For those who have experienced frequent miscarriages, suffered from genetic disorders, or are otherwise affected by infertility, IVF is an essential procedure. It is safe. It is necessary. And it has given millions of people the chance to have a family.

Last week, a ruling from the Alabama Supreme Court put the future of IVF in jeopardy. So my Democratic colleagues and I went to work. We proposed a bill that would protect the right to seek IVF treatment for all Americans. I am grateful to Senators DUCKWORTH and MURRAY for leading the charge on this legislation, and I was proud to be one of the cosponsors.

But, yesterday, Republicans blocked the Senate from passing it. They decided to put politics before protecting a critical medical procedure. They have put this resource at risk, one that has allowed millions of women and LGBTQ Americans to have children. They think that they know better than doctors. They think they know better than parents. They think they know more than four decades of proven science. The bill they opposed is literally pro-life and pro-family. Yet Republicans refused to put it on the floor.

Let's not forget how this all started. Senate Republicans stood with former President Trump when he stacked the Supreme Court with extreme judges. And when the Court overturned Roe v. Wade, it ripped the right to make choices about reproductive healthcare away from millions of women.

And now conservatives across the country feel empowered to take it even further. The ruling in Alabama is just the latest instance in the war against reproductive freedom. It could keep millions of Americans from starting families, and Senate Republicans are just fine with that.

We don't know how far this will go. We don't know what other proven procedures Republicans will try to take away from families in the future. We don't know what effect these rulings will have on new innovations in fertility science. We don't know if they are going to come after birth control next. But one thing is very, very clear: This is just the beginning of their efforts to deny reproductive freedom.

IVF should be available to every American citizen who needs it. And when someone is choosing to have children, politicians should never get in the way.

I call on my Republican colleagues to support the Access to Family Building Act, to stop playing politics and instead stand behind the millions of Americans who simply want—who simply want—the chance to start a family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, yesterday, my good friend Leader MCCONNELL shared some big news. At the end of this year, he will step down as the Republican leader of the U.S. Senate after having served the longest tenure of any leader in Senate history. For more than 17 years, he has been the steady hand at the helm, guiding us through some of the most consequential debates in recent history. He steered us through multiple wars, through a pandemic and countless high-stakes political battles under four different Presidents. Under his leadership, Congress rewrote the Federal Tax Code to help families across the country, unleashed American-generated power, and reshaped the Federal judiciary for a generation—and so much more.

It has been an honor to serve alongside Leader MCCONNELL and witness a modern-day ''Master of the Senate.'' I will have more to say about our friend from Kentucky at a later date, but the good news is he is not going anywhere. Senator MCCONNELL will lead our conference through the end of this Congress, but he will remain in the Senate through the rest of his term. During that time, he will do as he has always done: represent the State of Kentucky and put his expert knowledge of this Chamber to use on their behalf.

For now, let me just say thanks to Leader MCCONNELL for everything he has done for this body and our great country.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Madam President, on another matter, this week, the Senate finds itself in familiar territory. For the fourth time since last September, Congress is rushing to avert a government shutdown. Unless a funding bill is signed

into law before the clock strikes midnight tomorrow, portions of the Federal Government will shut down. And if nothing changes by the following Friday, we will be plunged into a full government shutdown.

I have made my feelings about government shutdowns crystal clear. No. 1, they don't save money. No. 2, they don't solve any problems. No. 3, they hurt innocent Americans and dedicated public servants. Government shutdowns are not in anyone's best interest, and I am glad that all four congressional leaders agree that we need to avoid a lapse in funding.

Before the end of this week—before tonight, I hope—I expect Congress to pass another stopgap funding bill. This will provide more time to advance regular appropriations bills, and I hope we can see some real progress this time.

But I must say that responsibility for where we are today lies at the feet of the majority leader of the U.S. Senate. Yes, the House has its problems, but here in the Senate, Senator MURRAY, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator COLLINS, and the entire Appropriations Committee have produced bipartisan—in some cases unanimous—appropriations bills that Senator SCHUMER has simply refused to put on the floor. So, without a doubt, he is complicit in where we find ourselves today.

It is just another example of how the Senate is broken. While the ongoing game of brinkmanship is extremely dangerous, it calls into question our military readiness and jeopardizes our national security at an increasingly dangerous time.

Making matters worse, this saga is completely avoidable. As I mentioned, the Appropriations Committee in the Senate passed 12 bills last summer, providing a lot of time for Senator SCHUMER to bring those bills to the floor. That is the earliest the Appropriations Committee has acted in the last 5 years. Thanks to Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS, they laid the groundwork for a thorough and ontime appropriations process. But Senator SCHUMER has ball control, and he simply failed to put those bills on the floor in a timely fashion, leading us to where we are today.

As I said, the Senate did not pass a single regular appropriations bill before the September 30 deadline. This was September 30 of last year. I don't know if people really appreciate how broken the Senate is, thanks to a lack of leadership. We are working on appropriations bills from last year. The fiscal year began the end of September of last year. As a result of the failure to do his job, Congress had to pass stopgap funding bills in September, November, and January.

And just think about it for a minute. If we weren't lurching from one crisis to the next, what other things might we do to benefit the American people? That is what economists call an opportunity cost. Each time, the Democratic leader vowed to use the extra time to make progress on regular appropriations bills, but each time he failed to do so.

We are now 5 months into the current fiscal year, and it is embarrassing—it should be embarrassing—to note that not a single full-year funding bill has been signed into law.

Members of this body are charged to do the hard work of negotiating, debating, and passing bills to provide government Agencies with ontime funding. It is hard to do when Senator SCHUMER has us in session 2½ days a week—2½ days a week. It is hard to get your job done when you are working 50 percent of the time. But he is the one who controls the agenda. He can say we are starting Monday morning, like most Americans do, and we are not leaving until we finish Friday night, but instead, he has canceled votes on Monday so we come in on Tuesday. We have our first vote at 5:30 on Tuesday, and then we leave after lunch, typically, on a Thursday. No wonder the Senate is broken and not doing its job.

The Senate has a number of big cliffs that are fast approaching as a result of the mismanagement of the Senate schedule. We have major funding deadlines tomorrow, but we also have one a week from now, on the 8th. In addition, here is what else has not been done on a timely basis: the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. That has to be done by next Friday. We need to reauthorize and strengthen section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act before April 19 or else it lapses, making us blind to the efforts of our adversaries to undermine our national security. And, yes, we need to pass a new farm bill before the end of September. We can't do that working half weeks—2½ days a week.

It is important to note that all of these tasks—funding, the FAA, section 702 of the farm bill—should have been completed last year. We are doing last year's work. We are not doing the American people's work today, looking forward, with the challenges with which our country is confronted.

We should have wrapped up our work on each of these items in 2023 instead of punting the deadline to 2024. We are now 2 months into the new year and still struggling to complete the work that should have been done months ago.

As I said, this backlog comes with a serious opportunity cost. When the Senate is dealing with overdue assignments, we don't have the time to work on other critical issues that deserve our attention on behalf of the American people. We don't have the ability to work on legislation to address the border crisis, the fentanyl epidemic, public safety concerns, or other issues that are top of mind for the American people.

Virtually all of the time is focused on one of two things: rushing to complete work that should have been done last year or processing nominations. That is it.

Under Senator SCHUMER's leadership, regular order has been thrown out the window. He has broken the Senate. And this Chamber has simply lurched from one deadline to another.

This should be embarrassing. This is malpractice. It is not negligent because it is by design. It is intentional. This is, regrettably, what we have come to expect under Democratic leadership. This is the new norm.

For the sake of the country, I hope that in the coming weeks, the Senate will prove more productive than the past several months have been. And, yes, I hope we have new management next year after the November election. That is the best way the 330 million people in this country can contribute to changing the status quo, which is a broken Senate, and fixing it, which we know how to do if we change management.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. KELLY. Madam President, 3 weeks ago, I stood here and spoke about the consequences of my Republican colleagues walking away from the border agreement.

After decades of crisis after crisis at our border, we had a chance to be the Senators who actually did something about it. We had a real opportunity, a real bill ready to be signed into law by the President—technology to stop fentanyl, more than 1,000 additional Border Patrol agents, authorities and policy changes to prevent the border from being overwhelmed, visas to keep families together, and more. That is what Senators SINEMA, MURPHY, and LANKFORD worked on together for months, with both Democrat and Republican Senate leaders at the table and with the administration at the table, and that is what Senate Republicans turned and walked away from.

I said then that some politicians see more advantage in shouting about problems than actually solving them. Well, let's take a look at what has happened in the last 3 weeks.

A couple of my Republican colleagues traveled to Texas so they could record videos about how bad things were at the border. Neither of them supported the bipartisan border bill. Other of my Republican colleagues have stood on this floor giving speeches, pointing fingers at President Biden. They have done the same on cable news. President Biden supported the bipartisan border bill; they did not.

In fact, one of my Republican colleagues said in his floor speech the other day that he hasn't seen the two Arizona Senators on this floor giving

speeches about the border. To that Senator, I say this: That is because we are not here to just talk about the problem; we are here to do something about it.

By the way, that same Senator did not support the bipartisan border bill.

A group of House Republicans came to my State for what they called a ''factfinding tour.'' What more facts do you need? That it is bad? Of course, it is. It would be better if Border Patrol agents had the resources and staffing and policy changes from the bipartisan border bill we could have passed. That would have helped them. But the folks who went on that trip didn't want to vote for that bill. So, no, this wasn't a factfinding tour; it was just another photo op, because they would rather keep talking about the problem instead of solving the problem. Who does that help? It doesn't help Border Patrol—who, by the way, supported this bipartisan bill. It doesn't help border communities that desperately need some relief.

The problems at the border do not go away when you fly back to Washington, DC. They just don't. And they don't go away when the TV camera stops rolling.

In Arizona, these aren't just talking points; it is a challenge that we face every day that strains our communities, and it strains law enforcement. That is why I am not going to stop working to solve these issues with our border and our immigration system.

Because while anybody can talk about a problem, those of us here in this building have the power to actually do something about it.

That is our job. That is what we were elected to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

ISRAEL

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, it has been several months now since Hamas carried out a truly heinous terrorist attack against Israel. The barbarity of October 7 should not be brushed aside and cannot ever be excused.

We are talking about terrorists gunning down innocent civilians—including in their homes—committing horrible acts of torture and sexual violence, and taking hostages, among them women and elderly people and infants.

As I have said repeatedly, Israel has a clear right to defend itself and its people against the very real and continued threat that Hamas poses to Israeli civilians.

As I have also said many times, that has to be done in accordance with the laws of armed conflict and international humanitarian law.

I appreciate that this is a tough, emotional topic. War always is. But at times like this, we cannot let passion kill compassion. We cannot let the horrors of the present end the hope for a brighter future.

As Israel seeks to eliminate the threat posed by Hamas, it must make every effort to protect innocent civilians in Gaza, who make up the vast, overwhelming majority of people in the Gaza strip.

But as we have watched this conflict escalate, it has become increasingly clear that is not what is happening. Just consider, hundreds of Palestinians were injured or killed today after Israeli troops fired on civilians crowded near aid trucks desperate for something to eat. While we are still learning more about the details, you have to believe that this kind of bloodshed should be completely avoidable.

I come to the floor today as a friend of Israel. I understand the very real threats Israel—home to about half of the world's Jews—faces outside its borders and in keeping its population safe.

And I come to the floor as someone who feels very strongly that Israel absolutely must change course. The collective punishment in Gaza has got to stop, and Israel must do more to protect civilian life.

We need a mutually agreed-upon cease-fire to end the fighting as soon as possible. We need the return of all the hostages by Hamas. And we need a massive surge in humanitarian aid.

Israel needs to understand the casualties they have inflicted on the people of Gaza. The devastation they have caused cannot continue. It is not in line with American interests nor does it make Israel safer.

The prosecution of this war so far by Netanyahu's far-right government has been nothing short of an unquestionable strategic failure. Many of the families of hostages have been protesting Netanyahu themselves, demanding a mutually negotiated cease-fire to see their loved ones safely returned.

Let's consider what is actually happening in Gaza, the human reality on the ground. There are over 2 million people in Gaza who have been displaced from their homes and 1.7 million people facing imminent starvation.

Most of the water in Gaza is unfit for consumption, and two-thirds of the hospitals are no longer operating—there are only 11 left.

Think about that. Think about what that means for the countless people who are starving, who are sick, and who are scared, the survivors. Or better yet, listen to the firsthand accounts. I did.

There are more than 150,000 pregnant and lactating women in harm's way. Doctors who had worked on the ground in Gaza spoke to me about performing emergency C-sections on rubble or in tents without anesthesia and women bleeding out because they couldn't get medical care.

Since the start of the war, 66,000 Palestinians have been injured, 29,000 have been killed, and more than half of them are women and children.

We all understand that war is not a simple thing. But I will just say, I don't know how you call a military operation targeted when there are 29,000 deaths.

I don't know how you call it targeted when there are babies and children being pulled from the rubble. Who does this serve? It cannot continue this way. The situation in Gaza and in the West Bank where there has been a disturbing rise in brazen violence from rightwing Israeli settlers against Palestinian families does not lead to peace and security for Israelis or Palestinians. It just doesn't.

And the rhetoric and stated policies of the Netanyahu regime—like abandoning a two-state solution—have been nothing short of deeply dangerous and wildly counterproductive.

I have voiced my strong support for the President's Executive order to allow sanctions on Israeli settlers in the West Bank who threaten or perpetrate violence against Palestinians.

I also want to make it crystal clear now: Indefinite Israeli control over Gaza is unacceptable, as is any contraction of territory for the Palestinians.

As someone who voted against the war in Iraq, I am acutely aware of mistakes our country made. You cannot defeat terrorism through sheer military force alone. That much is clear. And it is my hope that Israel can heed that lesson.

Winning a war against terrorism isn't a matter of how many people you kill. That approach isn't just bloody and brutal; it can be self-defeating. Terrorists don't care how many people you kill. They certainly don't care how many civilians you kill, because terrorism is not a human enemy of flesh and blood. It is an idea, it is a hatred, a violence, and it thrives on suffering.

So while Israel must work to eliminate the threat posed by Hamas, that fight must be targeted if it is to be successful. You have to fight the hopelessness extremism feeds on. You have to fight the sprawl of violence that entrenches conflict. And you have to stay clear-eyed and strategic in pursuit of justice and in pursuit of lasting peace.

I may be just one of a hundred Senators here, but I have been using my voice to help move things in that direction. On humanitarian aid, I have pressed the Biden administration repeatedly in many conversations to take steps that would dramatically increase aid to Gaza.

And I made including humanitarian aid for Gaza in our national security package a red line for me as the Senate put together our bill—even as Republicans tried over and over and over again to chisel it away.

I also want to be clear about the fact that the taxpayer-funded military aid we provided for Israel for their self-defense is subject to the Leahy Law. I have insisted throughout many conversations that this law is implemented as intended and that civilians are protected and that international law is followed.

And, finally, on moving towards a lasting peace, as President Biden recently noted, talks are ongoing and

productive towards a mutually agreed-upon cease-fire and the safe return of all the hostages. Recent developments like the deaths we saw today in Gaza City will likely make that more difficult, but diplomatic efforts must continue—even after this conflict—to ensure a lasting peace.

That is why I have backed efforts to reiterate America's longstanding policy of support for a two-state solution and will rebuff any statements by Netanyahu or his government that reject Palestinian sovereignty. It is why it is important to me that we don't just talk about fighting the enemy and winning the war but that we also talk about facing the hatred, the Islamophobia and anti-Semitism that have been on the rise in the wake of this conflict and doing the work of peace, creating a future that ensures dignity and security for both Palestinians and Israelis alike.

I want to close by saying a bit about what is happening here in America and in my home State of Washington. Because while this war may be happening across the world, it has been painful for our Arab and Jewish communities at home. They are seeing not just horrific news—including sometimes about relatives and friends—but also a horrific rise in anti-Arab and anti-Semitic violence.

Synagogues in my State have faced bomb threats. A 6-year-old Palestinian boy in Illinois was stabbed to death. And across the nation, there have been other disturbing reports of violence and threats against people perceived to be Arab, Muslim, or Jewish. It is heartbreaking, and it is incumbent upon all of us to stand against that hatred.

Our North Star has to be valuing the humanity in others and listening to the humanity in ourselves. That is my message today, and it is a message I am going to keep working to see put into action.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize February as National Children's Dental Health Month. Since 1981, this month has given us the chance to acknowledge the importance of dental health for children, recognize the progress we have made on this front, and renew our commitment to ensure that all children in our country have access to quality, affordable dental care.

Oral health is an aspect of health that is often overlooked, despite its critical role in the overall health of a person. As former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop once said, ''There is no health without oral health.''

In my state, like many others, we have witnessed firsthand the consequences of neglecting oral health in young people. One story that has shaped my view on this issue is that of Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Prince George's County resident who tragically died in 2007 due to a lack of comprehensive dental services. Deamonte's death was particularly heartbreaking because it was entirely preventable. What started out as a toothache turned into a severe brain infection that could have been prevented by an $80 extraction. After multiple surgeries and a lengthy hospital stay, sadly, Deamonte passed away, 17 years ago this month.

Stories like this underscore the need for access to affordable oral health care for all Americans, particularly vulnerable and underserved communities.

While trends over the past several decades show promising reductions in tooth decay among young children, tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood. About 1 in 4 preschool children experienced tooth decay in primary teeth and at least one in six children aged 6 to 11 years experienced dental tooth decay in permanent teeth. It is also important to note that neglecting oral health at a young age increases the need for more advanced and expensive dental services, which are even less accessible than more standard types of dental care.

There is a persistent pattern of oral health disparities, as children from lower-income and minority racial and ethnic groups generally experience more disease and have less access to treatment.

Children from low-income households are twice as likely to have cavities, compared with children from higher-income households. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for children aged 2 to 5 years, about 33 percent of Mexican-American and 28 percent of non-Hispanic Black children have had cavities in their primary teeth, compared with 18 percent of non-Hispanic White children. For children aged 12 to 19, nearly 70 percent of Mexican-American children have had cavities in their permanent teeth, compared with 54 percent of non-Hispanic White children.

In its most recent Oral Health in America report, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, one of National Institutes of Health, identified disparities as one of the primary challenges facing oral health in the United States. Last year, I held a hearing in the Senate Finance Health Care Subcommittee to focus on these issues. The hearing highlighted disparities in access to oral health care, which have persisted and have serious consequences for children, adults, families, and communities. I was proud to have Dr. Warren Brill, a distinguished pediatric dentist from Maryland who has long provided care to low-income children and provided valuable insights for our conversation, serve as a witness.

Poor dental health can have lasting impacts on children. Tooth and gum pain can impede a child's healthy development, including the ability to learn, play, and eat nutritious foods. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and get lower grades than children who have good oral health.

While it might be easy to view oral health as an afterthought, it is clear that the issues resulting from a lack of care can have wide-ranging, serious impacts, especially when access to care is a struggle from a young age. Poor oral health can contribute to severe outcomes like the tragic story of Deamonte while also manifesting in broader disparities across racial and ethnic groups.

Since the loss of Deamonte, I am proud to say that we have made significant progress in improving access to pediatric dental care in our country and in my state. In 2009, Congress reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, with an important addition: a guaranteed pediatric dental benefit. Research shows that CHIP generally offers more comprehensive benefits at a much lower cost to families than private coverage.

Additionally, the Affordable Care Act, ACA, has significantly improved access to affordable dental care for millions of Americans by requiring most insurers to cover essential health benefits. I was particularly pleased that pediatric services, specifically pediatric dental care, were identified as part of the ten categories of healthcare services included in the EHB package. As a result, pediatric dental insurance coverage is available for purchase on all State-based insurance marketplaces and the federal marketplace. The dental coverage offered through ACA plans in all States covers a minimum set of benefits to ensure children have coverage for essential dental services.

Expansion of dental insurance coverage has enabled early intervention for more children from low-income households. Today, 9 in 10 children in the U.S. have dental insurance. Dental care is also a mandatory benefit in Medicaid for children since it is provided through the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program. Still, research has found that although State Medicaid programs cover children's dental services, fewer than half of all publicly insured children get the recommended care.

This figure demonstrates that there is more we can do to ensure children are receiving proper dental care. This effort is a priority of mine and an area where I believe we can make tangible changes to the lives of many Americans.

For several Congresses, Senator STABENOW and I have introduced the Ensuring Kids Have Access to Medically Necessary Dental Care Act. Our legislation would eliminate lifetime and annual limits for dental care for children under CHIP. The bill would also require

States to provide ''wraparound'' CHIP dental coverage, meaning CHIP would cover dental services for eligible children who are not enrolled in CHIP. Currently, if a child is eligible for CHIP but instead has coverage under a group health plan or employer-sponsored insurance, States have the option of providing dental-only coverage to this child through CHIP. This bill requires that dental coverage be offered.

In recent years, dentists nationwide have seen a significant decrease in operating room access for dental procedures. This problem has primarily impacted children and adults with disabilities who are in need of urgent dental care and cannot access it in an office-based setting, necessitating care in an operating room. Earlier this Congress, Senator BLACKBURN and I sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services urging them to include the recently established code for dental surgical services in the 2024 Medicare Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System. Thankfully, the code was included in CMS's final rule to expand access to these critical procedures and shorten the waitlists to receive care under general anesthesia in operating rooms.

While ensuring dental coverage for our young people is the most direct way to support their oral health, it is also important to keep in mind that providing dental coverage for adults also improves outcomes for their children. A 2021 study found that Medicaid adult dental coverage was associated with a reduction in the prevalence of untreated tooth decay among children after parents had access to coverage for at least one year. The study found that all children saw improvements in oral health, and non-Hispanic Black children experienced larger and more persistent improvements than non-Hispanic White children. A Medicaid dental benefit for adults would enhance the progress for children and provide much needed dental care and improve oral health outcomes for adults.

That is why I am proud to have introduced the Medicaid Dental Benefit Act, which would extend comprehensive dental health benefits to tens of millions of low-income Americans on Medicaid. The legislation would provide States with a 100 percent federal match for the dental benefit for three years. This investment of federal funds would support states to set up or improve their dental benefit and assist in provider education and outreach efforts to better connect enrollees to oral health care.

Oral health is a crucial part of overall health, and it should be a priority for Americans from a young age. Dental care should not be a luxury or reserved for the most privileged. Access to quality, affordable care is not only important in the fight against tooth decay and related complications, but also plays a valuable role in combatting the health disparities that plague our communities. As we recognize our progress on this issue, we must recommit to expanding access to oral health services. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

S.J. RES. 60

Madam President, we are shortly going to be voting on a motion by Senator PAUL in regards to the F–16 sale to Türkiye. Recently, the administration noted an F–16 sale to Türkiye to modernize its F–16 air capacity.

I understand my colleague from Kentucky's concern about President Erdogan's record. I share some of those concerns. The State Department's most recent human rights report on Türkiye found significant issues, including credible reports of: forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and continued detention of tens of thousands of persons, opposition politicians, former members of parliament, lawyers, journalists, and human rights activists.

In addition, Türkiye has targeted U.S. partners in the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and supported Azerbaijan in its brutal war last year to conquer Nagorno-Karabakh.

This is unacceptable, and I have not hesitated to make it clear that Türkiye needs to change course. I have consulted closely with the highest levels of the Biden administration about this transition over several months.

I believe they share my concerns, and I believe we are making progress. And our former colleague Ambassador Flake is engaging regularly on these issues with the government in Ankara.

So I want to be clear, my approval of the Biden administration's sale of the F–16 aircraft to Türkiye was not a decision I came to lightly as the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It was contingent on Turkish approval of Sweden's NATO membership. That condition has been met. Türkiye's parliament ratified Sweden's NATO membership bid. This comes at a critical time.

(Mr. BOOKER assumed the Chair.)

President Putin is continuing his brutal war in Ukraine and threatening NATO and all of Europe. Given the stakes, not only is Sweden's membership vital to NATO, so is Türkiye's.

Türkiye is a key to the defense of the southern flank of NATO. It is host to a major U.S. military presence. And Türkiye's F–16 fleet contributes to NATO, including in the Black Sea, which is critical to our national security.

That is why it is in the national security interest of the United States and our allies for Türkiye to upgrade its aging F–16 fleet to a more capable model, a model that is compatible with the United States and NATO partners. That is exactly what this sale will do. It will usher in an important new chapter in our relationship with Türkiye.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to reject the resolution being offered by my friend from Kentucky and allow this sale to go forward. It is in our national security interest. It is in the security interest of our allies. It will strengthen NATO and strengthen our resolve against Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, the United States and Türkiye have an important and complex relationship, and I have been repeatedly outspoken about my concerns regarding Ankara's actions under President Erdogan. These include President Erdogan's ongoing attacks against our Syrian Kurdish allies, his aggressive actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the role he played in supporting Azerbaijan's military assaults against Nagorno-Karabakh. The Biden administration recently briefed me on these issues and provided some answers around my concerns.

Though I have been glad to see that President Erdogan has ceased the incursions by military aircraft into Greek airspace, the administration informed me that they continue to monitor this matter closely in order to encourage the ongoing dialogue between Greece and Türkiye. Additionally, I received assurances from the administration that it will continue to warn Azerbaijan against taking further military action against Armenia and that they will work with Türkiye to prevent any further escalation of that conflict. I remain deeply troubled by President Erdogan's attacks against the Syrian Democratic Forces—SDF—in Northeast Syria; however, the administration assured me that they continue to voice their strong objections to these attacks, including the threat posed to U.S. forces working with the SDF, and reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to supporting this crucial partner, who has served as the tip of the spear in our campaign to defeat the Islamic State. The administration told me that they would more clearly communicate that commitment to the SDF to allay concerns that have been expressed about a reduced American commitment to our partnership.

While Türkiye's ratification of Sweden's NATO membership was long delayed, it has been a welcome step forward and an important signal to the NATO community. I hope that this step indicates a broader realignment of Türkiye's actions with U.S. national security interests and serves as a platform upon which we can address these other lingering issues in the bilateral relationship. It is for these reasons that I will be opposing S.J. Res. 60, which would disapprove of the sale of 40 F–16s and other defense articles and services to the Government of Türkiye. I will continue to stay in regular communication with the administration regarding their assurances on these and other key issues. It is clear that we must keep a close watch on Türkiye in the weeks and months ahead; actions speak louder than words.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today in respect to S.J. Res. 60, which, as I understand it, will be up for vote here fairly quickly. And I rise in opposition to S.J. Res. 60. S.J. Res. 60, in essence, says that we would not keep the commitment that we have made to sell or refurbish the F–16 jets to Türkiye.

I am not here to tell you that Türkiye is the best partner that we have had. Indeed, as former chairman and now ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I deal and have to deal with them regularly on a lot of issues. They are an ally in NATO. NATO, as we all know, is the strongest political and military alliance that has ever been created on the planet, and Türkiye is a member of that alliance.

To be honest with you—and I tell them this face-to-face—they are not acting like a partner; they are not acting like an ally, and there are a long list of complaints that we have in that regard.

This actually started with defense missiles that they wanted to buy, and we offered them the Patriot missiles, as we do to all of our NATO allies, and, indeed, instead, they chose to purchase Russian S–400 missiles.

At the same time, they had purchased, or were in the process of purchasing, four F–35 of ours—which everybody wants, understandably. But at the time that they bought the S–400s, I told them they can't have S–400s in the same country as F–35s. If they are going to do business with Russia, so be it, but there are consequences for that.

So as a result of that, I put a hold on the F–35s, and I was followed by the other three corners and that hold was successful and the F–35s have not been transferred to Türkiye. And that was the fight we had with them over the S–400s.

We have made them a number of reasonable offers to try to resolve this, but they have not accepted any of those offers, and the result of that is they still got the S–400s, and we still got the four F–35s, which are going to stay here until the S–400s leave the country.

So the next thing that happened was they came to us and said, well, their F–16s were aging. They needed to be refurbished, and they needed a number of new F–16s.

About that time, they decided to put a hold on Sweden and Finland entering NATO. And as we all know, Finland and Sweden really, really wanted to enter NATO shortly after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and everybody in NATO agreed with that, with the exception of Türkiye and Hungary.

Both used the accession to NATO by those two countries as a way to use leverage against other countries within NATO on some parochial disputes that they have. That is not the way you do business as an ally. When your allied, yes, you will always have issues that you have to deal with other allied countries, but you don't use the security of the whole. You don't use the good of the whole as a bargaining chip to try to get a leg up on those.

So the result of that was for a long, long time, Türkiye held up the accession of those two countries into NATO. As a result of that, I held up the F–16 purchases that they wanted to make.

Negotiations went on for a long time. We were made promise after promise. The promises were broken. But, finally, they did roll over earlier this year, late last year, and allowed the accession of both Sweden and Finland. The result of that was that we agreed that we would do what they wanted to do with the F–16s.

This particular resolution, the S.J. Res. 60, really undoes that agreement, and I can fully understand Senators being upset with Türkiye for this and a long list of other complaints that we have. But a deal is a deal and we made this agreement and they kept their side of the bargain—admittedly not very timely, but they did keep their side of the bargain. And now Finland is in, and Sweden is about to come in so that will be the state of play.

I would urge a ''no'' vote on this simply because it is imperative to the United States, when we give our word on something, that we keep our word, and so that is where we are.

Having said that, I have urged Türkiye on a number of occasions to examine their conscience and really think about what their commitment means to NATO. That commitment to NATO all the rest of us have is very, very strong, and Türkiye and Hungary have not been behaving the way the rest of us in the coalition behave.

One of the most troubling things to me is both of them hold hands with Putin under the table, and that is a very, very bad state of affairs as far as what is going on in Europe, as far as NATO's relationship with Russia, and just the overall situation.

So although we have a lot of things to complain about with Türkiye, on this particular occasion, I am going to urge that we defeat S.J. Res. 60 and actually keep the agreement that we made regarding the F–16s.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, what we have here is a clear case of quid pro quo. If Türkiye releases its hold on Sweden's membership in NATO, then Türkiye gets America's F–16s.

You may remember the last time we had a famous case of quid pro quo here. Boy, everybody was all up in a lather, and they said that we had to impeach Donald Trump because it is a quid pro quo. Apparently, it depends on what the quid is and what the quo is.

Quid pro quo, though, is actually more the norm than it is actually the exception. The speakers you have seen here today were adamantly against Türkiye and adamantly against them getting the F–35 because they possess a Russian defensive weapon system that may well allow exploitation and allow Americans to become more vulnerable.

But now they are adamantly for it because it got Sweden into NATO. Thank God Sweden is in NATO. We can all rest easy.

Rewarding Türkiye with the sale of $23 billion of F–16 fighters, though, has some repercussions, and we should think about it before we do it. I maintain that there are deep concerns about the sale as it was initially proposed in 2021, and I have maintained my opposition given Türkiye's dismal human rights record, its unreliable behavior as a NATO ally, and its disruptive military actions in the Middle East, the Caucuses, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Congress must not serve as a rubberstamp for President Biden's side deals. The quid pro quo to expand NATO should not come at the expense of rewarding the alliances most embarrassing member.

President Biden pledged to center U.S. foreign policy on the defense of democracy and the protection of human rights. But Biden's own State Department issued a human rights report for Türkiye in 2022 which identifies significant human rights issues, including arbitrary killings, suspicious deaths of persons in custody, forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrest, and the continued detention of tens of thousands of persons, including opposition politicians, former members of Parliament, lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, and even an employee of the U.S. Mission.

It doesn't sound like one of our best allies. The Human Rights Foundation of Türkiye, a nongovernmental organization operating out of Ankara, reports that some 1,130 individuals were subjected to torture and other forms of mistreatment while in custody or at extra-custodial places—meaning not jails, some, you know, out-of-the-way place that no one can see where the torture happens—and this sadly also includes the torture of children.

In March 2023, it was reported a 14-year-old boy on his way home in southeast Türkiye was stopped by the police with no justification. He was subsequently abducted and subjected to torture. The police beat him with their guns and, according to the boy's lawyer, tried to force him to say: I am a Turk, a curse upon the Kurds. When he refused, the police instructed him to memorize the Turkish national anthem by the next day, threatening to shoot him if he failed to do so. The police then bound his hands and threw him into a swamp, before local villagers, hearing his cries for help, rescued him and brought him to the hospital.

The State Department's report also identifies—our State Department—identifies severe restrictions on the freedom of expression and assembly in Türkiye, violence and threats of violence against journalists in Türkiye, increased censorship, criminal liable laws, and unfortunately much more.

Since 2014, it is estimated that more than 160,000 people were investigated

for insulting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and more than 35,000 went to trial.

Imagine if it were a crime in the United States to criticize the President how many people would be in jail.

Of these trials, 12,881 individuals were convicted and 3,625 people—including 10 children—were sentenced to prison.

While Erdogan is imprisoning men, women, and children for insulting him, he is openly praising Hamas.

So these people come to the floor and they say: Oh, we were against giving the planes to Türkiye before we were for giving them. And we don't like that Türkiye gives to Hamas, but we are playing real politics here because we want Sweden in NATO, and whether Türkiye gives money to Hamas, we are going to turn a blind eye. That, to me, is a quid pro quo not worth taking.

After Hamas's brutal October 7 attack on Israel, Erdogan defiantly claimed: Hamas is not a terrorist group; it is a liberation group.

Do you think we should be sending our best weapons to a country that said, after one of the worst terrorist activities in modern history, October 7, Hamas is not a terrorist group?

Should we be sending our prized F–16s to a country that says Hamas is not a terrorist group; it is a liberation group—mujahideen—waging a battle to protect its lands and people? No. They went to a concert and killed young people, and we are going to send our weapons to them? Why? Because we made a quid pro quo. We got Sweden in NATO, so we are going to look the other way with Türkiye giving money and support to Hamas.

This is the type of government we want to send our weapons to? Shouldn't the United States require countries to reflect our values before we send them billions of dollars' worth of advanced weapons? Shouldn't we demand that a NATO ally in particular at least respect the rule of law and basic human rights? President Biden certainly doesn't seem to think so.

The United States cannot proudly proclaim human rights to be at the center of our foreign policy while it arms a country that commits gross violations of human rights.

I also remain deeply concerned about the negative strategic implications of this proposed sale given Türkiye's reckless military actions in recent years.

Just last October, a U.S. F–16 shot down a Turkish combat drone in Syria that was operating dangerously close to U.S. forces. Ironically, this sale provides Turkey with 40 brandnew F–16s and modernizes an existing fleet of 79. We are giving them the weapons system that we just used to shoot down their drone.

Why was a Turkish drone operating so close to U.S. troops? It was targeting the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, whom we have supported for years to fight against ISIS. Türkiye views the Syrian Democratic Forces as terrorists, so in the eyes of our NATO ally, our partners in Syria are their enemy and legitimate terrorists.

Does something seem a bit confusing here? They are shooting against people we consider to be our allies in the war against ISIS. They have drones up close to us, so we have to shoot down their drones. And we are sending them our modern planes and updating their fleet. The American taxpayers are paying to arm and train these Syrian Democratic Forces, and the Biden administration is giving Turkey advanced fighter jets that will inevitably be used to shoot and kill these same people. This utter lack of strategic foresight has unfortunately become commonplace in Washington foreign policy.

This was also not the first time that U.S. forces were threatened by Türkiye's reckless military actions in Syria. In November of 2022, a Turkish drone strike on Syrian Democratic Forces put U.S. soldiers at significant risk, leaving the Pentagon to call for an ''immediate de-escalation.''

In October 2019, U.S. forces came under Turkish artillery fire which sources claimed was a deliberate effort to push American troops away from Syria's northern border. The shelling was purportedly so severe that U.S. personnel considered firing back in self-defense.

This is our ally. We are sending these people F–16s who have been shooting at us and shooting at our other allies.

There is also the fact that Türkiye—and this is not an insignificant fact—Türkiye bought the S–400 air and missile defense systems in 2019 from Russia despite strong U.S. protest. That decision prompted the Trump administration to remove Türkiye from the F–35 Joint Strike Fighter Program.

At that point, the leadership on the Republican and the Democratic side were opposed to the F–35 Program. They have now only switched their minds because of the quid pro quo. They have been given membership for Sweden, they salivate over making NATO bigger, and they do that in exchange for now sending these weapons to Türkiye.

But there are concerns that the S–400 could expose classified F–35 stealth capabilities to Russian intelligence gathering.

You see, when you have missile defense, you are gathering defense on the plane that is flying towards you. If you own both the planes and the defense system, you can coordinate with them to learn more about the vulnerabilities of the planes that might be attacking your defense system. The same is true with the F–16.

So this is strategically and militarily, No. 1, a huge cave-in to the Turks, but it actually puts our soldiers and our pilots at risk because now we are exposing the F–16, one of our planes, to the S–400, the Russian weapons system, and allow the intermatching of the two, and this will inevitably put our pilots more at risk.

The risk of the S–400 serving as a Russian Trojan horse to compromise NATO's most advanced stealth fighter was clear to everyone in the alliance, but Türkiye proceeded nevertheless. President Trump subsequently imposed sanctions on Türkiye's defense procurement agency, which the Biden administration has kept in place.

Nobody has really reversed themselves and said Türkiye is behaving and deserves a plane because they have switched course. Everybody is just saying Türkiye gets what they want because Türkiye used a form of extortion. You can call it ''quid pro quo''—that sounds better than ''extortion''—but basically Türkiye said: We are not going to let Sweden into NATO unless you give us more planes.

It looks like extortion works. This actually reinforces bad behavior. What will Türkiye do the next time they want something? They will simply act like a bad ally and hold up something we need in order to get something they want.

So both the Trump and Biden administrations don't trust our supposed ally Türkiye to keep the F–35 capabilities secure, but now we are giving them the F–16. Perhaps Congress should examine some of the ways in which Türkiye has used F–16s recently.

The Armenian Ministry of Defense claims that on September 29, 2020, in support of Azerbaijan's war to conquer the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a Turkish F–16 shot down an Armenian Su-25 attack aircraft in Armenian airspace. Türkiye has stood closely by its Azerbaijani ally in its efforts to subjugate the region, providing combat drones, military equipment, training, and, if we are to believe the Armenian Government, direct combat support.

So the planes we give to the Turks, the F–16s, are actually being used in another war with Armenia. I have not heard of any debate on which side of that war we are supposed to be on—Azerbaijan or Armenia—but your weapons will be going in the middle of that war as well.

The war in 2020 and Azerbaijan's subsequent military operation in 2023 killed thousands and created a humanitarian disaster, forcing more than 100,000 people to flee—more than three-quarters of the population of that region.

Türkiye also continues to be an unreliable ally within NATO. Not only did Türkiye blackmail the alliance by delaying Sweden's NATO bid to extract concessions, the Turks continue to regularly threaten Greece, another NATO ally. In 2022, Turkish fighter jets and unmanned aerial vehicles violated Greek airspace more than 10,000 times. President Erdogan continues his hostile rhetoric, threatening to hit Athens with missile strikes and claiming that Turkish forces may land in Greece ''suddenly one night.'' It sounds like the unstable ramblings of a leader who

doesn't deserve to have our most advanced fighter jets.

Last August, Mesut Hakki Casin, an adviser on security and foreign policy to Erdogan, claimed that ''the Mediterranean Sea belongs to us, and no one should even think about raising a sword against us there. They [Greece, Cypress, and their allies] better not forget this.''

These are the people banging the drums for war with another fellow NATO ally that we are sending these weapons to. Without a hint of remorse on their side, they just held us hostage over Sweden. Sweden gave in. Quid pro quo. You get your jets.

These statements from Türkiye sound more like the bombastic threats from North Korea's dear leader than a NATO ally.

Do we really think giving Türkiye more fighter jets will modify their behavior? Actually, withholding them was the only chance of modifying their behavior. This sale will only embolden Türkiye to continue its disruptive actions at the expense of American interests and regional stability. What do we get in return? Greater risk to U.S. troops in Syria, instability in the Caucasus, continued threats to Greece, and the privilege of defending Sweden.

While NATO is supposed to be a collective security agency, the reality is that if Sweden were ever attacked, it would be American forces doing the majority of the fighting—unless anyone truly thinks Turkish F–16s will come to their aid.

The $23 billion sale is reckless. It fails to advance the security of the American people and does nothing to alter Türkiye's immoral human rights record, its unruly behavior within NATO, or its irresponsible actions in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and eastern Mediterranean. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the joint resolution of disapproval to reject this disastrous deal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to respond for up to 2 minutes, please.

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

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, first of all, I want the record to be absolutely clear. This is not a gift to Türkiye; this is a sale to Türkiye. They are going to pay for the munitions they are going to get, the aircraft they are going to get.

As I stated when I started out, Türkiye is very, very less than a desired or good ally in the current NATO framework, and certainly, as I said, we have a long list of complaints with them.

One thing I think that I would disagree with my good friend from Kentucky—the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO was a huge, huge matter. It wasn't something that was just a parenthetical thought. It added 800 miles of direct border against Russia, which is what NATO was created to push back against. And the same thing with Sweden. Sweden has a very, very robust defense system itself.

With all due respect to my friend from Kentucky, I wouldn't put this in the vein or argument that we are going to come to the defense of Sweden. Sweden is going to come to the defense of NATO and in a very, very robust way.

Yes, we wanted them, and yes, that is exactly why I withheld the F–16 sale and refurbishment—so that we could get those two. It was extremely important.

Also, my good friend has reiterated some human rights violations that this country has. I would remind my good friend that Russia does the same thing. I have a resolution that came out of the Foreign Relations Committee that is on the floor that reiterates all those human rights and condemns Russia for those exact human rights things that my good friend reiterated, but he has a hold on it. There is one hold on that piece of legislation, and it is from the Senator from Kentucky, which I would respectfully request that he lift.

In any event, I am not here to defend Türkiye or the other things that they do. What I am here to do is to defend the importance of NATO, the importance of adding Finland and Sweden to NATO, and the fact that negotiations are the way these things get done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. The difference between Russia and Türkiye is no one is offering to sell F–16s to Russia. I am not for selling F–16s to Russia; neither am I for selling F–16s to Türkiye.

This is a clear case of quid pro quo. All of the folks who are now for it were against it just months ago. The reason they have changed their opinion is they have been given something. Türkiye extorted us. Türkiye said: If you want Sweden to be in NATO, you have to give us these planes.

So they gave up Sweden in exchange for getting the planes. It doesn't change any of the facts. The facts are these: Them having F–16s and Russian S–400s allows them to steal some of our technology, to match the technology of our fighter jets against a Russian defense system and potentially give that to Russia.

This is a problem. It has been a problem. It hasn't changed. These are the same problems that opponents of this were mentioning over and over and over again. That is why for 2 years they have been opposed to this. They have flipped. They have sold their opposition to Türkiye for admission for Sweden. It is a quid pro quo. It is a trade.

They made a trade, but publicly they will have to acknowledge they made a trade and they think somehow it is more important to sell these planes to Türkiye than it is to protect the integrity of the technology of these planes against Russian military systems.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 60

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I move to discharge S.J. Res. 60 from the Foreign Relations Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S.J. Res. 60, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Türkiye of certain defense articles and services.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I yield back my time, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge?

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 West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 13, nays 79, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 62 Leg.]

YEAS—13

Braun	Paul	Warren
Fetterman	Peters	Welch
Lee	Sanders	Wyden
Markey	Scott (FL)	
Menendez	Stabenow	

NAYS—79

Baldwin	Graham	Padilla
Bennet	Grassley	Reed
Blackburn	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Risch
Booker	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rounds
Brown	Hickenlooper	Rubio
Budd	Hirono	Schatz
Butler	Hoeven	Schmitt
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Capito	Johnson	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Sinema
Carper	Kelly	Smith
Casey	Kennedy	Sullivan
Collins	King	Tester
Coons	Klobuchar	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Luján	Tuberville
Cotton	Lummis	Van Hollen
Cramer	Marshall	Vance
Crapo	McConnell	Warner
Cruz	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Mullin	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young
Fischer	Murray	
Gillibrand	Ossoff	

NOT VOTING—8

Barrasso	Daines	Romney
Britt	Manchin	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Moran	

The motion was rejected.

(Mr. FETTERMAN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 7463, which was received from the House and is at the desk, and that the only motions and amendments in order to the bill be the following: Paul amendment No. 1614; Marshall motion to commit, which is at the desk; Lee motion to commit, which is at the desk; and Cruz motion to commit, which is at the desk; further, that the Senate vote on the above motions and amendment in the order listed, with 60 affirmative votes required for adoption of amendment No. 1614; that upon the disposition of the Cruz motion to commit, the bill be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage, without further intervening action or debate, and with 2 minutes for debate, equally divided, prior to each vote; further, that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader but no later than Friday, March 8, 2024, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 3853; that there be up to 1 hour for debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, all without intervening action or debate, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage.

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

EXTENSION OF CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS ACT, 2024

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7463) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am pleased that Democrats have just reached an agreement with the Republicans to pass a temporary extension of government funding tonight. We will have up to five votes: four on amendments and then final passage. This agreement is an important step because we not only avoid a shutdown on Friday, we also clear the way for passing the first six appropriations bills next week.

We want to move quickly. So I ask Senators to stay in their seats or near the floor until we finish our work. We are going to try, starting on the second vote, to keep votes limited to 10 minutes. So please stay in your seats.

Now, Mr. President, this year, the good Lord gave us an extra day in February. So let's make sure we finish the job and don't drag this debate into March.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. SCHUMER. Excuse me. Just one more thing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all votes in this series after the first vote be 10 minutes in duration.

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

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am really glad that we have cleared consensus that no one wants to see a government shutdown and that preventing one now will require a very short CR so we can continue making good progress on our full-year funding bills.

I have been at the table for a long time now pushing to make progress every single day, and we are genuinely close. And if bipartisan cooperation prevails, I am very confident we can, at long last—at long last—wrap up our fiscal year 2024 bills.

And, as my colleagues are aware, we plan to release the first six bills in the coming days to give everyone time to review them before a vote next week, while we continue to lock up the last six bills.

I am confident we can get all of our funding bills done in the next few weeks, as long as partisan poison pills are taken off the table.

We are working in a divided government. That means, to get anything done, we have to work together in good faith to reach reasonable outcomes. That has been true from day one of these negotiations, and we will only reach the last day of these negotiations if that happens.

Again, we are close. We are moving in the right direction. It is full speed ahead. And we will keep working hard with our colleagues to get this wrapped up and take a shutdown completely off the table by passing the strongest bipartisan spending bills we can and, hopefully, soon.

I urge all of our colleagues to vote yes on this CR so we have the time to get these done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, several of the amendments that we will vote on propose a full-year continuing resolution that would lock in dangerously inadequate funding levels for our national defense and lead to cuts in other vital programs serving our veterans, farmers, low-income families, and older Americans.

In a briefing last month, the Commander of U.S. Central Command told me that this is the most dangerous security situation in 50 years. The idea that we would consider hamstringing our military under a yearlong continuing resolution at such a time is unconscionable.

The Department of Defense has never operated under a yearlong CR. It would reduce defense spending by $27 billion relative to the level called for under the Fiscal Responsibility Act. Further, there would be problems with the misalignment of funds that in many cases would prevent critical funding from being executed. For example, 30 percent of the Navy's shipbuilding request could not be spent because the funding would be misaligned.

According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, under a yearlong CR, ''thousands of [defense] programs will be impacted with the most devastating impacts to our national defense being to personnel, nuclear triad modernization, shipbuilding and maintenance, munitions production and replenishments, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command priorities.''

Let us also remember that we would be wasting taxpayer dollars as we would forego billions of dollars in potential spending reductions and rescissions carefully identified by the Appropriations Committee.

A yearlong CR would result in a military that is less able to respond to serious security threats around the globe, and it would harm important domestic investments in biomedical research, infrastructure, and other priority areas. It would result in furloughs or hiring freezes for food inspectors and air traffic controllers, as well as slash housing assistance at a time when we already face a severe affordable housing shortage.

I urge my colleagues to reject these motions and support the responsible approach of passing the short-term measure to fund the government. We will then move to the six completed conference reports on appropriations bills and continue our important work on the remainder of the full-year appropriations bills.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

AMENDMENT NO. 1614

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I call up Senate amendment No. 1614 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 Kentucky [Mr. PAUL] proposes an amendment numbered 1614.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish prohibitions relating to the purchase or sale of State or municipal securities)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITIONS RELATING TO THE PURCHASE OR SALE OF STATE OR MUNICIPAL SECURITIES.

(a) EMERGENCY LENDING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES.—The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System may not establish any emergency lending program or facility, including pursuant to section 13(3) of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 343(3)), that purchases or sells any security issued by a State or municipality, including a bond, note, draft, or bill of exchange.

(b) OPEN MARKET OPERATIONS.—No Federal reserve bank may purchase or sell any security described in subsection (a), including pursuant to section 14 of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 353 et seq.).

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, here we go again. Senators of both parties will once again kick the can down the road.

Our national debt is over $34 trillion and growing at an alarming rate.

The majority of the Senate meets today to vote once again for more deficit spending. We now know that the Federal Reserve is not only buying the Federal debt; they are buying the debt of profligate, large-spending States like California, New York, and Illinois.

My amendment would make it explicitly illegal for the Federal Reserve to buy the debt of these big-spending, profligate individual States. It was never intended that Congress give the Fed the power, and we should make sure that it is explicit that the Federal Reserve cannot buy the debt of individual States.

I urge a ''yes'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the Paul amendment.

As part of the effort to support our economy following the onset of the COVID–19 pandemic, the Federal Reserve established a liquidity facility to help State and local governments better manage their cash flow and those pressures that existed and that they faced as a result of the increase in State and local government expenditures related to the pandemic and the delay and decrease of some tax revenues and other revenues. And all of the funds borrowed by municipalities under this program have been repaid.

So tying the Feds' hands to prevent it from helping States and municipalities, as this provision would do, would be dangerous. Congress has given the Fed the flexibility to transact in State and local bonds because we knew that it could be an important and helpful tool in times of an emergency—protecting millions of public workers, including police officers, healthcare workers, and other first responders.

So, as we have seen during the pandemic and natural disasters, uncertainty can hurt both big and small States, and the Fed's simple ability to assist States and local governments in this way can provide stability and allow policymakers to address emerging crises. Preventing emergency programs outright would be dangerous and unnecessary.

And, finally, adopting this amendment would require the continuing resolution go back to the House and be voted on again.

So I urge my colleagues to vote no on the Paul amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1614

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

Mr. PAUL. 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 West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 37, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 63 Leg.]

YEAS—37

Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sanders
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Mullin	
Graham	Paul	

NAYS—53

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

NOT VOTING—10

Barrasso	Manchin	Scott (SC)
Britt	Moran	Vance
Cassidy	Risch	
Daines	Romney	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 37, the nays are 53.

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

The amendment (No. 1614) was rejected.

MOTION TO COMMIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. MARSHALL] moves to commit the bill H.R. 7463 to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate with instructions to report the same back to the Senate in 1 day, not counting any day in which the Senate is not in session, with changes that—

(1) are within the jurisdiction of such committee; and

(2) provide—

(A) continuing appropriations for the entire Federal Government through the end of fiscal year 2024; and

(B) $14,300,000,000 in aid to Israel, which is full offset by reductions in appropriations for the Internal Revenue Service.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I ask 4 minutes equally divided prior to the vote on the motion.

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, as we assess an embarrassing fiscal fiasco, I believe a full-year continuing resolution funding the remainder of this year at last year's levels is the least of the evils we face tonight.

Our amendment will effectively freeze spending and save American taxpayers at least $70 billion.

Look, here we are already 5 months late, and I see no path to gathering in the reins of an out-of-control budget process. American taxpayers full well understand we have a broken budget process, and every Senator here knows we have not done any serious work on the Senate floor with appropriations bills since October, already 4 months into the fiscal year.

And while the Appropriations Committee should be commended for accomplishing its job in a timely fashion last July, American taxpayers also realize these individual appropriations bills could have easily been brought to the floor one at a time, exposed to sunlight and cameras, amended, and then passed in a timely fashion months ago.

But today we realize the symptoms of a bigger problem. Today, we feel the pain of a disease of failed congressional budget process, which gives too much power to too few people. But just like American families, the American Government needs to learn to live within its means, and that is why I hope soon we can turn to legislation that will secure a more stable, competent budget process.

We need to get this year's appropriations process behind us, pass a yearlong CR, and then address legislation which brings teeth to an old budget law that forces the President and Congress to do our job in a competent, timely fashion.

And, finally, our amendment also funds Israel at the White House's request, thus showing the world once again America stands besides Israel.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the House just voted overwhelmingly to send us this clean and very short CR to keep our government open while we work on passing final funding bills, which is exactly what we should all be focused on now.

But this particular motion wouldn't just prevent the Senate from averting a shutdown tomorrow; it would swap the clean, short-term CR for a full-year CR that means devastating across-the-board cuts and tie it to military aid for Israel to a yearlong CR.

We are not going to throw in the towel on our funding bills, and we are not going to do half of our job by sending aid to some of our allies while leaving others like Ukraine in the dust.

We have already on this floor passed a comprehensive national security package in an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Now the House just needs to pass that—and I am confident they will—as soon as the Speaker brings it up for a vote.

So, tonight, let's pass this CR, get our funding bills done, and keep working to get the comprehensive supplemental signed into law. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Has time expired for both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington has 50 seconds.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield it back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time is expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are going to enforce the 10-minute rule. We announced it earlier. So please stay in your seats. Let's get the next amendments done with expedition.

VOTE ON MOTION TO COMMIT

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

Mr. MARSHALL. 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 West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 14, nays 76, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 64 Leg.]

YEAS—14

Blackburn	Johnson	Paul
Budd	Kennedy	Rubio
Cruz	Lee	Scott (FL)
Hagerty	Lummis	Tuberville
Hawley	Marshall	

NAYS—76

Baldwin	Carper	Ernst
Bennet	Casey	Fetterman
Blumenthal	Collins	Fischer
Booker	Coons	Gillibrand
Boozman	Cornyn	Graham
Braun	Cortez Masto	Grassley
Brown	Cotton	Hassan
Butler	Cramer	Heinrich
Cantwell	Crapo	Hickenlooper
Capito	Duckworth	Hirono
Cardin	Durbin	Hoeven
Hyde-Smith	Ossoff	Sullivan
Kaine	Padilla	Tester
Kelly	Peters	Thune
King	Reed	Tillis
Klobuchar	Ricketts	Van Hollen
Lankford	Rosen	Warner
Luján	Rounds	Warnock
Markey	Sanders	Warren
McConnell	Schatz	Welch
Menendez	Schmitt	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schumer	Wicker
Mullin	Shaheen	Wyden
Murkowski	Sinema	Young
Murphy	Smith	
Murray	Stabenow	

NOT VOTING—10

Barrasso	Manchin	Scott (SC)
Britt	Moran	Vance
Cassidy	Risch	
Daines	Romney	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this motion, the yeas are 14, the nays are 76, and the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

MOTION TO COMMIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I have a motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Utah [Mr. LEE] moves to commit the bill H.R. 7463 to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate with instructions to report the same back to the Senate in 1 day, not counting any day in which the Senate is not in session, with changes that—

(1) are within the jurisdiction of such committee; and

(2) provide continuing appropriations for the entire Federal Government through the end of fiscal year 2024.

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

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, this motion calls for a full-year CR. Let me tell you what a full-year CR taking us to September 30—if we were to go to a full-year CR, one taking us to September 30, we would save $130 billion.

Now, there have been comments made on the floor even this evening that are not correct, suggesting that this would take disproportionately from defense. It is just not true. Under a full-year CR, regular defense would be $1.4 billion higher relative to fiscal year 2023, while regular nondefense would be $40 billion less than fiscal year 2023.

In a day and age in which we are living with a $2 trillion deficit and crippling inflation coming as a result of that, we should take this as an opportunity to achieve a win for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, right now, our job is to avoid a government shutdown. The House has just sent us a very short, bipartisan CR to make sure that our Agencies and programs continue operating as we work together to pass the first six of our final funding bills next week. The House did its job. We need to do ours, and we need to keep pushing to complete our 2024 budget.

This motion would not prevent us from averting a shutdown. It would direct the Appropriations Committee to abandon weeks and weeks of very hard work and negotiations that reflect the input and interests of the Members of this body.

I urge a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, that one took 14 minutes. Let's beat it on this one. Please stay in your seats.

VOTE ON MOTION TO COMMIT

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

Mr. LEE. 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 West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) would have voted ''yea.''

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 12, nays 77, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 65 Leg.]

YEAS—12

Blackburn	Johnson	Marshall
Budd	Kennedy	Rubio
Cruz	Lee	Scott (FL)
Hawley	Lummis	Tuberville

NAYS—77

Baldwin	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hagerty	Rosen
Booker	Hassan	Rounds
Boozman	Heinrich	Sanders
Braun	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schmitt
Butler	Hoeven	Schumer
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Shaheen
Capito	Kaine	Sinema
Cardin	Kelly	Smith
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Luján	Thune
Cornyn	Markey	Tillis
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Van Hollen
Cotton	Menendez	Warner
Cramer	Merkley	Warnock
Crapo	Mullin	Warren
Duckworth	Murkowski	Welch
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murray	Wicker
Fetterman	Ossoff	Wyden
Fischer	Padilla	Young
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—11

Barrasso	Manchin	Romney
Britt	Moran	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Paul	Vance
Daines	Risch	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). On this vote, the yeas are 12, the nays are 77.

The motion is rejected.

The Senator from Texas.

MOTION TO COMMIT

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I have a motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. CRUZ] moves to commit the bill H.R. 7463 to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate with instructions to report the same back to the Senate in 1 day, not counting any day in which the Senate is not in session, with changes that—

(1) are within the jurisdiction of such committee;

(2) provide continuing appropriations for the entire Federal Government through the end of fiscal year 2024; and

(3) include the text of the H.R. 2 (the Secure the Border Act of 2023), as passed by the House of Representatives on May 11, 2023.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today with a motion to commit to instruct that H.R. 2 be added to this continuing resolution.

H.R. 2 contains a comprehensive plan to secure the border, to stop catch-and-release, to build the wall, to stop visa overstays, and to reform abuse of immigration, parole, and asylum laws.

In the past couple of weeks, we have seen tragedy across this country, including of a 22-year-old woman murdered in the State of Georgia, including a 2-year-old child murdered in the State of Virginia, including a 14-year-old child raped in Boston, MA, including a child under 14 raped in Louisiana—all by illegal aliens released by the Biden administration.

It is time for this to end. This bill has passed the House, and if the Senate wants to secure our open borders, we can do so right now—today.

I urge an affirmative vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the clock is ticking. We face a partial shutdown of the government tomorrow night. We cannot let the threat of that government shutdown be used as leverage to set aside the bipartisan agreement on the CR before us in order to jam through deeply partisan immigration policy. We are not going to throw in the towel on our very carefully negotiated funding bills we have worked on in favor of a full-year CR that would impose devastating across-the-board cuts to defense and nondefense programs.

Vote no.

VOTE ON MOTION TO COMMIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Mr. CRUZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, that one was 11 minutes. Let us get to 10.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is 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 West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 32, nays 58, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 66 Leg.]

YEAS—32

Blackburn	Graham	Mullin
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Budd	Hagerty	Rubio
Capito	Hawley	Schmitt
Cornyn	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Johnson	Sullivan
Cramer	Kennedy	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Tuberville
Ernst	Lummis	Vance
Fischer	Marshall	

NAYS—58

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Braun	Kelly	Shaheen
Brown	King	Sinema
Butler	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Luján	Stabenow
Cardin	Markey	Tester
Carper	McConnell	Van Hollen
Casey	Menendez	Warner
Collins	Merkley	Warnock
Coons	Murkowski	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wicker
Fetterman	Padilla	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	Young
Hassan	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—10

Barrasso	Manchin	Romney
Britt	Moran	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Paul	
Daines	Risch	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 32, the nays are 58.

The motion was rejected.

The majority leader.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am happy to inform the American people there will be no government shutdown on Friday. When we pass this bill, we will have, thank God, avoided a shutdown, with all its harmful effects on the American people.

I thank my colleagues for working together. It is good we are not shutting down. Now let us finish the job of funding the government so we don't have to do this again.

As I have said repeatedly to the Speaker, the only way to get things done in divided government is bipartisanship. I am glad the Speaker heard our plea and worked with us to avoid a shutdown.

Next week, we hope to bring the first six funding bills to the floor and send them to the President's desk before March 8. The vote tonight is a strong indication that we can work in a bipartisan way to get those bills passed.

We hope to finish funding all of the government by March 22. That is the commitment the Speaker made to us yesterday, and we are counting on him to follow through.

What we have done today has overcome the opposition of the MAGA hard right and gives us a formula for completing the appropriations process in a way that does not shut down the government and capitulate to extremists.

I thank Leader MCCONNELL, Speaker JOHNSON, Leader JEFFRIES, Chair MURRAY, Vice Chair COLLINS, and all the appropriators who helped reach this agreement.

VOTE ON H.R. 7463

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill is considered read a third time.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 77, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 67 Leg.]

YEAS—77

Baldwin	Ernst	Lummis
Bennet	Fetterman	Markey
Blumenthal	Fischer	McConnell
Booker	Gillibrand	Menendez
Boozman	Graham	Merkley
Brown	Grassley	Mullin
Butler	Hagerty	Murkowski
Cantwell	Hassan	Murphy
Capito	Heinrich	Murray
Cardin	Hickenlooper	Ossoff
Carper	Hirono	Padilla
Casey	Hoeven	Peters
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Reed
Coons	Kaine	Ricketts
Cornyn	Kelly	Rosen
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Rounds
Cotton	King	Rubio
Cramer	Klobuchar	Sanders
Duckworth	Lankford	Schatz
Durbin	Luján	Schumer

Shaheen	Thune	Welch
Sinema	Tillis	Whitehouse
Smith	Van Hollen	Wicker
Stabenow	Warner	Wyden
Sullivan	Warnock	Young
Tester	Warren	

NAYS—13

Blackburn	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Braun	Johnson	Tuberville
Budd	Lee	Vance
Crapo	Marshall	
Cruz	Schmitt	

NOT VOTING—10

Barrasso	Manchin	Romney
Britt	Moran	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Paul	
Daines	Risch	

(Mr. WELCH assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). On this vote, the yeas are 77, the nays are 13.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill is passed.

The bill (H.R. 7463) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 518.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ronald T. Keohane, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 518, Ronald T. Keohane, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Mark R. Warner, Jeanne Shaheen, Tim Kaine, Christopher A. Coons, Tammy Duckworth, Raphael G. Warnock, Richard J. Durbin, Debbie Stabenow, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Angus S. King, Jr., Alex Padilla, Mark Kelly, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Michael F. Bennet.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 529.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Moshe Z. Marvit, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of six years expiring August 30, 2028.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 529, Moshe Z. Marvit, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of six years expiring August 30, 2028.

Charles E. Schumer, Bernard Sanders, Brian Schatz, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tina Smith, Mark Kelly, Alex Padilla, Richard J. Durbin, Tammy Baldwin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Gary C. Peters, Jack Reed, Tim Kaine, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeanne Shaheen, Debbie Stabenow.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 456.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cathy Ann Harris, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 456, Cathy Ann Harris, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jeanne Shaheen, Tammy Duckworth, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Chris Van Hollen, Mark R. Warner, Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren, Alex Padilla, Brian Schatz, Mark Kelly.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, February 29, be waived.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 517, Douglas Craig Schmidt, of Tennessee, to be Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Department of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Douglas Craig Schmidt, of Tennessee, to be Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Department of Defense.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Schmidt nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I want to recognize an important milestone: the 90th Anniversary of the Export-Import Bank—EXIM—of the United States.

The Export-Import Bank was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt by Executive order on February 2, 1934, ''to aid in financing and to facilitate exports and imports and the exchange of commodities between the United States and other Nations.'' Its mission and work are equally as important now as they were back then.

EXIM contributes to our Nation's economic growth by supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs for America's exporters and the workers that make up the supply chains for our exports across the country.

Congress first authorized the EXIM Bank as an independent Agency in 1945, and we have continued to support the Bank's work under its charter ever since. In 2019, Congress recognized the critical role EXIM plays by passing a historic, 7-year reauthorization with bipartisan support. I contributed to that reauthorization legislation as the ranking member of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and now, as the chair of that committee, we have continued to support the Bank's work that creates jobs in Ohio and around the Nation.

Under the leadership of Chair Reta Jo Lewis, the first Black woman to lead EXIM, First Vice President Judith Pryor, Board Member Spencer Bachus, and Board Member Owen Herrnstadt, the Export-Import Bank has expanded financing for American exporters. During the last fiscal year, EXIM approved $8.7 billion in transactions, $3.5 billion more than the previous fiscal year. These transactions supported more than 40,000 jobs across our Nation, including many in Ohio.

Small business authorizations in fiscal year 2023 totaled $2.0 billion with 1,339 transactions authorized for the direct benefit of small business exporters.

EXIM also supports American workers in strategic industries. In the 2019 EXIM reauthorization bill, I helped establish the China & Transformational Exports Program, C-TEP. Congress directed EXIM to use the C-TEP program to prioritize financing for American exports in 10 critical areas, such as artificial intelligence, renewable energy and energy storage, wireless communications, and semiconductors. EXIM financing will help American manufacturers and exporters compete against Chinese exports that receive enormous financing from the Chinese Government, and the C-TEP program will help American companies unlock a new generation of jobs and economic growth.

EXIM supports secure and resilient supply chains. EXIM launched its first domestic financing initiative called ''Make More in America.'' By providing new financing for American companies that manufacture goods for export and new financing for their suppliers, we can bring more jobs back to our shores and strengthen our supply chains.

I have visited businesses in Ohio that depend on the Export-Import Bank to sell their products around the world, companies like NeoGraf Solutions in Lakewood, which manufactures graphite-based products used in cars, buses, and batteries, and Crown Battery in Fremont, which designs, manufactures, and distributes batteries, chargers, and accessories for various industries. Both companies rely on EXIM to help them compete in international markets. And in Southwest Ohio, the birthplace of aviation, GE Aerospace's engines are sold in jets around the world with the help of EXIM financing.

For decades, Ohio lived with the consequences of bad trade and tax policy that encouraged corporations to send production overseas in search of ever-lower wages. The Export-Import Bank is critical to bringing those supply chains back home by supporting Ohio manufacturers that want to expand production and exports. EXIM's job is to grow American businesses in the face of competition—often unfair competition—from countries like China.

The Export Import Bank will certainly face challenges in the future. EXIM must continue to manage risks associated with providing financing to projects worldwide, and both the Bank and Congress will need to further examine EXIM's role in monitoring and assessing the impacts of financing to balance the Bank's mission of supporting U.S. jobs through exports with environmental, security, and other policy considerations. EXIM can face these challenges and expand its support of American manufacturing.

I also want to note for all Senators that, since 1992, EXIM has generated more than $8 billion of revenue for the U.S. Treasury.

I applaud the work being done by EXIM's dedicated workforce as they continue to help U.S. companies and U.S. workers not only compete, but win across the global economy.

I congratulate the Agency on its 90th anniversary and look forward to EXIM's future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JERRY MARKS

● Mr. DAINES. Madam President, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing Gerald ''Jerry'' W. Marks of Missoula County for his service to his community during his tenure as the county's longest serving employee.

Growing up on a farm near Townsend, MT, Jerry went on to lead an accomplished life from his time in the U.S. Army serving overseas in Vietnam, to receiving quality education based in agriculture and public service from Montana State University and the University of Montana. His studies served him well as he began his long career as Missoula County's Agriculture Extension Agent in 1969. To provide some context, Jerry has been serving his community longer than we have had a man on the moon.

Jerry built programs and partnerships centered around agriculture, horticulture, and community development. During his tenure, Jerry increased the enrollment and community participation in 4–H by 30 percent, helped establish the Extension Forestry Program in 1983, and developed the County Weed Control Program in 1985. Jerry's most recent project, which took decades to finish, was the completion of the Gerald W. Marks Exploration Center and Rocky Mountain Gardens located on the Missoula County Fairgrounds, which fittingly bears his name.

Jerry and his wife of 51 years, Sharon, have two children and four grandchildren. Hailing from South Dakota, Sharon also grew up on a farm and had a career as an extension agent. The Markses enjoy sewing arts, growing plants, creative cooking, and supporting Missoula's arts community. After 55 years of service to his community, Jerry is set to retire March 1, 2024, and I have no doubt he will keep busy with his many hobbies and friends throughout Missoula County.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Jerry Marks for his life of service to the Missoula community. His favorite quote epitomizes his life's work. ''Do not fear the head winds, for they will make your program stronger.'' Thanks for your tireless work, Jerry, you make Montana proud and are one of the reasons it remains The Last Best Place.●

REMEMBERING CHARLES ''LEFTY'' DRIESELL

● Mr. KAINE. Madam President, it is my honor to recognize the life of longtime basketball coach Charles ''Lefty'' Driesell, who sadly passed away on February 17, 2024, at the age of 92, in Virginia Beach.

Driesell was born on Christmas Day, 1931, in Norfolk, VA. He started down the coaching path early in life, earning a varsity letter for the Granby High School basketball team in fourth grade for his service as a manager for the team. Driesell later became a star player for the team. While a senior in high school, he led his team to the Virginia State championship and was named tournament MVP.

After high school, Driesell accepted a scholarship to Duke University, where he played center and eventually graduated with a degree in education. Soon after college, he returned to Granby as the junior varsity coach and then later accepted a job as the varsity coach at nearby Newport News High School, where he won another State championship.

In 1960, Driesell joined the college coaching ranks, accepting the head coach position at Davidson University. Over the course of nine seasons, he accumulated 176 wins and made three NCAA tournaments.

Following Davidson, Driesell coached 17 years at the University of Maryland. While there, he won 348 games, made the NCAA tournament eight times, won the Atlantic Coast Conference—

ACC—twice, and won the 1972 National Invitation Tournament—NIT—championship. Driesell's teams at Maryland were consistently among the highest ranked in the Nation, and the team was one of the powerhouse programs of his era.

After Maryland, Driesell became the head coach of James Madison University, where he won another 159 games. His teams had the best record in the Colonial Athletic Association—CAA—for five straight seasons. Driesell finished his coaching career at Georgia State, winning 100 games. This made him the first coach to win 100 or more games at four different Division I schools.

In 2018, Driesell was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame, and Davidson, Maryland, Southern Conference, and Virginia Sports Halls of Fame.

Driesell's impact on the game of basketball goes well beyond his 786 career wins. He also brought more fans to the game with innovations like Midnight Madness. On the first day college teams were allowed to practice for the season, Driesell invited fans to join the team for a 12:03 a.m. run. This became an annual tradition, where thousands of fans would show up to celebrate the start of a new season with the team. Soon, other schools picked up on the practice, and these events have become a widespread and cherished part of college basketball.

Driesell's impact was felt by the many assistant coaches and staff he worked with over his 40 years of coaching, the hundreds of student athletes he coached, and the countless fans who found joy in the game of basketball watching Lefty Driesell-coached teams.●

RECOGNIZING RIVER BEND BISTRO & WINE BAR

● Mr. KAINE. Madam President, it is my honor to recognize the River Bend Bistro for 10 years of outstanding service. I would like to congratulate Caroline and Bill Ross and all the staff of River Bend Bistro on their success and wish them many more years of success.

Chef and co-owner Caroline Ross, a graduate of Fort Hunt High School, has been in the food industry since she was 18 and is a veteran of several other regional mainstay restaurants. In 1990, she was awarded a scholarship from Les Dames d'Escoffier to gain culinary skills in Paris. Co-owner Bill Ross has been a businessman in Alexandria for decades before he and Caroline teamed up to create River Bend Bistro, and he also continues to operate a Potomac River sightseeing business.

River Bend Bistro strives to use local and seasonal ingredients, including fresh ingredients from local farmers. Caroline has had relationships with its meat and seafood suppliers going back years before this particular restaurant. Many employees have been with them since the beginning. And thanks to hard work and ingenuity, as well as assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program from the CARES Act, they were able to navigate through pandemic lockdowns.

Whenever people sit down at River Bend Bistro, they will not just be experiencing outstanding food and drink; they will be supporting a small business with deep roots in the community and a deep commitment to excellence.

I wish Caroline and Bill Ross and their staff continued success and growth for many more years.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. KIM KRULL

● Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I rise today to thank Dr. Kim Krull for her many years of service to the State of Kansas and Butler Community College—BCC—as well as honor her for all she accomplished throughout her career.

A passionate educator dedicated to serving Kansans, Dr. Krull began her professional career teaching math, biology, and chemistry at Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture—UNL-NCTA. Following 18 years of service to UNL-NCTA, Dr. Krull decided to head south across the Nebraska-Kansas State line to Cloud County Community College, where she served as vice president of academic affairs for 8 years.

In 2013, Dr. Krull finally made the jump to my alma mater, Butler Community College, where she took over one of Kansas's largest community colleges as president. Dr. Krull hit the ground running, expanding BCC's online course catalog and prudently cutting programs no longer cost-effective. These two decisions, made early in Dr. Krull's tenure, remade BCC as a premier junior college destination in the State of Kansas, setting the stage for her and the school's subsequent successes.

In the years following, BCC accomplished much under Dr. Krull's guidance. In terms of campus restoration, Dr. Krull was able to fundraise $3.3 million to renovate the student union and was pivotal in expanding college operations in nearby Andover. Thanks to Dr. Krull's efforts, BCC remodeled its building within the Andover school district to be more accommodating to students, as well as opened the Redler Institute of Culinary Arts, a $6.2 million facility dedicated to providing for the next generation of BCC culinary and hospitality graduates.

But Dr. Krull's signature accomplishments during her time at BCC center around her support of the student body. While president, Dr. Krull added programs in Diesel Technology, Construction Technology, and expanded online offerings in partnerships with various Kansas colleges and universities. Doing this and increasing BCC student retention rates, especially amidst the COVID–19 pandemic, is a testament to Dr. Krull's work ethic and service to her student body.

For her efforts, Dr. Krull was the recipient of many awards, both for herself and on behalf of BCC. In 2021, the Wichita Business Journal named Dr. Krull an Executive of the Year, and in the year following, BCC was named an Aspen Top 150 institution. After these and many more successes, the Higher Learning Commission designated BCC in 2023 as a highly mature institution, one of the highest functioning colleges related to teaching and student assessment.

It was on this high note that Dr. Krull announced her retirement, and she will officially step down from Butler Community College on June 30, 2024, after decades of service in higher education. I now ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the distinguished career of Dr. Kim Krull, as well as thank her for all her work on behalf of the State of Kansas and my alma mater, Butler Community College. ''Go Grizzlies!''●

TRIBUTE TO CLINTON McKINNEY

● Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I rise today to honor and recognize the remarkable life and extraordinary service of Staff Sergeant Clinton McKinney, a true hero and distinguished World War II veteran. SSG McKinney's unwavering courage, sacrifice, and dedication to our Nation embody the spirit of the greatest generation.

SSG McKinney celebrated his 100th birthday on January 21, 2024. The occasion was marked by heartfelt tributes from his family and the Idaho community. It is a testament to SSG McKinney's enduring legacy and his profound impact on all who have the privilege of knowing him.

SSG McKinney fearlessly began his service in March 1943. He served with Company M of the 103rd Infantry Division during the Battle of the Bulge, a historic battle and turning point for World War II in the winter of 1944. SSG McKinney and company faced extreme conditions of bitter cold and isolation but never failed to demonstrate steadfast resolve and resilience. Sadly, 39 of his fellow infantrymen were lost in the battle, and SSG McKinney was taken prisoner. SSG McKinney escaped not once, but twice, only to be recaptured each time. His sheer determination and resourcefulness led to a successful third attempt with two other soldiers.

For his exceptional bravery and selflessness, SSG McKinney was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and multiple Purple Hearts, recognizing his immense contribution to the Allied cause and his dedication to duty.

Following the war, he returned home to his beloved wife Louise and devoted himself to public service by establishing a firefighting department in Washington State. His commitment to the safety and well-being of his fellow citizens extends far beyond his military service.

I am privileged to reflect on the extraordinary life of SSG McKinney,

honor his remarkable service, and learn from his example. SSG McKinney's courage and resilience serve as an inspiration, reminding us of the sacrifices made by the greatest generation and the debt of gratitude we owe them. SSG McKinney is a true American hero whose selfless actions and remarkable service have left an indelible mark on our Nation's history. May his legacy inspire future generations to serve with honor, courage, and unwavering commitment.●

RECOGNIZING THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

● Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, today I am honored to help the Georgia Association of Broadcasters celebrate 90 years of service to Georgians. Throughout nearly a century of existence, the Georgia Association of Broadcasters has been a stalwart advocate for the television and radio broadcasting industry, consistently pushing the boundaries of time and technology to deliver their communities quality, reliable news to keep us informed, safe, and connected.

Across Georgia, local broadcasters and journalists serve as the vanguard guardians of truth. Since its establishment in 1934, the GAB has been dedicated to representing the interests of radio and television broadcasters across the State. It is an organization that has played a pivotal role in making Georgia a premier destination for broadcast journalists worldwide, shaping the narrative of our communities with public education programs, scholarships, and professional development opportunities.

This remarkable journey includes initiatives like the WSB Care-a-Thon, a testament to the compassionate spirit of Georgia broadcasters, sharing stories of hope and inspiration from the Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Through generous donations, this initiative funds family support services and vital research, embodying the association's commitment to making a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need.

And in the quieter corners of our State, we can still rely on sound local reporting, like at radio station WBHF in Cartersville, which prides itself on providing robust coverage of council meetings in towns across Bartow County, local sports and events, or school board meetings—nowhere else could local residents find such in-depth and impactful stories on what is going on in their own backyard.

Voices of Valor, a heartfelt project by WJCL in Savannah, stands as a corner dedicated to uplifting local troops and military families, as well as features honoring the educators shaping the next generation of Georgians. And over in Augusta, WRDW partners with Grant Me Hope, striving to end potential homelessness among Georgia's fostered youth by finding loving, adoptive homes before they age out of the system.

In times of disaster, the spirit of Georgia broadcasters shines a light on our better angels. When severe storms and tornadoes wreak havoc across our State, they emerge as the ''first informers,'' providing crucial information and assistance. In a remarkable display of community solidarity, local TV and radio stations, like WTVM, WRBL, and others, join forces for tornado relief campaigns, setting up online donation portals and donation drop-off locations that raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for those in need.

These initiatives underscore a fundamental truth: A story is more than a script or a soundbite; it is an opportunity to see ourselves in others, to recognize our shared humanity, and to know that we are not alone in this world or within our communities.

Today, I commend the Georgia Association of Broadcasters for their tireless commitment to public service, and I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating them on an extraordinary 90 years of dedicated service and storytelling to the people of Georgia.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:39 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3511. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require training on increasing contract awards to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4669. An act to provide for Department of Energy and Small Business Administration joint research and development activities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4984. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the District of Columbia so that the District may use the Campus for purposes including residential and commercial development, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5265. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require a report on the performance of the Office of Rural Affairs, to require a report on the memorandum of understanding between the Small Business Administration and the Department of Agriculture entered into on April 4, 2018, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6544. An act to advance the benefits of nuclear energy by enabling efficient, timely, and predictable licensing, regulation, and deployment of nuclear energy technologies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6591. An act to amend section 8(a) of the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to regularly reassess the asset and net worth thresholds for qualifying as an economically disadvantaged individual, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7105. An act to establish requirements relating to certification of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 89. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

At 2:36 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 7454. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7463. An act making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3511. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require training on increasing contract awards to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 4669. An act to provide for Department of Energy and Small Business Administration joint research and development activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 5265. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require a report on the performance of the Office of Rural Affairs, to require a report on the memorandum of understanding between the Small Business Administration and the Department of Agriculture entered into on April 4, 2018, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 6544. An act to advance the benefits of nuclear energy by enabling efficient, timely, and predictable licensing, regulation, and deployment of nuclear energy technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 6591. An act to amend section 8(a) of the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to regularly reassess the asset and net worth thresholds for qualifying as an

economically disadvantaged individual, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 7105. An act to establish requirements relating to certification of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 3853. A bill to extend the period for filing claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to provide for compensation under such Act for claims relating to Manhattan Project waste, and to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining.

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–3646. A communication from the Chairman of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3647. A communication from the Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Tribal Cybersecurity Needs Report''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3648. A communication from the Senior Advisor of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Memorandum, Increasing Small Business Participation on Multiple-Award Contracts [*Note: OMB has concluded that this memorandum is not a 'rule' within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 804(3). Nevertheless, out of an abundance of caution, OMB is submitting it to each House of Congress and to the Comptroller General consistent with the procedures set forth in 5 U.S.C. 801(a).]'' received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3649. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–377, ''Term Clarification Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3650. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–378, ''Shirley Chisholm Elementary School Redesignation Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3651. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–379, ''School Improvement Amendment Act of 2023''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3652. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–389, ''Proactive Inspection Program Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3653. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–390, ''Home Visiting Services Reimbursement Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3654. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–391, ''Childhood Continuous Coverage Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3655. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–392, ''Minor Access to Medical Records and Appointments Regulations Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3656. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the National Security Education Program (NSEP) for fiscal year 2023; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC–3657. A communication from the Assistant to the Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments; Annual Adjustments'' (RIN1076–AF74) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 22, 2024; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–3658. A communication from the Assistant to the Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Appeals From Administrative Actions'' (RIN1076–AF74) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 22, 2024; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–3659. A communication from the Assistant to the Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Land Acquisitions'' (RIN1076–AF74) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 22, 2024; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–3660. A communication from the Executive Director, Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, transmitting, pursuant to Section 301(1) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act, the Office's annual reports regarding covered payments from the account described in section 415(a) of the Act that were the result of claims alleging a violation of part A of title II of the Act; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC–3661. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report from the Attorney General to Congress relative to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1939. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal years 2024 through 2028, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. DURBIN for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Kelly Harrison Rankin, of Wyoming, to be United States District Judge for the District of Wyoming.

Leon Schydlower, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas.

Ernest Gonzalez, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas.

Susan M. Bazis, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

Ann Marie McIff Allen, of Utah, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah.

Robin Michelle Meriweather, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

(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. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mr. CARPER, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KING, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. SMITH, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 4. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself and Mr. KELLY):

S. 3832. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure appropriate access to non-opioid pain management drugs under part D of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAGERTY (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BUDD, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 3833. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that aliens who have been convicted of, or who have committed, an offense for driving while intoxicated or impaired are inadmissible and deportable; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 3834. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure veterans may obtain a physical copy of a form for reimbursement of certain travel expenses by mail or at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. SMITH:

S. 3835. A bill to establish an interagency Working Group to study financial safety and inclusion for survivors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 3836. A bill to improve drought-related disaster assistance programs of the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. SCHMITT):

S. 3837. A bill to improve financial literacy training for members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. HYDE–SMITH:

S. 3838. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to authorize assistance for emergency measures in response to pine beetle outbreaks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. RICKETTS (for himself and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 3839. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 East 6th Street in Lexington, Nebraska, as the ''Bill Barrett Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. LUMMIS (for herself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LEE, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 3840. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to prohibit exchanges from effecting transactions in securities issued by natural asset companies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KING (for himself and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 3841. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the impact of a proposed rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on access of veterans to long-term care facilities; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BUTLER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 3842. A bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammed Ali, in recognition of his contributions to the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3843. A bill to amend chapters 95 and 96 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the system of public financing for Presidential election campaigns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3844. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reduce the number of members of the Federal Election Commission from 6 to 5, to revise the method of selection and terms of service of members of the Commission, to distribute the powers of the Commission between the Chair and the remaining members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 3845. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to create a national zero-emission vehicle standard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 3846. A bill to establish a task force on waterway freight diversification and economic development in the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela River corridors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WELCH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 3847. A bill to authorize the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to carry out a Social Determinants of Health Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. BUDD, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 3848. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to freeze the existing adverse effect wage rate applicable to H–2A nonimmigrants through December 31, 2025; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 3849. A bill to promote United States leadership in technical standards by directing the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Department of State to take certain actions to encourage and enable United States participation in developing standards and specifications for artificial intelligence and other critical and emerging technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BOOKER:

S. 3850. A bill to provide for research and improvement of cardiovascular health among the South Asian population of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 3851. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 90 McCamly Street South in Battle Creek, Michigan, as the ''Sojourner Truth Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 3852. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to promulgate regulations prohibiting the use of lead ammunition on all land and water under the jurisdiction and control of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 3853. A bill to extend the period for filing claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to provide for compensation under such Act for claims relating to Manhattan Project waste, and to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining; read the first time.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 3854. A bill to combat transnational repression abroad, to strengthen tools to combat authoritarianism, corruption, and kleptocracy, to invest in democracy research and development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 3855. A bill to interconnect the Electric Reliability Council of Texas to its neighbors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 3856. A bill to require certain forest supervisors of units of the National Forest System to submit to the Chief of the Forest Service a harvesting improvement report, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Ms. BUTLER):

S. 3857. A bill to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 3858. A bill to establish within the Office of Land and Emergency Management of the Environmental Protection Agency the Office of Mountains, Deserts, and Plains, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. 3859. A bill to ensure that homicides can be prosecuted under Federal law without regard to the time elapsed between the act or omission that caused the death of the victim and the death itself; considered and passed.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 569. A resolution recognizing religious freedom as a fundamental right, expressing support for international religious freedom as a cornerstone of United States foreign policy, and expressing concern over increased threats to and attacks on religious freedom around the world; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KING, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. Res. 570. A resolution designating March 1, 2024, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 140

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 140, a bill to combat organized crime involving the illegal acquisition of retail goods for the purpose of selling those illegally obtained goods through

physical and online retail marketplaces.

S. 532

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 532, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 610

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 610, a bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to modify the frequency of board of directors meetings, and for other purposes.

S. 665

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 665, a bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities, and for other purposes.

S. 1237

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1237, a bill to restore the exemption of family farms and small businesses from the definition of assets under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

S. 1248

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1248, a bill to expand eligibility for and provide judicial review for the Elderly Home Detention Pilot Program, and make other technical corrections.

S. 1842

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1842, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the regulation of zootechnical animal food substances.

S. 1943

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1943, a bill to establish the Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture, and for other purposes.

S. 2207

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2207, a bill to provide enhanced funding for family planning services.

S. 2223

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2223, a bill to amend the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 to provide families year-round access to nutrition incentives under the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2340

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2340, a bill to establish the Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program within the Farm Service Agency Office of Outreach and Education.

S. 2372

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2372, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to streamline enrollment under the Medicaid program of certain providers across State lines, and for other purposes.

S. 2748

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2748, a bill to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

S. 2788

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, his name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2788, a bill to amend section 3661 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the consideration of acquitted conduct at sentencing.

S. 2801

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2801, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 2888

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2888, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize representatives of veterans service organizations to participate in presentations to promote certain benefits available to veterans during preseparation counseling under the Transition Assistance Program of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 3125

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3125, a bill to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3348

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3348, a bill to amend the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 to address harmful algal blooms, and for other purposes.

S. 3369

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3369, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to restrict the possession of certain firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 3444

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3444, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9–8–8, and for other purposes.

S. 3548

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3548, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for hospital and insurer price transparency.

S. 3572

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3572, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, to award grants for arts and creative workforce programs.

S. 3584

At the request of Mr. FETTERMAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3584, a bill to require enforcement against misbranded egg alternatives.

S. 3612

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3612, a bill to prohibit the limitation of access to assisted reproductive technology, and all medical care surrounding such technology.

S. 3722

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) were added as cosponsors of S. 3722, a bill to require a report on access to maternal health care within the military health system, and for other purposes.

S. 3775

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3775, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3814

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3814, a bill to prohibit actions that would authorize conduct of official United States Government business in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank.

S.J. RES. 49

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 49, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of

the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to a ''Standard for Determining Joint Employer Status''.

S.J. RES. 60

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 60, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Turkiye of certain defense articles and services.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mr. CARPER, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KING, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. SMITH, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. LUJAN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 4. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on voting rights, later today, I will join several of my Democratic colleagues at a press conference to mark the reintroduction of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

John Lewis once said:

Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community.

That is what John Lewis said.

With this legislation, we are not only honoring John Lewis and his lifetime fight for voting rights, we are also committed to doing our part to expand access to the ballot box and end voter discrimination, which has plagued this Republic since its founding.

I will have more to say later, but recent history makes it absolutely clear that we need these protections on the books. MAGA Republicans across the country are continuing their dangerous crusade—self-serving—to restrict access to the ballot box, particularly when it comes to people of color ahead of the November election.

So Democrats will continue to heed the words of our late colleague, John Lewis, and we will work tirelessly to safeguard the right to vote and our democracy, advancing the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act.

We can—and must—build a more responsive democracy, a more perfect Union.

S. 4

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2024''.

TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

SEC. 101. VOTE DILUTION, DENIAL, AND ABRIDGMENT CLAIMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301(a)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after ''applied by any State or political subdivision'' the following: ''for the purpose of, or''; and

(2) by striking ''as provided in subsection (b)'' and inserting ''as provided in subsection (b), (c), (d), or (e)''.

(b) VOTE DILUTION.—Section 2 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10301), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) A violation of subsection (a) for vote dilution is established if, based on the totality of circumstances, it is shown that the political processes leading to nomination or election in the State or political subdivision are not equally open to participation by members of a class of citizens protected by subsection (a) in that its members have less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice. The extent to which members of a protected class have been elected to office in the State or political subdivision is one circumstance which may be considered: *Provided*, That nothing in this section establishes a right to have members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in the population. The legal standard articulated in Thornburg v. Gingles, 478 U.S. 30 (1986), governs claims under this subsection. For purposes of this subsection a class of citizens protected by subsection (a) may include a cohesive coalition of members of different racial or language minority groups.''.

(c) VOTE DENIAL OR ABRIDGEMENT.—Section 2 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10301), as amended by subsections (a) and (b), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c)(1) A violation of subsection (a) for vote denial or abridgment is established if the challenged standard, practice, or procedure imposes a discriminatory burden on members of a class of citizens protected by subsection (a), meaning that—

''(A) members of the protected class face greater difficulty in complying with the standard, practice, or procedure, considering the totality of the circumstances; and

''(B) such greater difficulty is, at least in part, caused by or linked to social and historical conditions that have produced or currently produce discrimination against members of the protected class.

''(2) The challenged standard, practice, or procedure need only be a but-for cause of the discriminatory burden or perpetuate a pre-existing discriminatory burden.

''(3)(A) The totality of the circumstances for consideration relative to a violation of subsection (a) for vote denial or abridgment shall include the following factors, which, individually and collectively, show how a voting standard, practice, or procedure can function to amplify the effects of past or present racial discrimination:

''(i) The history of official voting-related discrimination in the State or political subdivision.

''(ii) The extent to which voting in the elections of the State or political subdivision is racially polarized.

''(iii) The extent to which the State or political subdivision has used unduly burdensome photographic voter identification requirements, documentary proof of citizenship requirements, documentary proof of residence requirements, or other voting standards, practices, or procedures beyond those required by Federal law that may impair the ability of members of the protected class to participate fully in the political process.

''(iv) The extent to which members of the protected class bear the effects of discrimination in areas such as education, employment, and health, which hinder the ability of those members to participate effectively in the political process.

''(v) The use of overt or subtle racial appeals either in political campaigns or surrounding the adoption or maintenance of the challenged standard, practice, or procedure.

''(vi) The extent to which members of the protected class have been elected to public office in the jurisdiction, except that the fact that the protected class is too small to elect candidates of its choice shall not defeat a claim of vote denial or abridgment under this section.

''(vii) Whether there is a lack of responsiveness on the part of elected officials to the particularized needs of members of the protected class.

''(viii) Whether the policy underlying the State or political subdivision's use of the challenged qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure has a tenuous connection to that qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure.

''(B) A particular combination or number of factors under subparagraph (A) shall not be required to establish a violation of subsection (a) for vote denial or abridgment.

''(C) The totality of the circumstances for consideration relative to a violation of subsection (a) for vote denial or abridgment shall not include the following factors:

''(i) The total number or share of members of a protected class on whom a challenged standard, practice, or procedure does not impose a material burden.

''(ii) The degree to which the challenged standard, practice, or procedure has a long pedigree or was in widespread use at some earlier date.

''(iii) The use of an identical or similar standard, practice, or procedure in other States or political subdivisions.

''(iv) The availability of other forms of voting unimpacted by the challenged standard, practice, or procedure to all members of the electorate, including members of the protected class, unless the State or political subdivision is simultaneously expanding those other standards, practices, or procedures to eliminate any disproportionate burden imposed by the challenged standard, practice, or procedure.

''(v) A prophylactic impact on potential criminal activity by individual voters, if such crimes have not occurred in the State or political subdivision in substantial numbers.

''(vi) Mere invocation of interests in voter confidence or prevention of fraud.''.

(d) INTENDED VOTE DILUTION OR VOTE DENIAL OR ABRIDGMENT.—Section 2 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10301), as amended by subsections (a), (b), and (c) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d)(1) A violation of subsection (a) is also established if a challenged qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure is intended, at least in part, to dilute the voting strength of a protected class or to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2).

''(2) Discrimination on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2), need only be one purpose of a qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure in order to establish a violation of subsection (a), as described in this subsection. A qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure intended to dilute the voting strength of a protected class or to make it more difficult for members of a protected class to cast a ballot that will be counted constitutes a violation of subsection (a), as described in this subsection, even if an additional purpose of the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure is to benefit a particular political party or group.

''(3) Recent context, including actions by official decisionmakers in prior years or in other contexts preceding the decision responsible for the challenged qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure, and including actions by predecessor government actors or individual members of a decisionmaking body, may be relevant to making a determination about a violation of subsection (a), as described under this subsection.

''(4) A claim that a violation of subsection (a) has occurred, as described under this subsection, shall require proof of a discriminatory impact but shall not require proof of violation of subsection (b) or (c).''.

SEC. 102. RETROGRESSION.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), as amended by section 101 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) A violation of subsection (a) is established when a State or political subdivision enacts or seeks to administer any qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting in any election that has the purpose of or will have the effect of diminishing the ability of any citizens of the United States on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2), to participate in the electoral process or elect their preferred candidates of choice. This subsection applies to any action taken on or after January 1, 2021, by a State or political subdivision to enact or seek to administer any such qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice or procedure.

''(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (e), final decisions of the United States District Court of the District of Columbia on applications or petitions by States or political subdivisions for preclearance under section 5 of any changes in voting prerequisites, standards, practices, or procedures, supersede the provisions of subsection (e).''.

SEC. 103. VIOLATIONS TRIGGERING AUTHORITY OF COURT TO RETAIN JURISDICTION.

(a) TYPES OF VIOLATIONS.—Section 3(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10302(c)) is amended by striking ''violations of the fourteenth or fifteenth amendment'' and inserting ''violations of the 14th or 15th Amendment, violations of this Act, or violations of any Federal law that prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group,''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10302(a)) is amended by striking ''violations of the fourteenth or fifteenth amendment'' and inserting ''violations of the 14th or 15th Amendment, violations of this Act, or violations of any Federal law that prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group,''.

SEC. 104. CRITERIA FOR COVERAGE OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.

(a) DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO SECTION 4(a).—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10303(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) EXISTENCE OF VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING PREVIOUS 25 YEARS.—

''(A) STATEWIDE APPLICATION.—Subsection (a) applies with respect to a State and all political subdivisions within the State during a calendar year if—

''(i) fifteen or more voting rights violations occurred in the State during the previous 25 calendar years; or

''(ii) ten or more voting rights violations occurred in the State during the previous 25 calendar years, at least one of which was committed by the State itself (as opposed to a political subdivision within the State).

''(B) APPLICATION TO SPECIFIC POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.—Subsection (a) applies with respect to a political subdivision as a separate unit during a calendar year if three or more voting rights violations occurred in the subdivision during the previous 25 calendar years.

''(2) PERIOD OF APPLICATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), if, pursuant to paragraph (1), subsection (a) applies with respect to a State or political subdivision during a calendar year, subsection (a) shall apply with respect to such State or political subdivision for the period—

''(i) that begins on January 1 of the year in which subsection (a) applies; and

''(ii) that ends on the date which is 10 years after the date described in clause (i).

''(B) NO FURTHER APPLICATION AFTER DECLARATORY JUDGMENT.—

''(i) STATES.—If a State obtains a declaratory judgment under subsection (a), and the judgment remains in effect, subsection (a) shall no longer apply to such State and all political subdivisions in the State pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) unless, after the issuance of the declaratory judgment, paragraph (1)(A) applies to the State solely on the basis of voting rights violations occurring after the issuance of the declaratory judgment.

''(ii) POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.—If a political subdivision obtains a declaratory judgment under subsection (a), and the judgment remains in effect, subsection (a) shall no longer apply to such political subdivision pursuant to paragraph (1), including pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) (relating to the statewide application of subsection (a)), unless, after the issuance of the declaratory judgment, paragraph (1)(B) applies to the political subdivision solely on the basis of voting rights violations occurring after the issuance of the declaratory judgment.

''(3) DETERMINATION OF VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), a voting rights violation occurred in a State or political subdivision if any of the following applies:

''(A) JUDICIAL RELIEF; VIOLATION OF THE 14TH OR 15TH AMENDMENT.—Any final judgment (that was not reversed on appeal) occurred, in which the plaintiff prevailed and in which any court of the United States determined that a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group occurred, or that a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting created an undue burden on the right to vote in connection with a claim that the law unduly burdened voters of a particular race, color, or language minority group, in violation of the 14th or 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, anywhere within the State or subdivision.

''(B) JUDICIAL RELIEF; VIOLATIONS OF THIS ACT.—Any final judgment (that was not reversed on appeal) occurred in which the plaintiff prevailed and in which any court of the United States determined that a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting was imposed or applied or would have been imposed or applied anywhere within the State or subdivision in a manner that resulted or would have resulted in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, in violation of subsection (e) or (f) or section 2, 201, or 203.

''(C) FINAL JUDGMENT; DENIAL OF DECLARATORY JUDGMENT.—In a final judgment (that was not been reversed on appeal), any court of the United States has denied the request of the State or subdivision for a declaratory judgment under section 3(c) or section 5, and thereby prevented a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting from being enforced anywhere within the State or subdivision.

''(D) OBJECTION BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The Attorney General has interposed an objection under section 3(c) or section 5, and thereby prevented a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting from being enforced anywhere within the State or subdivision. A violation under this subparagraph has not occurred where an objection has been withdrawn by the Attorney General, unless the withdrawal was in response to a change in the law or practice that served as the basis of the objection. A violation under this subparagraph has not occurred where the objection is based solely on a State or political subdivision's failure to comply with a procedural process that would not otherwise count as an independent violation of this Act.

''(E) CONSENT DECREE, SETTLEMENT, OR OTHER AGREEMENT.—

''(i) AGREEMENT.—A consent decree, settlement, or other agreement was adopted or entered by a court of the United States that contains an admission of liability by the defendants, which resulted in the alteration or abandonment of a voting practice anywhere in the territory of such State or subdivision that was challenged on the ground that the practice denied or abridged the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in violation of subsection (e) or (f) or section 2, 201, or 203, or the 14th or 15th Amendment.

''(ii) INDEPENDENT VIOLATIONS.—A voluntary extension or continuation of a consent decree, settlement, or agreement described in clause (i) shall not count as an independent violation under this subparagraph. Any other extension or modification of such a consent decree, settlement, or agreement, if the consent decree, settlement, or agreement has been in place for ten years or longer, shall count as an independent violation under this subparagraph. If a court of the United States finds that a consent decree, settlement, or agreement described in clause (i) itself denied or abridged the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on

account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, violated subsection (e) or (f) or section 2, 201, or 203, or created an undue burden on the right to vote in connection with a claim that the consent decree, settlement, or other agreement unduly burdened voters of a particular race, color, or language minority group, that finding shall count as an independent violation under this subparagraph.

''(F) MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS.—Each instance in which a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, including each redistricting plan, is found to be a violation by a court of the United States pursuant to subparagraph (A) or (B), or prevented from being enforced pursuant to subparagraph (C) or (D), or altered or abandoned pursuant to subparagraph (E) shall count as an independent violation under this paragraph. Within a redistricting plan, each violation under this paragraph found to discriminate against any group of voters based on race, color, or language minority group shall count as an independent violation under this paragraph.

''(4) TIMING OF DETERMINATIONS.—

''(A) DETERMINATIONS OF VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.—As early as practicable during each calendar year, the Attorney General shall make the determinations required by this subsection, including updating the list of voting rights violations occurring in each State and political subdivision for the previous calendar year.

''(B) EFFECTIVE UPON PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER.—A determination or certification of the Attorney General under this section or under section 8 or 13 shall be effective upon publication in the Federal Register.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 4(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10303(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), in the first sentence of the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''any State with respect to which'' and all that follows through ''unless'' and inserting ''any State to which this subsection applies during a calendar year pursuant to determinations made under subsection (b), or in any political subdivision of such State (as such subdivision existed on the date such determinations were made with respect to such State), though such determinations were not made with respect to such subdivision as a separate unit, or in any political subdivision with respect to which this subsection applies during a calendar year pursuant to determinations made with respect to such subdivision as a separate unit under subsection (b), unless'';

(B) in paragraph (1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking the second sentence;

(C) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking ''(in the case of a State or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)'';

(D) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking ''(in the case of a State or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)'';

(E) in paragraph (3), by striking ''(in the case of a State or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)'';

(F) in paragraph (5), by striking ''(in the case of a State or subdivision which sought a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)'';

(G) by striking paragraphs (7) and (8); and

(H) by redesignating paragraph (9) as paragraph (7).

(b) CLARIFICATION OF TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS.—Section 4(a)(1) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10303(a)(1)), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''race or color,'' and inserting ''race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees of subsection (f)(2),''.

(c) FACILITATING BAILOUT.—Section 4(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10303(a)), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1)(C) and redesignating subparagraphs (D) through (F) as subparagraphs (C) through (E), respectively;

(2) by inserting at the beginning of paragraph (7), as redesignated by subsection (a)(2)(H), the following: ''Any plaintiff seeking a declaratory judgment under this subsection on the grounds that the plaintiff meets the requirements of paragraph (1) may request that the Attorney General consent to entry of judgment.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) If a political subdivision is subject to the application of this subsection, due to the applicability of subsection (b)(1)(A), the political subdivision may seek a declaratory judgment under this section if the subdivision demonstrates that the subdivision meets the criteria established by the subparagraphs of paragraph (1), for the 10 years preceding the date on which subsection (a) applied to the political subdivision under subsection (b)(1)(A).

''(9) If a political subdivision was not subject to the application of this subsection by reason of a declaratory judgment entered prior to the date of enactment of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2024, and is not, subsequent to that date of enactment, subject to the application of this subsection under subsection (b)(1)(B), then that political subdivision shall not be subject to the requirements of this subsection.''.

SEC. 105. DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE FOR COVERED PRACTICES.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) is further amended by inserting after section 4 the following:

''SEC. 4A. DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE FOR COVERED PRACTICES.

''(a) PRACTICE-BASED PRECLEARANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State and each political subdivision shall—

''(A) identify any newly enacted or adopted law, regulation, or policy that includes a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or a standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, that is a covered practice described in subsection (b); and

''(B) ensure that no such covered practice is implemented unless or until the State or political subdivision, as the case may be, complies with subsection (c).

''(2) DETERMINATIONS OF CHARACTERISTICS OF VOTING-AGE POPULATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—As early as practicable during each calendar year, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of the Bureau of the Census and the heads of other relevant offices of the government, shall make the determinations required by this section regarding voting-age populations and the characteristics of such populations, and shall publish a list of the States and political subdivisions to which a voting-age population characteristic described in subsection (b) applies.

''(B) PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER.—A determination (including a certification) of the Attorney General under this paragraph shall be effective upon publication in the Federal Register.

''(b) COVERED PRACTICES.—To assure that the right of citizens of the United States to vote is not denied or abridged on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group as a result of the implementation of certain qualifications or prerequisites to voting, or standards, practices, or procedures with respect to voting, newly adopted in a State or political subdivision, the following shall be covered practices subject to the requirements described in subsection (a):

''(1) CHANGES TO METHOD OF ELECTION.—Any change to the method of election—

''(A) to add seats elected at-large in a State or political subdivision where—

''(i) two or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population in the State or political subdivision, respectively; or

''(ii) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the State or political subdivision; or

''(B) to convert one or more seats elected from a single-member district to one or more at-large seats or seats from a multi-member district in a State or political subdivision where—

''(i) two or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population in the State or political subdivision, respectively; or

''(ii) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the State or political subdivision.

''(2) CHANGES TO POLITICAL SUBDIVISION BOUNDARIES.—Any change or series of changes within a year to the boundaries of a political subdivision that reduces by 3 or more percentage points the percentage of the political subdivision's voting-age population that is comprised of members of a single racial group or language minority group in the political subdivision where—

''(A) two or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the political subdivision's voting-age population; or

''(B) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the political subdivision.

''(3) CHANGES THROUGH REDISTRICTING.—Any change to the boundaries of districts for Federal, State, or local elections in a State or political subdivision where any racial group or language minority group that is not the largest racial group or language minority group in the jurisdiction and that represents 15 percent or more of the State or political subdivision's voting-age population experiences a population increase of at least 20 percent of its voting-age population, over the preceding decade (as calculated by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census), in the jurisdiction.

''(4) CHANGES IN DOCUMENTATION OR QUALIFICATIONS TO VOTE.—Any change to requirements for documentation or proof of identity to vote or register to vote in elections for Federal, State, or local offices that will exceed or be more stringent than such requirements under State law on the day before the date of enactment of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2024.

''(5) CHANGES TO MULTILINGUAL VOTING MATERIALS.—Any change that reduces multilingual voting materials or alters the manner in which such materials are provided or distributed, where no similar reduction or alteration occurs in materials provided in English for such election.

''(6) CHANGES THAT REDUCE, CONSOLIDATE, OR RELOCATE VOTING LOCATIONS, OR REDUCE VOTING OPPORTUNITIES.—Any change that reduces, consolidates, or relocates voting locations in elections for Federal, State, or local

office, including early, absentee, and election-day voting locations, or reduces days or hours of in-person voting on any Sunday during a period occurring prior to the date of an election for Federal, State, or local office during which voters may cast ballots in such election, or prohibits the provision of food or non–alcoholic drink to persons waiting to vote in an election for Federal, State, or local office, except where the provision would violate prohibitions on expenditures to influence voting, if the location change, reduction in days or hours, or prohibition applies—

''(A) in one or more census tracts in which two or more language minority groups or racial groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population; or

''(B) on Indian lands in which at least 20 percent of the voting-age population belongs to a single language minority group.

''(7) NEW LIST MAINTENANCE PROCESS.—Any change to the maintenance process for voter registration lists that adds a new basis for removal from the list of active voters registered to vote in elections for Federal, State, or local office, or that incorporates new sources of information in determining a voter's eligibility to vote in elections for Federal, State, or local office, if such a change would have a statistically significant disparate impact, concerning the removal from voter rolls, on members of racial groups or language minority groups that constitute greater than 5 percent of the voting-age population—

''(A) in the case of a political subdivision imposing such change if—

''(i) two or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population of the political subdivision; or

''(ii) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the political subdivision; or

''(B) in the case of a State imposing such change, if two or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population of—

''(i) the State; or

''(ii) a political subdivision in the State, except that the requirements under subsections (a) and (c) shall apply only with respect to each such political subdivision individually.

''(c) PRECLEARANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) ACTION .—Whenever a State or political subdivision with respect to which the requirements set forth in subsection (a) are in effect shall enact, adopt, or seek to implement any covered practice described under subsection (b), such State or subdivision may institute an action in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia for a declaratory judgment that such covered practice neither has the purpose nor will have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, and unless and until the court enters such judgment such covered practice shall not be implemented.

''(B) SUBMISSION TO ATTORNEY GENERAL.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), such covered practice may be implemented without such proceeding if the covered practice has been submitted by the chief legal officer or other appropriate official of such State or subdivision to the Attorney General and the Attorney General has not interposed an objection within 60 days after such submission, or upon good cause shown, to facilitate an expedited approval within 60 days after such submission, the Attorney General has affirmatively indicated that such objection will not be made. For purposes of determining whether expedited consideration of approval is required under this subparagraph or section 5(a), an exigency such as a natural disaster, that requires a change in a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting during the period of 30 days before a Federal election, shall be considered to be good cause requiring that expedited consideration.

''(ii) EFFECT OF INDICATION.—Neither an affirmative indication by the Attorney General that no objection will be made, nor the Attorney General's failure to object, nor a declaratory judgment entered under this subsection shall bar a subsequent action to enjoin implementation of such covered practice. In the event the Attorney General affirmatively indicates that no objection will be made within the 60-day period following receipt of a submission, the Attorney General may reserve the right to reexamine the submission if additional information comes to the Attorney General's attention during the remainder of the 60-day period which would otherwise require objection in accordance with this subsection.

''(C) COURT.—Any action under this subsection shall be heard and determined by a court of three judges in accordance with the provisions of section 2284 of title 28, United States Code, and any appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court.

''(2) DENYING OR ABRIDGING THE RIGHT TO VOTE.—Any covered practice described in subsection (b) that has the purpose of or will have the effect of diminishing the ability of any citizens of the United States on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, to elect their preferred candidates of choice denies or abridges the right to vote within the meaning of paragraph (1).

''(3) PURPOSE DEFINED.—The term 'purpose' in paragraphs (1) and (2) shall include any discriminatory purpose.

''(4) PURPOSE OF PARAGRAPH (2).—The purpose of paragraph (2) is to protect the ability of such citizens to elect their preferred candidates of choice.

''(d) ENFORCEMENT.—The Attorney General or any aggrieved citizen may file an action in a district court of the United States to compel any State or political subdivision to satisfy the obligations set forth in this section. Such an action shall be heard and determined by a court of three judges under section 2284 of title 28, United States Code. In any such action, the court shall provide as a remedy that implementation of any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, that is the subject of the action under this subsection be enjoined unless the court determines that—

''(1) the voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, is not a covered practice described in subsection (b); or

''(2) the State or political subdivision has complied with subsection (c) with respect to the covered practice at issue.

''(e) COUNTING OF RACIAL GROUPS AND LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS.—For purposes of this section, the calculation of the population of a racial group or a language minority group shall be carried out using the methodology in the guidance of the Department of Justice entitled 'Guidance Concerning Redistricting Under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act; Notice' (76 Fed. Reg. 7470 (February 9, 2011)).

''(f) SPECIAL RULE.—For purposes of determinations under this section, any data provided by the Bureau of the Census, whether based on estimation from a sample or actual enumeration, shall not be subject to challenge or review in any court.

''(g) MULTILINGUAL VOTING MATERIALS.—In this section, the term 'multilingual voting materials' means registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, provided in the language or languages of one or more language minority groups.''.

SEC. 106. PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY TO ENFORCE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT.

(a) TRANSPARENCY.—The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 5 the following:

''SEC. 6. TRANSPARENCY REGARDING CHANGES TO PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS.

''(a) NOTICE OF ENACTED CHANGES.—

''(1) NOTICE OF CHANGES.—If a State or political subdivision makes any change in any qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting in any election for Federal office that will result in the qualification or prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure being different from that which was in effect as of 180 days before the date of the election for Federal office, the State or political subdivision shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the website of the State or political subdivision, of a concise description of the change, including the difference between the changed qualification or prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure and the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure which was previously in effect. The public notice described in this paragraph, in such State or political subdivision and on the website of a State or political subdivision, shall be in a format that is reasonably convenient and accessible to persons with disabilities who are eligible to vote, including persons who have low vision or are blind.

''(2) DEADLINE FOR NOTICE.—A State or political subdivision shall provide the public notice required under paragraph (1) not later than 48 hours after making the change involved.

''(b) TRANSPARENCY REGARDING POLLING PLACE RESOURCES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to identify any changes that may impact the right to vote of any person, prior to the 30th day before the date of an election for Federal office, each State or political subdivision with responsibility for allocating registered voters, voting machines, and official poll workers to particular precincts and polling places shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the website of a State or political subdivision, of the information described in paragraph (2) for precincts and polling places within such State or political subdivision. The public notice described in this paragraph, in such State or political subdivision and on the website of a State or political subdivision, shall be in a format that is reasonably convenient and accessible to persons with disabilities who are eligible to vote, including persons who have low vision or are blind.

''(2) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—The information described in this paragraph with respect to a precinct or polling place is each of the following:

''(A) The name or number.

''(B) In the case of a polling place, the location, including the street address, and whether such polling place is accessible to persons with disabilities.

''(C) The voting-age population of the area served by the precinct or polling place, broken down by demographic group if such breakdown is reasonably available to such State or political subdivision.

''(D) The number of registered voters assigned to the precinct or polling place, broken down by demographic group if such breakdown is reasonably available to such State or political subdivision.

''(E) The number of voting machines assigned, including the number of voting machines accessible to persons with disabilities who are eligible to vote, including persons who have low vision or are blind.

''(F) The number of official paid poll workers assigned.

''(G) The number of official volunteer poll workers assigned.

''(H) In the case of a polling place, the dates and hours of operation.

''(3) UPDATES IN INFORMATION REPORTED.—If a State or political subdivision makes any change in any of the information described in paragraph (2), the State or political subdivision shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the website of a State or political subdivision, of the change in the information not later than 48 hours after the change occurs or, if the change occurs fewer than 48 hours before the date of the election for Federal office, as soon as practicable after the change occurs. The public notice described in this paragraph and published on the website of a State or political subdivision shall be in a format that is reasonably convenient and accessible to persons with disabilities who are eligible to vote, including persons who have low vision or are blind.

''(c) TRANSPARENCY OF CHANGES RELATING TO DEMOGRAPHICS AND ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.—

''(1) REQUIRING PUBLIC NOTICE OF CHANGES.—Not later than 10 days after making any change in the constituency that will participate in an election for Federal, State, or local office or the boundaries of a voting unit or electoral district in an election for Federal, State, or local office (including through redistricting, reapportionment, changing from at-large elections to district-based elections, or changing from district-based elections to at-large elections), a State or political subdivision shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the website of a State or political subdivision, of the demographic and electoral data described in paragraph (3) for each of the geographic areas described in paragraph (2).

''(2) GEOGRAPHIC AREAS DESCRIBED.—The geographic areas described in this paragraph are as follows:

''(A) The State as a whole, if the change applies statewide, or the political subdivision as a whole, if the change applies across the entire political subdivision.

''(B) If the change includes a plan to replace or eliminate voting units or electoral districts, each voting unit or electoral district that will be replaced or eliminated.

''(C) If the change includes a plan to establish new voting units or electoral districts, each such new voting unit or electoral district.

''(3) DEMOGRAPHIC AND ELECTORAL DATA.—The demographic and electoral data described in this paragraph with respect to a geographic area described in paragraph (2) are each of the following:

''(A) The voting-age population, broken down by demographic group.

''(B) The number of registered voters, broken down by demographic group if such breakdown is reasonably available to the State or political subdivision involved.

''(C)(i) If the change applies to a State, the actual number of votes, or (if it is not reasonably practicable for the State to ascertain the actual number of votes) the estimated number of votes received by each candidate in each statewide election held during the 5-year period which ends on the date the change involved is made; and

''(ii) if the change applies to only one political subdivision, the actual number of votes, or (if it is not reasonably practicable for the political subdivision to ascertain the actual number of votes) the estimated number of votes in each subdivision-wide election held during the 5-year period which ends on the date the change involved is made.

''(4) VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE BY SMALLER JURISDICTIONS.—Compliance with this subsection shall be voluntary for a political subdivision of a State unless the subdivision is one of the following:

''(A) A county or parish.

''(B) A municipality with a population greater than 10,000, as determined by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census.

''(C) A school district with a population greater than 10,000, as determined by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'school district' means the geographic area under the jurisdiction of a local educational agency (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

''(d) RULES REGARDING FORMAT OF INFORMATION.—The Attorney General may issue rules specifying a reasonably convenient and accessible format that States and political subdivisions shall use to provide public notice of information under this section.

''(e) NO DENIAL OF RIGHT TO VOTE.—The right to vote of any person shall not be denied or abridged because the person failed to comply with any change made by a State or political subdivision to a voting qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure if the State or political subdivision involved did not meet the applicable requirements of this section with respect to the change.

''(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'demographic group' means each group which section 2 protects from the denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2);

''(2) the term 'election for Federal office' means any general, special, primary, or runoff election held solely or in part for the purpose of electing any candidate for the office of President, Vice President, Presidential elector, Senator, Member of the House of Representatives, or Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress; and

''(3) the term 'persons with disabilities', means individuals with a disability, as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a)(1) shall apply with respect to changes which are made on or after the expiration of the 60-day period which begins on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 107. AUTHORITY TO ASSIGN OBSERVERS.

(a) CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY IN POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE.—Section 8(a)(2)(B) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10305(a)(2)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) in the Attorney General's judgment, the assignment of observers is otherwise necessary to enforce the guarantees of the 14th or 15th Amendment or any provision of this Act or any other Federal law protecting the right of citizens of the United States to vote; or''.

(b) ASSIGNMENT OF OBSERVERS TO ENFORCE BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 8(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10305(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or'' at the end of paragraph (1);

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) the Attorney General certifies with respect to a political subdivision that—

''(A) the Attorney General has received written meritorious complaints from residents, elected officials, or civic participation organizations that efforts to violate section 203 are likely to occur; or

''(B) in the Attorney General's judgment, the assignment of observers is necessary to enforce the guarantees of section 203;''; and

(3) by moving the margin for the continuation text following paragraph (3), as added by paragraph (2) of this subsection, 2 ems to the left.

(c) TRANSFERRAL OF AUTHORITY OVER OBSERVERS TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—

(1) ENFORCEMENT PROCEEDINGS.—Section 3(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10302(a)) is amended by striking ''United States Civil Service Commission in accordance with section 6'' and inserting ''Attorney General in accordance with section 8''.

(2) OBSERVERS; APPOINTMENT AND COMPENSATION.—Section 8 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10305) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), in the flush matter at the end, by striking ''Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall assign as many observers for such subdivision as the Director'' and inserting ''Attorney General shall assign as many observers for such subdivision as the Attorney General'';

(B) in subsection (c), by striking ''Director of the Office of Personnel Management'' and inserting ''Attorney General''; and

(C) in subsection (c), by adding at the end the following: ''The Director of the Office of Personnel Management may, with the consent of the Attorney General, assist in the selection, recruitment, hiring, training, or deployment of these or other individuals authorized by the Attorney General for the purpose of observing whether persons who are entitled to vote are being permitted to vote and whether those votes are being properly tabulated.''.

(3) TERMINATION OF CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS OF OBSERVERS.—Section 13(a)(1) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10309(a)(1)) is amended by striking ''notifies the Director of the Office of Personnel Management,'' and inserting ''determines,''.

SEC. 108. CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY TO SEEK RELIEF.

(a) POLL TAX.—Section 10(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10306(b)) is amended by striking ''the Attorney General is authorized and directed to institute forthwith in the name of the United States such actions,'' and inserting ''an aggrieved person or (in the name of the United States) the Attorney General may institute such actions''.

(b) CAUSE OF ACTION.—Section 12(d) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10308(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d)(1) Whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that any person has engaged in, or is about to engage in, any act or practice that would (1) deny any citizen the right to register, to cast a ballot, or to have that ballot counted properly and included in the appropriate totals of votes cast in violation of the 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, or 26th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, (2) violate subsection (a) or (b) of section 11, or (3) violate any other provision of this Act or any other Federal voting rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, an aggrieved person or (in the name of the United States) the Attorney General may institute an action for preventive relief, including an application for a temporary or permanent injunction, restraining order, or other appropriate

order. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to create a cause of action for civil enforcement of criminal provisions of this or any other Act.''.

(c) JUDICIAL RELIEF.—Section 204 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10504) is amended by striking the first sentence and inserting the following: ''Whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a State or political subdivision has engaged or is about to engage in any act or practice prohibited by a provision of this title, an aggrieved person or (in the name of the United States) the Attorney General may institute an action in a district court of the United States, for a restraining order, a preliminary or permanent injunction, or such other order as may be appropriate.''.

(d) ENFORCEMENT OF TWENTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT.—Section 301(a)(1) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10701(a)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a)(1) An aggrieved person or (in the name of the United States) the Attorney General may institute an action in a district court of the United States, for a restraining order, a preliminary or permanent injunction, or such other order as may be appropriate to implement the 26th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.''.

SEC. 109. PREVENTIVE RELIEF.

Section 12(d) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10308(d)), as amended by section 108, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(2)(A) In considering any motion for preliminary relief in any action for preventive relief described in this subsection, the court shall grant the relief if the court determines that the complainant has raised a serious question as to whether the challenged voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure violates any of the provisions listed in section 111(a)(1) of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2024 and, on balance, the hardship imposed on the defendant by the grant of the relief will be less than the hardship which would be imposed on the plaintiff if the relief were not granted.

''(B) In making its determination under this paragraph with respect to a change in any voting qualification, prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, the court shall consider all relevant factors and give due weight to the following factors, if they are present:

''(i) Whether the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure in effect prior to the change was adopted as a remedy for a Federal court judgment, consent decree, or admission regarding—

''(I) discrimination on the basis of race or color in violation of the 14th or 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

''(II) a violation of the 19th, 24th, or 26th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States;

''(III) a violation of this Act; or

''(IV) voting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in violation of any other Federal or State law.

''(ii) Whether the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure in effect prior to the change served as a ground for the dismissal or settlement of a claim alleging—

''(I) discrimination on the basis of race or color in violation of the 14th or 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

''(II) a violation of the 19th, 24th, or 26th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

''(III) a violation of this Act; or

''(IV) voting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in violation of any other Federal or State law.

''(iii) Whether the change was adopted fewer than 180 days before the date of the election with respect to which the change is to take or takes effect.

''(iv) Whether the defendant has failed to provide timely or complete notice of the adoption of the change as required by applicable Federal or State law.

''(3) A jurisdiction's inability to enforce its voting or election laws, regulations, policies, or redistricting plans, standing alone, shall not be deemed to constitute irreparable harm to the public interest or to the interests of a defendant in an action arising under the Constitution or any Federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in the voting process, for the purposes of determining whether a stay of a court's order or an interlocutory appeal under section 1253 of title 28, United States Code, is warranted.''.

SEC. 110. BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.

Section 203(b)(1) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10503(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''2032'' and inserting ''2037''.

SEC. 111. RELIEF FOR VIOLATIONS OF VOTING RIGHTS LAWS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) RELIEF FOR VIOLATIONS OF VOTING RIGHTS LAWS.—In this section, the term ''prohibited act or practice'' means—

(A) any act or practice—

(i) that creates an undue burden on the fundamental right to vote in violation of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States; or

(ii) that is prohibited by the 15th, 19th, 24th, or 26th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, section 2004 of the Revised Statutes (52 U.S.C. 10101), the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (52 U.S.C. 20501 et seq.), the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (52 U.S.C. 20301 et seq.), the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 20901 et seq.), the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (52 U.S.C. 20101 et seq.), or section 2003 of the Revised Statutes (52 U.S.C. 10102); and

(B) any act or practice in violation of any Federal law that prohibits discrimination with respect to voting, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to diminish the authority or scope of authority of any person to bring an action under any Federal law.

(3) ATTORNEY'S FEES.—Section 722(b) of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1988(b)) is amended by inserting ''a provision described in section 111(a)(1) of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2024,'' after ''title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,''.

(b) GROUNDS FOR EQUITABLE RELIEF.—In any action for equitable relief pursuant to a law listed under subsection (a), proximity of the action to an election shall not be a valid reason to deny such relief, or stay the operation of or vacate the issuance of such relief, unless the party opposing the issuance or continued operation of relief meets the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence that the issuance of the relief would be so close in time to the election as to cause irreparable harm to the public interest or that compliance with such relief would impose serious burdens on the party opposing relief.

(1) IN GENERAL.—In considering whether to grant, deny, stay, or vacate any order of equitable relief, the court shall give substantial weight to the public's interest in expanding access to the right to vote. A State's generalized interest in enforcing its enacted laws shall not be a relevant consideration in determining whether equitable relief is warranted.

(2) PRESUMPTIVE SAFE HARBOR.—Where equitable relief is sought either within 30 days of the adoption or reasonable public notice of the challenged policy or practice, or more than 45 days before the date of an election to which the relief being sought will apply, proximity to the election will be presumed not to constitute a harm to the public interest or a burden on the party opposing relief.

(c) GROUNDS FOR STAY OR VACATUR IN FEDERAL CLAIMS INVOLVING VOTING RIGHTS.—

(1) PROSPECTIVE EFFECT.—In reviewing an application for a stay or vacatur of equitable relief granted pursuant to a law listed in subsection (a), a court shall give substantial weight to the reliance interests of citizens who acted pursuant to such order under review. In fashioning a stay or vacatur, a reviewing court shall not order relief that has the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote of any citizen who has acted in reliance on the order.

(2) WRITTEN EXPLANATION.—No stay or vacatur under this subsection shall issue unless the reviewing court makes specific findings that the public interest, including the public's interest in expanding access to the ballot, will be harmed by the continuing operation of the equitable relief or that compliance with such relief will impose serious burdens on the party seeking such a stay or vacatur such that those burdens substantially outweigh the benefits to the public interest. In reviewing an application for a stay or vacatur of equitable relief, findings of fact made in issuing the order under review shall not be set aside unless clearly erroneous.

SEC. 112. PROTECTION OF TABULATED VOTES.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10307) is amended—

(1) in section 11—

(A) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) No person acting under color of law shall—

''(1) fail or refuse to permit any person to vote who is entitled to vote under Federal law or is otherwise qualified to vote;

''(2) willfully fail or refuse to tabulate, count, and report such person's vote; or

''(3) willfully fail or refuse to certify the aggregate tabulations of such persons' votes or certify the election of the candidates receiving sufficient such votes to be elected to office.''; and

(B) in subsection (b), by inserting ''subsection (a) or'' after ''duties under''; and

(2) in section 12—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) by striking ''a year following an election in a political subdivision in which an observer has been assigned'' and inserting ''22 months following an election for Federal office''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following: ''Whenever the Attorney General has reasonable grounds to believe that any person has engaged in or is about to engage in an act in violation of this subsection, the Attorney General may institute (in the name of the United States) a civil action in Federal district court seeking appropriate relief.'';

(B) in subsection (c), by inserting ''or solicits a violation of'' after ''conspires to violate''; and

(C) in subsection (e), by striking the first and second sentences and inserting the following: ''If, after the closing of the polls in

an election for Federal office, persons allege that notwithstanding (1) their registration by an appropriate election official and (2) their eligibility to vote in the political subdivision, their ballots have not been counted in such election, and if upon prompt receipt of notifications of these allegations, the Attorney General finds such allegations to be well founded, the Attorney General may forthwith file with the district court an application for an order providing for the counting and certification of the ballots of such persons and requiring the inclusion of their votes in the total vote for all applicable offices before the results of such election shall be deemed final and any force or effect given thereto.''.

SEC. 113. ENFORCEMENT OF VOTING RIGHTS BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Section 12 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10308), as amended by this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) VOTING RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to fulfill the Attorney General's responsibility to enforce this Act and other Federal laws that protect the right to vote, the Attorney General (or upon designation by the Attorney General, the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights) is authorized, before commencing a civil action, to issue a demand for inspection and information in writing to any State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, with respect to any relevant documentary material that the Attorney General has reason to believe is within their possession, custody, or control. A demand by the Attorney General under this subsection may require—

''(A) the production of such documentary material for inspection and copying;

''(B) answers in writing to written questions with respect to such documentary material; or

''(C) both the production described under subparagraph (A) and the answers described under subparagraph (B).

''(2) CONTENTS OF AN ATTORNEY GENERAL DEMAND.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Any demand issued under paragraph (1), shall include a sworn certificate to identify the voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, or other voting related matter or issue, whose lawfulness the Attorney General is investigating and to identify the Federal law that protects the right to vote under which the investigation is being conducted. The demand shall be reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of documentary material and information relevant to such investigation. Documentary material includes any material upon which relevant information is recorded, and includes written or printed materials, photographs, tapes, or materials upon which information is electronically or magnetically recorded. Such demands shall be aimed at the Attorney General having the ability to inspect and obtain copies of relevant materials (as well as obtain information) related to voting and are not aimed at the Attorney General taking possession of original records, particularly those that are required to be retained by State and local election officials under Federal or State law.

''(B) NO REQUIREMENT FOR PRODUCTION.—Any demand issued under paragraph (1) may not require the production of any documentary material or the submission of any answers in writing to written questions if such material or answers would be protected from disclosure under the standards applicable to discovery requests under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure in an action in which the Attorney General or the United States is a party.

''(C) DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL.—If the demand issued under paragraph (1) requires the production of documentary material, it shall—

''(i) identify the class of documentary material to be produced with such definiteness and certainty as to permit such material to be fairly identified; and

''(ii) prescribe a return date for production of the documentary material at least 20 days after issuance of the demand to give the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, a reasonable period of time for assembling the documentary material and making it available for inspection and copying.

''(D) ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS.—If the demand issued under paragraph (1) requires answers in writing to written questions, it shall—

''(i) set forth with specificity the written question to be answered; and

''(ii) prescribe a date at least 20 days after the issuance of the demand for submitting answers in writing to the written questions.

''(E) SERVICE.—A demand issued under paragraph (1) may be served by a United States marshal or a deputy marshal, or by certified mail, at any place within the territorial jurisdiction of any court of the United States.

''(3) RESPONSES TO AN ATTORNEY GENERAL DEMAND.—A State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, shall, with respect to any documentary material or any answer in writing produced under this subsection, provide a sworn certificate, in such form as the demand issued under paragraph (1) designates, by a person having knowledge of the facts and circumstances relating to such production or written answer, authorized to act on behalf of the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, upon which the demand was served. The certificate—

''(A) shall state that—

''(i) all of the documentary material required by the demand and in the possession, custody, or control of the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, has been produced;

''(ii) with respect to every answer in writing to a written question, all information required by the question and in the possession, custody, control, or knowledge of the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, has been submitted; or

''(iii) the requirements described in both clause (i) and clause (ii) have been met; or

''(B) provide the basis for any objection to producing the documentary material or answering the written question.

To the extent that any information is not furnished, the information shall be identified and reasons set forth with particularity regarding the reasons why the information was not furnished.

''(4) JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.—

''(A) PETITION FOR ENFORCEMENT.—Whenever any State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, fails to comply with demand issued by the Attorney General under paragraph (1), the Attorney General may file, in a district court of the United States in which the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, is located, a petition for a judicial order enforcing the Attorney General demand issued under paragraph (1).

''(B) PETITION TO MODIFY.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Any State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, that is served with a demand issued by the Attorney General under paragraph (1) may file in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia a petition for an order of the court to modify or set aside the demand of the Attorney General.

''(ii) PETITION TO MODIFY.—Any petition to modify or set aside a demand of the Attorney General issued under paragraph (1) must be filed within 20 days after the date of service of the Attorney General's demand or at any time before the return date specified in the Attorney General's demand, whichever date is earlier.

''(iii) CONTENTS OF PETITION.—The petition shall specify each ground upon which the petitioner relies in seeking relief under clause (i), and may be based upon any failure of the Attorney General's demand to comply with the provisions of this section or upon any constitutional or other legal right or privilege of the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent. During the pendency of the petition in the court, the court may stay, as it deems proper, the running of the time allowed for compliance with the Attorney General's demand, in whole or in part, except that the State or political subdivision, or other governmental representative or agent, filing the petition shall comply with any portions of the Attorney General's demand not sought to be modified or set aside.''.

SEC. 114. DEFINITIONS.

Title I of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 21. DEFINITIONS.

''In this Act:

''(1) INDIAN.—The term 'Indian' has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

''(2) INDIAN LANDS.—The term 'Indian lands' means—

''(A) any Indian country of an Indian tribe, as such term is defined in section 1151 of title 18, United States Code;

''(B) any land in Alaska that is owned, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, by an Indian tribe that is a Native village (as such term is defined in section 3 of such Act), or by a Village Corporation that is associated with the Indian tribe (as such term is defined in section 3 of such Act);

''(C) any land on which the seat of government of the Indian tribe is located; and

''(D) any land that is part or all of a tribal designated statistical area associated with the Indian tribe, or is part or all of an Alaska Native village statistical area associated with the tribe, as defined by the Bureau of the Census for the purposes of the most recent decennial census.

''(3) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian tribe' or 'tribe' has the meaning given the term 'Indian tribe' in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

''(4) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.—The term 'Tribal Government' means the recognized governing body of an Indian Tribe.

''(5) VOTING-AGE POPULATION.—The term 'voting-age population' means the numerical size of the population within a State, within a political subdivision, or within a political subdivision that contains Indian lands, as the case may be, that consists of persons age 18 or older, as calculated by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census.''.

SEC. 115. ATTORNEYS' FEES.

Section 14(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10310(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) The term 'prevailing party' means a party to an action that receives at least

some of the benefit sought by such action, states a colorable claim, and can establish that the action was a significant cause of a change to the status quo.''.

SEC. 116. OTHER TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ACTIONS COVERED UNDER SECTION 3.—Section 3(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10302(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''any proceeding instituted by the Attorney General or an aggrieved person under any statute to enforce'' and inserting ''any action under any statute in which a party (including the Attorney General) seeks to enforce''; and

(2) by striking ''at the time the proceeding was commenced'' and inserting ''at the time the action was commenced''.

(b) CLARIFICATION OF TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS.—Section 4(f) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10303(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking the second sentence; and

(2) by striking paragraphs (3) and (4).

(c) PERIOD DURING WHICH CHANGES IN VOTING PRACTICES ARE SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE UNDER SECTION 5.—Section 5 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10304) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''based upon determinations made under the first sentence of section 4(b) are in effect'' and inserting ''are in effect during a calendar year'';

(2) in subsection (a), by striking ''November 1, 1964'' and all that follows through ''November 1, 1972'' and inserting ''the applicable date of coverage''; and

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

''(e) The term 'applicable date of coverage' means, with respect to a State or political subdivision—

''(1) June 25, 2013, if the most recent determination for such State or subdivision under section 4(b) was made on or before December 31, 2021; or

''(2) the date on which the most recent determination for such State or subdivision under section 4(b) was made, if such determination was made after December 31, 2021.''.

(d) REVIEW OF PRECLEARANCE SUBMISSION UNDER SECTION 5 DUE TO EXIGENCY.—Section 5 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10304) is amended, in subsection (a), by inserting ''An exigency, including a natural disaster, inclement weather, or other unforeseeable event, requiring such different qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure within 30 days of a Federal, State, or local election shall constitute good cause requiring the Attorney General to expedite consideration of the submission.'' after ''will not be made.''.

SEC. 117. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2024 or any amendment made by this title, or the application of such a provision or amendment to any person or circumstance, is held to be unconstitutional or is otherwise enjoined or unenforceable, the remainder of this title and amendments made by this title, and the application of the provisions and amendments to any other person or circumstance, and any remaining provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), shall not be affected by the holding. In addition, if any provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), or any amendment to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or the application of such a provision or amendment to any person or circumstance, is held to be unconstitutional or is otherwise enjoined or unenforceable, the application of the provision and amendment to any other person or circumstance, and any remaining provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, shall not be affected by the holding.

SEC. 118. GRANTS TO ASSIST WITH NOTICE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall make grants each fiscal year to small jurisdictions who submit applications under subsection (b) for purposes of assisting such small jurisdictions with compliance with the requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to submit or publish notice of any change to a qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice or procedure affecting voting.

(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, a small jurisdiction shall submit an application to the Attorney General in such form and containing such information as the Attorney General may require regarding the compliance of such small jurisdiction with the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

(c) SMALL JURISDICTION DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term ''small jurisdiction'' means any political subdivision of a State with a population of 10,000 or less.

TITLE II—ELECTION WORKER AND POLLING PLACE PROTECTION

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Election Worker and Polling Place Protection Act''.

SEC. 202. PROHIBITION ON INTERFERENCE AND INTIMIDATION.

Section 11 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10307) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f)(1)(A) Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, by force or threat of force, or by violence or threat of violence to any person or property, willfully interferes with or attempts to interfere with, the ability of any person or any class of persons to vote or qualify to vote, or to qualify or act as a poll watcher or as any legally authorized election official, in any primary, special, or general election, or any person who is, or is employed by, an agent, contractor, or vendor of a legally authorized election official assisting in the administration of any primary, special, or general election to assist in that administration, shall be fined not more than $2,500, or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both.

''(B) Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, by force or threat of force, or by violence or threat of violence to any person or property, willfully intimidates or attempts to intimidate, any person or any class of persons seeking to vote or qualify to vote, or to qualify or act as a poll watcher or as any legally authorized election official, in any primary, special, or general election, or any person who is, or is employed by, an agent, contractor, or vendor of a legally authorized election official assisting in the administration of any primary, special, or general election, shall be fined not more than $2,500, or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both.

''(C) If bodily injury results from an act committed in violation of this paragraph or if such act includes the use, attempted use, or threatened use of a dangerous weapon, an explosive, or fire, then, in lieu of the remedy described in subparagraph (A) or (B), the violator shall be fined not more than $5,000 or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

''(2)(A) Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, willfully physically damages or threatens to physically damage any physical property being used as a polling place or tabulation center or other election infrastructure, with the intent to interfere with the administration of a primary, general, or special election or the tabulation or certification of votes for such an election, shall be fined not more than $2,500, or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both.

''(B) If bodily injury results from an act committed in violation of this paragraph or if such act includes the use, attempted use, or threatened use of a dangerous weapon, an explosive, or fire, then, in lieu of the remedy described in subparagraph (A), the violator shall be fined not more than $5,000 or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

''(3) For purposes of this subsection, de minimus damage or a threat of de minimus damage to physical property shall not be considered a violation of this subsection.

''(4) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'election infrastructure' means any office of a legally authorized election official, or a staffer, worker, or volunteer, assisting such an election official or any physical, mechanical, or electrical device, structure, or tangible item, used in the process of creating, distributing, voting, returning, counting, tabulating, auditing, storing, or other handling of voter registration or ballot information.

''(g) No prosecution of any offense described in subsection (f) may be undertaken by the United States, except under the certification in writing of the Attorney General, or a designee, that—

''(1) the State does not have jurisdiction;

''(2) the State has requested that the Federal Government assume jurisdiction; or

''(3) a prosecution by the United States is in the public interest and necessary to secure substantial justice.''.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BUTLER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 3842. A bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammed Ali, in recognition of his contributions to the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. PADILLA, Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the Muhammad Ali Congressional Gold Medal Act, which I introduced today.

Muhammad Ali is often referred to as ''The Greatest,'' an appropriate title that he earned through his inspiring athletic achievements, dedication to ensuring that all Americans have equal rights, and advocacy for underserved communities around the world. Ali serves as an example of service and self-sacrifice for all generations.

Muhammad Ali was born in Louisville, KY, on January 17, 1942. From an early age, he excelled in boxing, going on to win a Gold Medal at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome and becoming an undisputed heavyweight boxing champion. Throughout his career, he helped our Nation grow past the legacy of Jim Crow and segregation in sports. He worked tirelessly to support medical research and charitable organizations, including founding the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center and raising over $50 million for Parkinson's research.

Ali's devotion to humanitarian causes and racial equality earned him many accolades, including being chosen as United Nations Messenger of Peace and receiving an Amnesty International Lifetime Achievement Award. He was also chosen to light the Olympic flame at the 1996 Olympic Games in

Atlanta, and in 2005, President George W. Bush awarded Ali the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Muhammad Ali also left a lasting impact on my home State of California. For roughly 7 years, Ali lived in Los Angeles, and five of his professional fights were held in Southern California. Due to his courage and conviction, the 1987 California Bicentennial Foundation for the U.S. Constitution selected Ali to personify the vitality of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The Congressional Gold Medal is a fitting award for an American who devoted his life and career to uplifting underserved communities in the United States and abroad. I want to thank Representative CARSON for introducing this bill in the House, and I hope that our colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us in awarding a posthumous Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammad Ali.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Ms. BUTLER):

S. 3857. A bill to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the Jamul Indian Village Land Transfer Act.

The Jamul Indian Village Land Transfer Act would place four parcels of approximately 172 acres of land already owned in fee by the Jamul Indian Village into trust by the United States for the benefit of the Tribe.

The four parcels of land in the bill would not be used for any class II or class III gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

Over time, Jamul's ancestral lands have diminished from over 640 acres to just 6 acres, which now comprise the Tribe's entire trust land base. This 6-acre reservation is one of the smallest reservations in the country.

In 2005, Jamul Tribal members voluntarily moved off of the reservation in order to allow the Tribe to pursue economic development, build a casino, and become self-sufficient and less reliant on the Federal Government.

The Tribe has worked hard to maximize the use of its 6-acre reservation. Jamul opened a casino in 2006 and is working towards the opening of an adjacent hotel next year. Once the hotel is complete, the casino and hotel will occupy the entire Tribal reservation.

This legislation would place additional acres into trust for the benefit of the Tribe, allowing Jamul to build a true homeland and bring their members back to the reservation. On the largest parcel covered by the bill, Jamul plans to develop housing for their Tribal members so they can create a true homeland, as well as use the land for administrative offices, a health clinic, a childcare center, educational services, a community center, law enforcement offices, and other community resources for Tribal members.

Another parcel contains the only physical access road to the Tribe's reservation, and the fourth parcel contains the Tribe's historical church and cemetery.

I am proud to work with the Jamul Indian Village to introduce this bill that would enhance Tribal community development, preserve a sacred site, and improve economic development opportunities that will positively impact the Tribes' members and culture for generations to come. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the Jamul Indian Village Land Transfer Act in the Senate as quickly as possible.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 569—RECOGNIZING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS A CORNERSTONE OF UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY, AND EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER INCREASED THREATS TO AND ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 569

Whereas freedom of religion is a fundamental right;

Whereas the First Amendment of the Constitution stipulates that ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof'';

Whereas, in pushing for religious freedom in the Commonwealth of Virginia, James Madison argued that the right to freedom of religion ''is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society'';

Whereas freedom of religion is a foundational element of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the United States and abroad, as well as a guiding principle for United States foreign policy;

Whereas Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states ''Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (referred to in this preamble as ''USCIRF'') stipulates that ''freedom of religion or belief is an expansive right that includes the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, association, and assembly'';

Whereas the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) recognizes religious freedom as a ''universal human right'';

Whereas the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) requires the President to annually designate as a ''country of particular concern'' each country the government of which has engaged in or tolerated ''particularly severe'' religious freedom violations, including—

(1) systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations such as torture;

(2) cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;

(3) prolonged detention without charges; and

(4) forced disappearances;

Whereas, on December 29, 2023, the Biden administration designated Burma, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan as countries of particular concern;

Whereas the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114–281;130 Stat. 1426) requires the President to annually designate countries with severe religious freedom violations that do not reach the threshold of ''systematic, ongoing, and egregious'' violations to a ''Special Watch List'';

Whereas, on December 29, 2023, the Biden administration designated Algeria, Azerbaijan, the Central African Republic, Comoros, and Vietnam as Special Watch List countries;

Whereas, to enhance accountability for global human rights violations, including violations of religious freedom, President Joseph R. Biden signed the permanent authorization of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 2656 note) into law on April 8, 2022;

Whereas the Senate passed a resolution calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws in 2020 (Senate Resolution 458, 116th Congress, agreed to December 19, 2020);

Whereas, in 2023, threats to religious freedom worsened around the world, including incidents targeting the exercise of religion in public or private, participation in religious advocacy, conversion from one religion to another, engagement in religious practices broadly, and those choosing to have no faith at all;

Whereas, according to USCIRF, there were thousands of incidents wherein religious freedom was violated in 2023, including—

(1) the targeting of 2,228 individuals by 27 countries and entities;

(2) the imprisonment of 1,491 individuals;

(3) the ongoing imprisonment of 1,311 individuals; and

(4) the death of 9 individuals while in custody;

Whereas USCIRF has identified 95 countries with legislation criminalizing blasphemy used to enforce arbitrary limitations on religious freedom of expression;

Whereas the Department of State has determined that religious minorities continue to be victims of genocides that relate to matters of religious freedom, including in—

(1) Burma, where security forces have committed crimes against humanity and genocide against Rohingya Muslims since 2017, including the systematic killing, torture, and confinement of Rohingyas to small, overcrowded camps without freedom of movement or access to adequate food, health care, and education; and

(2) China, where since 2017 the Chinese government has committed crimes against humanity and genocide against Uyghurs, including by—

(A) imprisoning more than 1,000,000 Uyghurs in ''re-education camps'';

(B) subjecting Uyghur women to forced sterilizations and abortions;

(C) deliberately separating Uyghur families;

(D) instituting government surveillance through intrusive homestay programs; and

(E) eliminating the Uyghur language from educational materials;

Whereas religious minorities face harassment, intimidation, violence, and imprisonment from state and non-state actors around the world, including in—

(1) Afghanistan, where the Taliban has rigorously enforced its harsh interpretation of Shari'a law that violates the freedom of religion or belief of religious minorities, including Christians, Ahmadiyya Muslims, Baha'is, and nonbelievers who face imprisonment or death if discovered;

(2) Burma, where in addition to violence targeted at religious minorities, strict laws in favor of the Buddhist majority regulate religious conversion, marriages, and births of non-Buddhists such as Muslims and Christians;

(3) China, where the government utilizes targeted surveillance to monitor, harass, and detain Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghur Muslims, and other religious minorities for exercising their beliefs;

(4) Cuba, where the government subjects religious leaders and groups that are unregistered through its Office of Religious Affairs to detention, interrogation, imprisonment, and confiscation of property;

(5) India, where laws promoting religiously discriminatory policies, including laws that target religious conversion, interfaith relationships, the wearing of hijabs, and cow slaughter, have been implemented at the national, state, and local levels and negatively impact the livelihoods of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and Adivasis;

(6) Iran, where the government disproportionately subjects members of religious minorities such as Baha'is, Christians, Gonabadi Dervishes, and Sunni Muslims to amputations, floggings, detention, harassment, surveillance, executions, and exile;

(7) Nicaragua, where the government arbitrarily detains and exiles religious clerics and leaders who advocate for the rights of religious minorities and criticize the government's persecution of the Roman Catholic Church;

(8) Nigeria, where the government's enforcement of blasphemy laws embedded in Nigeria's criminal and Shari'a codes results in the arbitrary detainment and imprisonment of those who express their religious identity;

(9) North Korea, where any religion contrary to the ruling ideology known as Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism is deemed an existential threat to the state;

(10) Pakistan, where religious minorities face killings, lynchings, mob violence, forced conversions, and sexual violence for their religious identities;

(11) Russia, where laws on terrorism and extremism are used to target religious minorities such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, and members of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church for their beliefs;

(12) Tajikistan, where the government represses the display of public religiosity by individuals of all faiths and institutes strict restrictions against Muslims, including a ban on beards and hijabs;

(13) Turkmenistan, where the government controls all aspects of religious life and expression, monitors religious practice, and punishes nonconformity through administrative harassment, imprisonment, and torture; and

(14) Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, where the Russian military has reportedly perpetrated 43 cases of targeted persecution of the clergy and more than 109 acts pressuring churches and religious figures representing Orthodox Christians, Ukrainian Greek-Catholics, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses since the launch of its full-scale invasion in February 2022;

Whereas violent extremists and non-state actors continue to capitalize upon violence and instability in countries to perpetrate serious human rights violations against religious minorities, including in—

(1) Latin America, where criminal gangs and paramilitary groups threaten and displace indigenous communities, destroy places of worship, and forcibly require conversion or renunciation of ancestral practices;

(2) Nigeria, where violent, non-state militant groups such as Boko Haram target Christians, as well as persons engaged in ''un-Islamic'' activities, including Muslim critics and elders;

(3) the Sahel region of Africa, where violent extremist organizations threaten violence against Christians who do not convert to Islam;

(4) Syria, where violent extremist organizations restrict the religious freedom of nonconfirming Sunni Muslims and threaten the property, safety, and existence of religious minority groups such as Alawites, Christians, and Druze; and

(5) Yemen, where the Houthi rebels harass, defame, and incite hatred against vulnerable faith communities including the Christians, Baha'is, Jews, and non-religious persons who continue to be forced to flee to the south of the country or leave Yemen entirely; and

Whereas religious sites continue to be damaged or destroyed, especially in areas of conflict, including in—

(1) Burma, where the military junta has destroyed approximately 200 houses of worship and religious sites such as Buddhist monasteries, churches, and mosques, and has occupied religious compounds for use as military bases;

(2) China, where the government has destroyed mosques, shrines, gravesites, and other religious and cultural sites throughout Xinjiang and the country;

(3) Ethiopia, where ongoing violence between the government and non-state actors has led to drone strikes and attacks on church compounds such as the Full Gospel Church in the Oromiya region in which 8 people were killed;

(4) India, where places of worship such as Christian churches and Muslim madrasas continue to be destroyed, especially those in predominantly Christian and Muslim neighborhoods;

(5) Nigeria, where violent, non-state groups, such as Boko Haram, attack population centers and religious targets, including churches and mosques;

(6) Sudan, where members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked a Coptic Christian monastery and raided the Sudanese Episcopal Church in Khartoum, using both as bases for military operations; and

(7) Ukraine, where approximately 500 houses of worship have been damaged or destroyed since Russia's full-scale invasion of the country began in February 2022: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes religious freedom as a fundamental human right;

(2) recognizes the critical importance of religious freedom in—

(A) supporting democracy, good governance, and the rule of law;

(B) encouraging pluralism and robust political participation; and

(C) fostering global stability and peace;

(3) expresses grave concern over threats to religious freedom around the world, such as through harassment, violence, and imprisonment;

(4) condemns all efforts to suppress religious freedom, including through the criminalization of—

(A) religious exercise in public or private;

(B) the choice to have no faith;

(C) conversion from one religion to another;

(D) advocacy for religious freedom;

(E) sharing and spreading religious messages and educational materials; and

(F) construction and maintenance of religious holy sites;

(5) supports the invaluable work of religious freedom advocates in fighting for greater religious freedom around the world; and

(6) urges the Department of State to—

(A) continue robust bilateral and multilateral engagement with allies and partners on religious freedom;

(B) maintain and expand support for human rights activists, journalists, and civil society leaders working to protect religious freedom in countries of particular concern and Special Watch List countries;

(C) leverage all diplomatic and sanctions tools available to the United States Government to hold religious freedom violators accountable for their actions, including those authorized by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.);

(D) continue to impose sanctions on those responsible for violations of religious freedom pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Act (22 U.S.C. 2656 note);

(E) consider human rights abuses and religious freedom violations in prioritizing partners for free trade agreements; and

(F) promote religious freedom as an utmost priority for the United States in implementation of United States foreign policy.

SENATE RESOLUTION 570—DESIGNATING MARCH 1, 2024, AS ''NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY''

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KING, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 570

Whereas it is essential for youth to learn and practice the art of communicating with and without technology;

Whereas speech and debate education offers students myriad forms of public speaking through which students may develop talent and exercise unique voice and character;

Whereas speech and debate education gives students the 21st century skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration;

Whereas critical analysis and effective communication allow important ideas, texts, and philosophies the opportunity to flourish;

Whereas personal, professional, and civic interactions are enhanced by the ability of the participants in those interactions to listen, concur, question, and dissent with reason and compassion;

Whereas students who participate in speech and debate have chosen a challenging activity that requires regular practice, dedication, and hard work;

Whereas teachers and coaches of speech and debate devote in-school, afterschool, and weekend hours to equip students with life-changing skills and opportunities;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the lifelong impact of providing people of the United States with the confidence and preparation to both discern and share views;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day acknowledges that most achievements, celebrations, commemorations, and pivotal moments in modern history begin, end, or are crystallized with public address;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day recognizes that learning to research, construct, and present an argument is integral to personal advocacy, social movements, and the making of public policy;

Whereas the National Speech & Debate Association, in conjunction with national and local partners, honors and celebrates the importance of speech and debate through National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the importance of speech and debate education and the integration of speech and debate education across grade levels and disciplines: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 1, 2024, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day'';

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and all people of the United States to celebrate and promote National Speech and Debate Education Day.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1614. Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. BRAUN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7463, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes.

SA 1615. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7454, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1614. Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. BRAUN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7463, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITIONS RELATING TO THE PURCHASE OR SALE OF STATE OR MUNICIPAL SECURITIES.

(a) EMERGENCY LENDING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES.—The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System may not establish any emergency lending program or facility, including pursuant to section 13(3) of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 343(3)), that purchases or sells any security issued by a State or municipality, including a bond, note, draft, or bill of exchange.

(b) OPEN MARKET OPERATIONS.—No Federal reserve bank may purchase or sell any security described in subsection (a), including pursuant to section 14 of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 353 et seq.).

SA 1615. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7454, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 401. EXPANDING USE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE GULF OF MEXICO.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall prioritize the authorization of an eligible UAS test range sponsor partnering with an eligible airport authority to achieve the goals specified in subsection (b).

(b) GOALS.—The goals of a partnership authorized pursuant to subsection (a) shall be to test the operations of innovative technologies in both commercial and non-commercial applications to—

(1) identify challenges associated with aviation operations over large bodies of water;

(2) provide transportation of cargo and passengers to offshore energy infrastructure;

(3) assess the impacts of operations in saltwater environments;

(4) identify the challenges of integrating such technologies in complex airspace, including with commercial rotorcraft; and

(5) identify the differences between coordinating with Federal air traffic control towers and towers operated under the FAA Contract Tower Program.

(c) BRIEFING TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall provide an annual briefing to the appropriate committees of Congress on the status of the partnership authorized under this section, including detailing any barriers to the commercialization of innovative technologies in the Gulf of Mexico.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ELIGIBLE AIRPORT AUTHORITY.—The term ''eligible airport authority'' means an AIP-eligible airport authority that is—

(A) located in a state bordering the Gulf of Mexico which does not already contain a UAS Test Range;

(B) has an air traffic control tower operated under the FAA Contract Tower Program;

(C) is located within 60 miles of a port; and

(D) does not have any scheduled passenger airline service as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) ELIGIBLE UAS TEST RANGE SPONSOR.—The term ''eligible UAS test range sponsor'' means an existing sponsor of a UAS test range located in a landlocked State.

(3) INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES.—The term ''innovative technologies'' means unmanned aircraft systems and powered-lift aircraft.

(4) UAS.—The term ''UAS'' means an unmanned aircraft system.

(5) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.—The term ''unmanned aircraft system'' has the meaning given such term in section 44801 of title 49, United States Code.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have three requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 9:30 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 Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the senior Senator from Hawaii be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions from February 29, 2024, through March 5, 2024.

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

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 106–286, appoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China: the Honorable SHERROD BROWN of Ohio; the Honorable LAPHONZA R. BUTLER of California.

JUSTICE FOR MURDER VICTIMS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3859, introduced earlier today by Senators GRASSLEY and OSSOFF.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3859) to ensure that homicides can be prosecuted under Federal law without regard to the time elapsed between the act or omission that caused the death of the victim and the death itself.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I further ask that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate

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

The bill (S. 3859) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3859

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Justice for Murder Victims Act''.

SEC. 2. HOMICIDE OFFENSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 51 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 1123. No maximum time period between act or omission and death of victim

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A prosecution may be instituted for any homicide offense under this title without regard to the time that elapsed between—

''(1) the act or omission that caused the death of the victim; and

''(2) the death of the victim.

''(b) RELATION TO STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in subsection (a) shall be construed to supersede the limitations period under section 3282(a), to the extent applicable.

''(c) MAXIMUM TIME PERIOD APPLICABLE IF DEATH PENALTY IMPOSED.—A sentence of death may not be imposed for a homicide offense under this title unless the Government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that not more than 1 year and 1 day elapsed between—

''(1) the act or omission that caused the death of the victim; and

''(2) the death of the victim.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of sections for chapter 51 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''1123. No maximum time period between act or omission and death of victim.''.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—Section 1123(a) of title 18, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to an act or omission described in that section that occurs after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR FIRST-DEGREE MURDER BASED ON TIME PERIOD BETWEEN ACT OR OMISSION AND DEATH OF VICTIM.—Section 1111(b) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after ''imprisonment for life'' the following: '', unless the death of the victim occurred more than 1 year and 1 day after the act or omission that caused the death of the victim, in which case the punishment shall be imprisonment for any term of years or for life''.

VICTIMS' VOICES OUTSIDE AND INSIDE THE COURTROOM EFFECTIVENESS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 3706 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3706) to amend section 3663A of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that restitution includes necessary and reasonable expenses incurred by a person who has assumed the victim's rights.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 3706) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3706

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Victims' Voices Outside and Inside the Courtroom Effectiveness Act'' or the ''Victims' VOICES Act''.

SEC. 2. RESTITUTION FOR EXPENSES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE ASSUMED THE VICTIM'S RIGHTS.

Section 3663A(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) CLARIFICATION.—In ordering restitution under this section, a court shall order the defendant to make restitution to a person who has assumed the victim's rights under paragraph (2) to reimburse that person's necessary and reasonable—

''(A) lost income, child care, transportation, and other expenses incurred during and directly related to participation in the investigation or prosecution of the offense or attendance at proceedings related to the offense;

''(B) lost income, transportation, and other expenses incurred that are directly related to transporting the victim for necessary medical and related professional services and devices relating to physical, psychiatric, and psychological care, including nonmedical care and treatment rendered in accordance with a method of healing recognized by the law of the place of treatment; and

''(C) lost income, transportation, and other expenses incurred that are directly related to transporting the victim to receive necessary physical and occupational therapy and rehabilitation.''.

NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 570, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 570) designating March 1, 2024, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day''.

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 570) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 3853

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand 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. 3853) to extend the period for filing claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to provide for compensation under such Act for claims relating to Manhattan Project waste, and to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I now ask for its 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.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024, THROUGH TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned to convene for pro forma session only, with no business conducted, at 12 noon on Friday, March 1; and that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Keohane nomination; further, that the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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 8:22 p.m., adjourned until Friday, March 1, 2024, at 12 noon.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

JUDY W. CHANG, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2029, VICE ALLISON CLEMENTS, TERM EXPIRING.

DAVID ROSNER, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2027, VICE RICHARD GLICK, TERM EXPIRED.

LINDSAY S. SEE, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2028, VICE JAMES P. DANLY, TERM EXPIRED.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

DANA LYNN BANKS, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE OREN E. WHYCHE–SHAW.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARY E. DASCHBACH, OF RHODE ISLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC.

TROY FITRELL, OF VIRGINIA, 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 SEYCHELLES.

JOSHUA M. HARRIS, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA.

ELIZABETH K. HORST, OF MINNESOTA, 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 DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

MARTIN JOSEPH WALSH, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2029, VICE DONALD LEE MOAK, TERM EXPIRED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 7064:

To be major

MATTHEW A. DUGARD
JAMES R. JOHNSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 7064:

To be major

ARNOLD J. STEINLAGE III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY NURSE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 7064:

To be major

ARLENE JOHNSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

DARIM C. NESSLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

BRANDI N. HICKS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

NATHAN A. BENNINGTON
JENNIFER C. BLALOCK
JEREMY M. COLEMAN
MARK A. GUNN
REYNALDO B. URRA
ANDREW S. WAGNER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 7064:

To be lieutenant colonel

SANDEEP R. N. RAHANGDALE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 7064:

To be lieutenant colonel

WENDI J. DICK

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

BENJAMIN J. GRASS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

THOMAS C. FARRINGTON II

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

YULIYA OMAROV

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be commander

WILLIAM SELDE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be commander

BRACKERY L. BATTLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

DANIEL J. BALDOR
WILLIAM J. ISOM
MATTHEW A. WAGNER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

WILLIAM J. ROY, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

COLETTE B. LAZENKA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

NIKOLAOS SIDIROPOULOS

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 29, 2024:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

MARJORIE A. ROLLINSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND AN ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOUGLAS CRAIG SCHMIDT, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.