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## 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, the Reverend Tony Setley, Pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church, from Morgantown, WV.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

I invite you to pray with me.

Creator God, from the beginning, You have brought order from chaos, and in Your wise compassion, You order society by calling people into vocations—masks of God, which through others Your work is done.

We pray Your blessing upon our Senate this day and especially upon the many You have called to live out their vocation within and around this Chamber: for our Senators and their staffs, for civil servants and political appointees, for facility workers and security personnel, for lobbyists and support service workers, for press members, for pages and interns, and for all others. Provide them each daily moments to remember the source and importance of their calling so that they may well and faithfully exercise their vocation, here in this place, for both God and country.

For this, we pray in Your most Holy 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, March 7, 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 CALENDER

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 Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, tonight, the President of the United States comes before Congress to deliver his State of the Union address to the American people. It is a chance for the Commander in Chief to tell the story of where our country stands today, to hear about the sacrifices we have made as a country, about the challenges we have overcome, and about the kind of future we can achieve if we work together.

America has suffered immense challenge in recent years. When President Biden took office, over 3,000 Americans were dying of COVID a day; over 18 million Americans were on unemployment; our democracy was wounded, damaged, and battered after January 6; and inflation climbed to suffocating heights.

But today, President Biden will make clear that after so much adversity, America's economy is growing, inflation is slowing, and Democrats' agenda is delivering. Our economy has added a record 15 million new jobs—15 million new jobs—since President Biden took office, the greatest turnaround of any President. Last year alone, the economy created more jobs than in any year of the Trump administration.

Less than 2 years ago, inflation was at a crushing 9 percent. But today, it has cooled to the lowest level since the start of the pandemic; and that means that over the last year, the prices of things like milk, eggs, appliances, car rentals, and airfare have all come down.

Across the country, manufacturing and job creation is surging. Communities that have been long overlooked, especially in places like Upstate New York, are getting a second chance. It didn't happen on its own. It is the result of the Democratic agenda; a result of legislation like the American Rescue Plan, Infrastructure, CHIPS and

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



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Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which I was happy to champion in a Democratic Senate as I was majority leader.

But statistics and data tell only part of the story. Today, I am honored to welcome five inspiring New Yorkers and one brave Ukrainian soldier as my guests for the State of the Union. These six individuals show better than any statistic how America is made stronger by the policies of the Biden administration and a Democratic Senate.

You can look at the example of Andrii Chevozorov, a 25-year-old Ukrainian soldier who has risked his life and limb on the battlefield. After losing his leg in a mine explosion, he came to New York in January for prosthetics and rehabilitation treatment at Staten Island University Hospital.

It is an honor to welcome Andrii, and the Senate thanks him for his sacrifice. He reminds us all about the stakes of the war in Ukraine, of the importance of passing the supplemental. And I will continue working as hard as I can to make sure we get it done. It is a historic moment for America. We cannot turn our back on Ukraine and our other allies and the menaces that we face in the world.

You can also get a look at what is at stake through the story of Kate Farley of Hudson Valley, who is expecting her second child through in vitro fertilization. Without IVF, Kate could have never gotten pregnant. And it is both heartbreaking and enraging that extreme Republicans have made people like Kate worry this vital service will be curtailed. I am honored to welcome her today.

I am also honored to invite my friend Kevin McCaffrey of Suffolk County, the proud president of Teamsters Local 707, as well as Deborah Hartman, a retired UFCW member who used to work at Tops supermarket.

Kevin, of course, is the Republican leader of the Suffolk County legislature, but it didn't stop him and I to work to deal with the pensions that members of his local, Local 707, might have lost. Like many Americans, both Kevin and Deborah and their fellow workers faced the unthinkable prospect of their pensions drying up just a few years ago. Some workers had pensions cut by as much as two-thirds. People who put in money every 2 weeks, hoping, knowing, relying on the fact that their retirement would be secure—it wouldn't make them rich, but would make them secure—saw the rug pulled out from under them. And with Kevin from one end of my State and Deborah from the other, we were able to save those pensions. Republicans refused to offer relief. Democrats had to do it on its own.

Thanks to the reforms in the American Rescue Plan, millions of our union brothers and sisters across New York and America have seen that critical pension relief. These workers who have saved their whole lives to retire with

dignity have seen their dignity restored, something all Americans can be very proud of.

I am also proud of New Yorkers like Van Robinson, who I have known for decades and have partnered with to combat gun violence, increase affordable housing, and reduce lead poisoning for underserved communities. Van has been one of the leading voices reconnecting communities divided by highways and for tearing down I-81 in Syracuse; and thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure law that I led in Congress, we are getting it done.

Finally, I am delighted to welcome Kim Spica, an equipment Engineer Technician at GlobalFoundries. Kim's story shows what the future can look like for so many New Yorkers. She got her job after finishing a registered apprenticeship program at Hudson Valley Community College.

Recently, GlobalFoundries received the largest preliminary award from the CHIPS and Science Act to date: over \$1.5 billion, which will help them build a second chip fab for New York's capital region and create thousands of good-paying jobs like Kim's.

I was proud to lead the way on CHIPS and Science because I knew what it would mean for New Yorkers like Kim in the form of new jobs, greater opportunity, and a more decent life.

So if you want to see how far we have come as a country, these New Yorkers are a good illustration. These guests are the reason our Democratic majority fought so hard to pass the American Rescue Plan, pass infrastructure, pass CHIPS and Science, and pass the Inflation Reduction Act. I knew it would make an enormous difference for New Yorkers like the people who are joining me tonight.

Democrats' agenda, of course, is paying off in other ways. Americans are paying less for insulin. Prescription drugs for seniors on Medicare have been capped. Student loan borrowers have seen hundreds of millions of debt forgiveness.

So, tonight, the difference between the parties will be as clear as night and day. Democrats are focused on lowering costs, creating jobs, and putting money in people's pockets, but the hard right, which too often runs the Republican Party in the House and now increasingly in the Senate, is consumed by chaos, bullying, and attacking things like women's freedom of choice.

The Republican front runner for President has made it abundantly clear that he is not running to make people's lives better but, rather, on airing his personal political grievances. Donald Trump's cynical power grab even destroyed the best change at border security that Congress has seen in decades—a bill that even a Wall Street Journal poll from this morning shows that Americans clearly supported. Americans wanted bipartisan border security. Congress had bipartisan security ready to go, and Donald Trump

and his MAGA Republican followers are at fault for killing it in its tracks. That is shameful cynicism that once again hurts Americans.

Ideologues cannot run the show here. We have to fight these things.

So I thank President Biden for his leadership. The road hasn't been easy. The work is not yet done. But we have come far. We have overcome so much. And there is still so much on the line for American families, American values, and America's future. It is imperative we stay the course and finish the job we began 3 years ago.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on the appropriations bill, well, last night, the House passed the six appropriations bills with an overwhelming bipartisan vote—339 to 85.

Last night, the Senate took the first step to advance the appropriations bill via voice vote, which I hope portends more bipartisan cooperation moving forward. The watchwords for the Senate will be "cooperation" and "speed" as we work to pass these appropriations bills before tomorrow night's deadline.

It is noteworthy that a majority of both parties in the House—a majority of even the Republicans—supported this legislation.

Of course, the process is never easy in divided government, but with hard work, cooperation, and persistence, good things can happen if we put working together before other extraneous and often destructive issues.

The Senate will continue our work on these appropriations bills today so we can finish the package before tomorrow night's deadline. We are close to the finish line, but it will take bipartisan cooperation to get us there.

#### FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, finally, on the FAA, last night, the Senate, I am glad to say, unanimously approved a temporary extension of FAA funding until May 10. This extension will give Chair CANTWELL and the Commerce Committee the time they need to resolve the differences between FAA legislation in the House and the Senate. I am committed to moving an FAA reauthorization bill passed and signed into law as soon as we can so we can keep the United States one of the safest nations in the world for air travel.

Getting FAA reauthorization done will mean more safety inspectors at manufacturing plants, more traffic controllers, better customer service, and mandatory refunds for flight disruptions.

I am glad the Senate also preserves the 1,500-hour rule, which I have insisted—aided by the families in Buffalo—I have insisted it cannot and must not and will not be weakened.

Thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for continuing work on the FAA, and I look forward to bringing FAA reauthorization to the floor and sending it to the President's desk.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER.

The Republican leader is recognized.

#### STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, well, tonight, President Biden will deliver the last State of the Union Address of his term. For the past 3 years, these speeches have served as mile markers but not of any meaningful progress toward a more perfect Union. Instead, each year, the American people tuned in to see just how far the President's own version of his record is from the reality of their lives.

For 3 years, the President, who campaigned as a moderate, has governed like an activist from the furthest fringe of the Democratic Party.

The Biden administration's agenda has meant pain at home and weakness abroad. It didn't have to be this way. President Biden took office amid strong tailwinds—from an economic recovery that was already restoring the record-setting prosperity we saw before the pandemic to a historic modernization of our military that was well underway. He inherited everything he needed to point our Nation toward further security and prosperity, but he chose weakness and invited danger instead.

Today, nearly two-thirds of voters say our economy is worse than it was 4 years ago. Not even one in four thinks our country is on the right track. Barely a quarter of the country expects our economy to improve in the coming year. But that hasn't stopped President Biden from trying to convince working Americans to take his word for it and ignore their own shrinking paychecks. He has literally taken a victory tour to tout his disastrous economic record. His administration has declared Bidenomics "the word of the year."

Meanwhile, American consumers are shelling out a bigger portion of their income on groceries than at any point in the last 30 years. A food pantry in Northern Kentucky is reporting "more and more demand for . . . enough food to make people's income stretch." Across the board, consumer prices are nearly 18 percent higher today than they were when President Biden took office. This is what "Bidenomics in action" really means?

At kitchen tables tonight, working families will probably wonder whether the President has any regrets, whether he wishes he hadn't ignored his party's top economists and rammed through trillions of dollars in leftwing spending, which brought on the worst inflation in 40 years, or whether he wishes

he hadn't declared total war on our most affordable sources of domestic energy, along with the jobs these American industries support. On President Biden's watch, overall energy prices are up nearly a third.

Time after time, when given the choice to lead or to outsource his work to leftwing activists, President Biden has chosen the latter. He has handed his base a blank check for a wish list of social engineering and left the American people to foot the bill.

Meanwhile, he has poured gasoline on the fire of leftwing, pro-criminal, anti-police rhetoric across the country. The Biden administration has packed its Justice Department full of leftwing activists working overtime to tear serious crimes right out of the Criminal Code.

A couple years back, a district attorney in Massachusetts declared she wouldn't prosecute crimes like breaking and entering or drug possession with intent to distribute. President Biden rewarded this behavior by making Rachael Rollins one of his first U.S. attorneys. Across the country, on this President's watch, leftwing prosecutors have turned repeated offenders into the streets—repeatedly. In President Biden's America, violent criminals have learned that they won't face serious consequences, and, of course, they are acting accordingly.

At the same time, leftwing activists bent on attacking the Federal judiciary have found an ally in the Biden White House. The President has tried to give life tenure to a judicial nominee who identified himself as a "wild-eyed leftist," another with a history of supporting terrorist sympathizers, and even one who had worked to undermine a teenage girl's claim of sexual assault. President Biden hasn't just tried putting the wrong people in our Nation's institutions, he spent 3 years undermining the institutions themselves. His Attorney General slow-walked urgent security measures to protect the Supreme Court Justices and their families from angry mobs, and his administration even stood up a commission to explore Court packing—a terrible idea that hasn't gotten any less terrible since it was killed back in the 1930s.

So the rule of law is less stable on President Biden's watch. The streets of our major cities are less safe. And, of course, our borders are less secure.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, 3 years ago, illegal immigrants arrived at our southern border in shirts wearing his campaign logo insisting, as one put it, that "Biden promised us that everything is going to change"—that everything is going to change.

Well, they were absolutely right. Since President Biden took office, nearly 10 million people crossed our southern border illegally. His administration has abandoned CBP and ICE to contend with the highest daily, monthly, and yearly totals of illegal arrivals on record.

As soon as he took office, the President tore up commonsense authorities he could have used to maintain the secure border. Instead, he spent years pretending that functionally open borders didn't amount to a crisis.

The only campaign promise President Biden appears to have kept is the one he made on the campaign trail to people hoping to cross our borders illegally: "We immediately surge to the border, all those people who are seeking asylum."

By contrast, it is difficult to think of a pledge the President abandoned more completely than his campaign promise to restore respect for America on the world stage. Today, the credibility of our commitments is in serious doubt. The West is confronting the most dangerous moment since the fall of the Berlin wall, and our Commander in Chief's first instincts appear to be hesitation and self-deterrence. President Biden's failures pose embarrassing questions for America and our allies and partners.

Are we safer after his disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan? Do allies still take our word? Did the President's self-proclaimed fear of escalation force Putin to back down from his own brutal escalation in Ukraine, or did it give the Ukrainians the critical weapons they needed when they needed it most? Does America's closest ally in the Middle East feel like they can count on America's total support in its existential fight against genocidal terrorists? Did the world's most active state-sponsor of terror think twice before targeting Americans like the Georgia guardsmen killed, the Kentucky soldiers injured in the Tower 22 attack in Jordan? Does Iran hesitate to sic its proxies on Israel or threaten commercial shipping? Did the Biden administration's climate diplomacy with Beijing close any meaningful gaps in strategic competition with our top adversary? Did it reassure our allies and partners in the region that we understood the importance of hard power?

The answer to all these questions is a resounding "no."

President Biden's 3 years in office have left American leadership a weaker brand and our resolve a less fearsome asset, and we will be dealing with the consequences of his failures for years to come.

Around the Biden administration's 100-day mark, I warned the President that it wasn't too late to change course and start governing as the moderate he promised he would be. Needless to say, he certainly didn't take my advice.

And he didn't take the American people's sterner counsel either when they demanded change at the ballot box the following year. Well, this fall, the voters have a chance to issue a further course correction, one with a bit more finality.

Tonight, we will hear from a President who has failed in the most basic responsibility of government. He will come to the Capitol with record historic inflation, surging crime, open

borders, and weakness on the world stage.

Then, of course, the American people will witness historic contrast. They will hear our colleague Senator BRITT tell her story and offer a very different assessment of this moment in American history, one that embraces what makes our Nation great. I am glad for the Nation to hear directly from the youngest Republican woman ever elected to the Senate and one of our conferences brightest stars.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Republican whip.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tonight President Biden will come to Congress to deliver his State of the Union Address. It is a natural time to look at a President's legacy. And if one thing is certain, it is that the Biden Presidency hasn't done much for the state of our union.

Yesterday, I came down to the floor to talk about the national security crisis we are facing at our southern border. It is a crisis we have been facing almost since the day the President took office.

The President marked his inauguration by taking measures that weakened our Nation's border security, including halting construction of the border wall, rescinding the declaration of a national emergency at our southern border, and pausing deportations except under certain conditions. The effect was to declare to the world that the U.S. borders were effectively open, and the number of migrant encounters at our southern border ticked up accordingly.

And the surge has never stopped. President Biden has presided over 3 recordbreaking years of illegal immigration at our southern border. And if we continue on our current track, he will likely be presiding over a fourth. The first 4 months of fiscal year 2024 saw nearly 1 million migrant encounters at our southern border—1 million in just 4 months. These kinds of numbers not only represent a logistical and humanitarian crisis, they represent a gaping hole in our national security.

There is no question that the kind of numbers we are seeing smooth the way for dangerous individuals to enter our country. Last year, 169 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist were apprehended attempting to cross our southern border, and we are on track to exceed that number this year.

And those numbers only reflect individuals who were actually apprehended. With around 1.8 million known "got-aways" since President Biden took office and an untold number of

unknown "got-aways," I think we can safely assume that there are plenty of dangerous people making their way into our country without being stopped.

And President Biden's border crisis is not the only way in which he has jeopardized our national security. His disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan weakened our standing with our allies, and his failure to prioritize ensuring our military is equipped to meet and defeat current and future threats sends a dangerous signal to bad actors around the world.

Then, of course, there is the fact that the President is setting us up for a future energy crisis that will jeopardize our Nation's security by jeopardizing our energy security, not to mention jeopardizing American's pocketbooks. The President's hostility to conventional energy production and his determination to push us into a Green New Deal regime that our current energy system simply cannot cope with is setting us up for long-term instability in our Nation's energy supply.

That threatens our national security, which depends on stable access to energy; and it threatens America's financial security as an unstable supply will almost unquestionably result in higher prices. The steep rise in energy prices so far under the Biden administration could look small compared to the energy prices Americans could see under the Green New Deal regime President Biden envisions for the future.

Speaking of higher prices, perhaps the defining feature of the Biden administration is the inflation crisis the President helped create when he signed the so-called American Rescue Plan Act and flooded the economy with unnecessary government spending. Three years in, inflation is still well above the Federal Reserve's target rate.

Americans continue to suffer. Today, it costs the 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.

Grocery prices are up 21 percent under President Biden, and 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.

Then there is the 31 percent increase in energy costs, as I alluded to earlier, the 19 percent increase in housing costs, the 27 percent increase in the cost of car repairs, and the list goes on.

The President likes to talk about giving American families breathing room. Well, President Biden has eliminated the breathing room for a lot of American families. Along with higher prices—much higher prices—on everything from groceries to gas, Americans are also dealing with the high interest rates the Federal Reserve has had to impose to deal with President Biden's inflation crisis.

Those interest rates have helped to drive up mortgage rates and credit card rates, compounding hardship for a lot of Americans.

It is no wonder that, in a recent poll, just one in three voters said the economy was on the right track, or that 57 percent of respondents in another recent poll rated the economy as "fairly bad" or "very bad." Sixty-six percent of respondents in that same poll said that things in America are going "somewhat" or "very" badly.

The inflation crisis, the national security crisis at our southern border, and the potential energy crisis—it is no wonder that Americans aren't feeling very optimistic about the state of our Nation. It would be nice if the President spoke to their concerns tonight, but I expect that his speech tonight will involve more blame shifting than solutions to the crises that he has helped create, along with, of course, a host of election-year handouts designed to attract voters. If Americans are looking for relief, they are not going to find it from President Biden in his speech tonight on the state of the Union.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### I-27 NUMBERING ACT OF 2023

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to pass the I-27 Numbering Act, bipartisan legislation to officially designate the route between Laredo, TX, and Raton, NM, as the future Interstate 27.

I will say I am particularly gratified that the Senator from New Mexico is presiding because this is legislation that he and I offered together. It is bipartisan legislation that is supported by the State of Texas and the State of New Mexico.

This bill is the next step to advance major highway infrastructure in Texas and New Mexico that will support trade and commerce and jobs and economic development.

What is so important about a future interstate number?

By officially designating the highways between Laredo and Raton as future Interstate 27, this bill is a clear signal to the communities and businesses across Texas and New Mexico that Congress supports their work to develop the current highways to become part of the Interstate System.

Communities across this route need better infrastructure because of the increasing demands to move goods and people. Last year, Mexico was the top U.S. trade partner, with \$798 billion of trade between our nations. That is higher than the trade with our second and third biggest trading partners, Canada and China.

Even better, the port of entry in Laredo, TX, was the top trade gateway in the United States, outperforming the Port of Los Angeles—Laredo, TX. This is fantastic news for Texas. It means more jobs and economic development in Texas to move those goods. It is also part of a broader trend of a flourishing freight business in Texas.

Last year, I was proud to pass bipartisan, bicameral legislation to streamline the Presidential permit application process for bridges across the Rio Grande River in South Texas—four bridges: two in Laredo, one in Brownsville, one in Eagle Pass. And two of them are along the future I-27 route, the World Trade Bridge in Laredo, currently with 8 lanes—the proposal is to expand that to 18 lanes—and the Puer to Verde Bridge in Maverick County.

Passing the I-27 Numbering Act would support the increased trade we are expecting to come across those new bridges and those new lanes of traffic.

We have received letters of support for the I-27 Numbering Act from the Texas and New Mexico Departments of Transportation, the agencies tasked with building infrastructure along this route. We also have strong support from the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, which has worked so hard to bring the ports-to-plains route to reality. We have strong support from cities up and down the future Interstate 27.

Notably, the Texas Department of Transportation is working to improve infrastructure all along the future I-27. TxDOT currently has \$5.5 billion in active projects along the route related to planning, engineering, and construction, including \$481 million from the Texas Transportation Commission to upgrade parts of the route to a four-lane divided highway.

I want to thank Senator LUJÁN, who is presiding right now; Senator CORNYN, my colleague from Texas; and Senator HEINRICH, your colleague from New Mexico, for working hand in hand with me on this bill. It is notable that all four Senators representing Texas and New Mexico are standing in unison with this bill because it is good for Texas, it is good for New Mexico, and it is good for the country.

There should be no objection to this bill. The Senate previously passed this bill unanimously in July of last year. It then passed the House, which made some very small technical changes in December of last year. And there were no substantive changes to the bill, which means there should be no objections here now. The Senate should pass the I-27 Numbering Act today.

Before I proceed, I want to yield to my colleague from Texas, Senator CORNYN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator CRUZ for his leadership on this legislation, which I am, of course, proud to cosponsor. We represent a booming State. We represent in excess of 30 million people, and because of geopolitical shifts of manufacturing from China back to near shore or places like Mexico, thanks to the USMCA—the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement—we are mutually dependent with Mexico and Canada for trade, which creates millions of jobs right here in America, and principally in Texas.

The first time I went to Lubbock, TX, when I ran for statewide office, a former Congressman, Randy Neugebauer, before he was a Member of Congress, said: There are three things you need to remember about Lubbock, TX: cotton, Texas Tech University, and ports to plains. It was that important back then, and it is even more important today.

So the ports-to-plains system, as Senator CRUZ pointed out, is a 963-mile transportation corridor. And building on the success we had in passing a bill to designate the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas and New Mexico as an interstate, this I-27 Numbering Act does exactly that.

I look forward to seeing the Ports-to-Plains Corridor fuel more trade, more jobs, more energy security, and agricultural production for years to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 992.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 992) entitled "An Act to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to designate the Texas and New Mexico portions of the future Interstate-designated segments of the Port-to-Plains Corridor as Interstate Route 27, and for other purposes.," do pass with an amendment.

#### MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. CRUZ. I move to concur in the House amendment, and I ask unanimous consent that the motion be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRUZ. I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### TEXAS WILDFIRES

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, on Monday of this week, I visited the towns of Fritch and Borger in the Panhandle of Texas.

Fritch is a town of roughly 1,800 residents. They are no strangers to hard times. In 1992, a tornado a mile wide ripped through the town and destroyed over 1,300 homes. Ten years ago, in 2014, a wildfire in Fritch destroyed over 100 homes. In the past week and a half, Fritch and the rest of the Texas Panhandle, and the Oklahoma Panhandle as well, have been dealing with devastating wildfires.

When I was there on Monday, 242 homes had been lost. I met with local officials, county judges, mayors, the police chiefs, fire chiefs, volunteers at churches, and charities. I met with

families who have been devastated and lost everything.

I saw homes that had been burned beyond recognition. At one home I saw, outside was parked a truck that had been utterly burned and charred. The heat was so intense that the windshield glass had melted, and there were just pools of glass on the hood. I also saw, in front of a house, a motorcycle—I think it was a Harley—that had been utterly incinerated. The tires were burned and gone. I saw a boat—I think it was a bass boat, a fishing boat—again, utterly incinerated, nothing but fiberglass just melted on the ground.

One of the officials I met with was Volunteer Fire Chief Zeb Smith. I met with Chief Smith on Monday. Less than 24 hours after, Chief Smith passed away fighting that wildfire, running into a home that was on fire, trying to stop the blaze. He had been fighting fires for 9 days straight when he entered that home first thing Tuesday morning.

On Monday, I asked Chief Smith: Have any firefighters been injured yet? He said: "Thankfully, no."

Neither he nor I knew when we were having that conversation that, 24 hours later, he would be first, and he would give his life to save his community.

These wildfires have been raging for a week and a half, and they devastated communities like Fritch all the way from Lake Meredith to Canadian. One of the fires, the Smokehouse Creek fire, is the largest wildfire in Texas history and the second largest in our Nation's history. The scar from these fires can be seen from space, and they currently cover more acreage than the entire State of Rhode Island.

These fires have had a devastating impact on farmers and ranchers in Texas. More than 500 structures have been lost, and 10,000 miles' worth of barbed wire has been destroyed. It is still unclear exactly how many cattle have perished, but we know it is thousands upon thousands of cattle that have been taken by the fire.

I texted a good friend of mine who lives in Canadian. I told her I was thinking of her and just asked how she was doing and how she was doing with the fires. I didn't expect her response.

She responded: Well, not too well. My home burned down, so did my barn, and I lost half my cattle.

But then she responded: Do you know what? I am actually feeling pretty lucky because the ranchers on both sides of me lost all their cattle.

I have to say I prayed for my friend. I prayed for all the men and women in the panhandle. But that response also embodies the frontier spirit. These are tough Texans.

The destruction we are seeing is enormous. Throughout all of this, to date, there have been only three deaths attributed to the wildfires. That is extraordinary given the magnitude of this disaster as there could easily have been scores and scores of deaths. That is a testament to the firefighters and

the first responders in the panhandle who have been tirelessly working to get people out of harm's way and to contain the fires. At times, the fires have been traveling more than 200 yards per second. That is how fast these fires have been moving.

Right now, as this disaster is unfolding in Texas, the first priority is to contain these fires, to put them out. Texans are working to stop their spread. The weather has been a big factor. A few days ago, fortunately, there was some cold. There was some wet weather with snow and ice. That slowed the fires some, but then the weather got drier and windier, which are ideal conditions for spreading fire. So, right now, there are firefighters heroically battling massive fires, risking their lives.

When I was there, I was told that over 60 fire departments from across Texas and across the country have sent firefighters to battle the blaze. Monday night, I was at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and I saw the Houston fire chief. He told me Houston had sent firefighters all the way up to the panhandle to help battle the blaze.

To anyone in the panhandle who sees this, I want to ask you: Please listen very, very carefully to your local officials. Listen to emergency responders. If they give you an evacuation order, treat it seriously. Keep your families safe. At the end of the day, it is tragic when someone loses a home, but a home can be replaced. Your family members cannot.

This fire is dangerous, and our first priority needs to be preserving life and getting people out of harm's way. The second step is to shift to relief and rebuilding, and rebuilding is a process that is going to take years. In the short term, there are charities that have stepped up and are engaged, including the Salvation Army and the Red Cross and their local churches.

You know, I want to say something. I have been in the Senate for 12 years. Texas is a big State, and as a big State, we have our share of natural disasters—from hurricanes ravaging the gulf coast, to tornadoes doing enormous devastation, to this wildfire raging in the panhandle right now. As Texas's Senator, it is my responsibility to stand with those communities in a time of crisis and in the aftermath rebuilding.

Every time we have had a natural disaster in Texas, it is heartbreaking when you see the loss of life and the suffering, but, consistently, it is also inspiring. It is inspiring because of the reaction of Texans in a time of crisis. They come together, Texans helping Texans, holding on to each other, supporting each other.

When Hurricane Harvey hit the gulf coast and home after home was flooded, I remember Texans would go and rescue their neighbors. They were jumping on bass boats because the streets were flooded, and they would go from house to house, pulling people out

of harm's way. Rednecks in bass boats is what I called them, and it was the spirit of Texas. The beauty in that time is there are no partisan divisions. There are no Republicans and Democrats. People don't care about race or ethnicity or religion. It is just Texans helping Texans. That is what I saw in Fritch and Borger, that same spirit of Texans helping Texans.

I will tell you, in a time of crisis, the church steps up, and the church should. The church should show love.

When I was in the panhandle, I stopped at multiple churches and relief centers. I thanked the volunteers who were there. They were giving out food. They were giving out water. They were giving out diapers. They were giving out supplies for people who had lost everything, and I thanked them.

I visited with one woman whose home had burned down, and her daughter's home had burned down. Yet, I will tell you, she was smiling and was in good spirits.

She said: Do you know what? My family is alive and safe.

I mentioned that, in Fritch, 242 homes had burned down. The county judge told me, though, there were only half a dozen people in the local shelter they had stood up because everyone else whose home had burned down was presumably staying with friends or family or loved ones. It was other Texans who said: Hey, you lost your home; come stay with me. That is inspiring. It is powerful. That is what Texans do.

There are also things we can and should do at the Federal level to help the panhandle. With every local official, I assured: Do you have the Federal resources you need? Do you have the assistance right now in crisis?

Then, going forward, my office has been working hand in hand with State officials and local officials and is beginning to coordinate Federal resources to fight the fires. Indeed, I have already filed an amendment to the minibuss the Senate is considering right now to increase the funding for wildfire relief to help the people impacted by this. I will continue working on measures to provide disaster relief for Texans in harm's way—from the people who have lost their homes to our ranchers who have suffered the devastating loss of livestock. We need to stand with the panhandle and help recover from this historic disaster.

There is an old panhandle saying up there that people have "Panhandle Spirit"—a spirit of humility; a spirit of companionship; a spirit that when a neighbor needs help, by God, you help him. The whole country has seen that spirit in the past few days. Thousands of bales of hay and cattle feed have been trucked up daily from ranchers wanting to help out fellow ranchers. Hundreds of pallets of water and food and clothes have been donated to help people in need.

That same spirit that built Texas is the same spirit that makes the Lone Star State so unique. That is the spirit

that keeps our firefighters fighting the blazes, that keeps our ranchers rebuilding the fences and people picking up the pieces and rerooting in the land they love.

Together, with that same spirit and that same determination that people in the Panhandle Plains have had for generations, we will rebuild. We will come back even stronger than ever.

God bless our firefighters, and God bless our first responders. God bless all the Texans who have lost their homes in the past few days and those Texans who have lost loved ones. We are praying for you, and we will help you rebuild.

I would like to close by again talking about Chief Smith.

The loss of Zeb Smith has left a huge hole in the community. On social media, the Fritch Volunteer Fire Department wrote:

Just know that right now we are not OK. We love our chief, our brother, our friend. Please be patient with us.

The Hutchinson County Office of Emergency Management team stated about Chief Smith:

His exemplary leadership was evident in his tireless efforts over the past week, where he worked diligently to protect and safeguard his community and fellow citizens.

Chief Smith was a hero. His name will not be forgotten. In his honor, I had a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to recognize his heroic service. Chief Smith gave his life on Tuesday of this week so that his fellow Texans could live.

To the family and friends and loved ones of Chief Smith, we are mourning with you, and we are celebrating a life well lived.

May God bless the people of Texas. We will defeat these wildfires.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

#### RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, nearly 80 years ago, in Central New Mexico's Tularosa Basin, at a place we now call the Trinity Site, the world as we knew it changed.

The Trinity test was the first detonation of a nuclear weapon in human history, and the families who lived downwind from the Trinity explosion have lived the consequences of that day for every moment of their lives. These families were never told that the white dust falling around them that day would contaminate their bodies, would contaminate the bodies of the children they had yet to bear, that it would contaminate the crops and the water and the livestock that they had built their communities around. They were never told about the kinds of cancers they would get, the conditions they would suffer through, or the loved ones they would lose.

These families still to this day have not received the recognition or the compensation for what they endured so that our Nation could be victorious in the Second World War. Nearly a century later, 80 years now, these folks deserve better. They deserve justice.

It is long overdue for Congress to finally, finally amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, RECA, to include the Trinity downwinders, to include all Americans who were directly impacted from our nuclear tests and program, and to include the uranium workers who were exposed to radiation in service to our national defense. That is what we are voting on this week in the U.S. Senate. Today, we have a chance to finally deliver justice for the Trinity downwinders and for all Americans who were exposed to radioactive nuclear materials.

I want to thank especially the Presiding Officer as it has been one of the honors of my career to fight alongside him for this expansion of RECA for our entire congressional careers.

I want to urge all of our colleagues to stand with us on the right side of history today and to support this legislation.

#### AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, I rise now as the chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. For the better part of 9 months, I have been negotiating a bipartisan agricultural appropriations bill. My singular goal was delivering a bill that invests in rural communities, supports our farmers, and delivers for America's children. That is what our agricultural appropriations bill does. I am proud to have gotten us here, alongside Ranking Member JOHN HOEVEN and his great staff and with the immeasurable leadership of Chairwoman PATTY MURRAY.

Our bill will help farmers produce healthy food. It will support economic development in rural communities and help working families put food on the table.

As we went through the negotiations, I had to stand particularly firm to protect the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—what most of us know as WIC. I can't think of a more important program and a more important constituency in our country than one that delivers food to babies and toddlers.

My constituents in New Mexico agree. Dr. Laurence Shandler is a pediatrician back home. As he put it in a letter to my office, the impact of delivering this support goes way beyond the food itself. Dr. Shandler shared how "children who receive WIC have improved birth outcomes, increased immunization rates, better access to healthcare, reduced healthcare costs, and better referrals to social services for families." He said:

Now is not the time to scale back on WIC.

I couldn't agree more.

I am proud to say that despite House Republicans' best efforts—and, believe me, they tried—we have fully funded WIC.

This is a major win for families across the country. We are ensuring that none of the 7 million women and

children who depend on this nutrition will be put on a waiting list or denied assistance outright.

I am also proud that we have fully funded SNAP—a program that helps 42 million Americans put food on the table each month. In doing that, we also blocked House Republicans' attempt to impose new redtape and ineffective restrictions on eligibility for Americans who count on SNAP, because what working families need right now is a government that will fight for them, not one that will make their lives more difficult.

Our bill fully funds Child Nutrition Programs—like the School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the summer EBT program—to ensure that children don't go hungry.

Our kids should be able to focus on learning in the classroom, on growing, and on making new friends, not worrying about where their next meal will come from.

We also are maintaining our strong support for the agricultural producers who grow our food. I know how much that means to the Presiding Officer. That includes maintaining support for vital agricultural research and our Nation's next generation of researchers through funding for both the Agricultural Research Service and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

These funds support scientific discovery at land-grant universities and research centers all across our country, including New Mexico State University in my home State.

Our bill also delivers investments to help our Nation's farmers and producers make their operations more resilient to an ever-changing climate. Farmers in New Mexico are grappling with dryer conditions, dwindling water supplies. And they are not alone. I know that farmers and producers are eager to improve the long-term health of their working landscapes. They just need effective tools to improve soil health, conserve water, conserve energy, and manage their natural hazard risks.

Speaking of managing risks and improving safety, our bill also supports the Food and Drug Administration's critical mission to protect the safety and the security of our Nation's supply chains for food and for medicine.

Our bill will also deliver important economic development investments to revitalize rural communities all across America. That includes support for the Rental Assistance Program at USDA that ensures Americans living in rural areas have access to safe and affordable housing.

We also delivered vital investments in public safety for our rural communities. I was very proud to secure millions of dollars of Federal funding that will help communities all across New Mexico. From Taos County to Anthony and Portales to San Juan County, we were able to fund fire engines and ambulances and build new emergency response facilities.

Finally, at a time of mounting international conflict and global food insecurity, we are reaffirming America's moral leadership in fighting hunger worldwide. Maintaining our support for international food aid programs not only demonstrates our Nation's commitment in the fight against hunger, but it helps us build new markets for our agricultural exports.

As we drafted this bill and steered it through negotiations with the House, we had to make some very difficult decisions on how to best invest taxpayer dollars. We had to stay within the very thin margins for topline funding levels that were agreed to last year by President Biden and House Republican leadership. But I am very proud of where we landed in this comprehensive, bipartisan legislation.

I especially want to thank the staff on the subcommittee for all the work they did to land this bill. I would just urge all of our colleagues to support these investments that will make a real difference for working families, for farmers who produce our food, and for rural economies.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MANCHIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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. 506, Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

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.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 74 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Britt Sanders

(Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 46, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and proceed to the consideration of S. 3853, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today in the hours before President Biden's State of the Union address to discuss the reality of the past 3 years and the current circumstances of our

Nation. Together, my colleagues and I are here to speak on behalf of the American people who have been forgotten and left behind by President Biden, those who know the true consequences of his administration's policies and who are really feeling the pain by the continued failures that have defined President Biden's time in the White House.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have been guided by my eternal optimism. I feel like I can see beyond the gloom and push toward a brighter future. However, it is clear that this is not the perspective that is felt in communities across our country, as Americans realize that the state of our Nation is not as strong as it should and could be. They continue to battle economic challenges that are making the American dream unaffordable.

There is a continued assault on American energy, which started by canceling the Keystone XL pipeline and now, just several weeks ago, the disastrous halting of the construction of the LNG export terminals.

They see the unmitigated flow of illegal crossings at our southern border, and they face the threat of rising crime, and they see the weakened state of Americans standing on the global stage.

President Biden remains the common denominator across each of these issues, and he continues to prove—and this is harsh—that he is just not up to the task of leading our country in a time when it is needed most.

Perhaps the most consistent issue that has defined President Biden's tenure in the White House—and one that I hear constantly about back home—is the state of our economy and the persistence of high interest rates and inflation. Despite President Biden's claims, inflation has not cooled and price hikes have worn down consumers over the past 3 years, making necessities like food and housing nearly unaffordable. The price of food at the grocery store—anybody who is listening to this that has been to the grocery store knows this better than anybody. The price of food at grocery stores and in our restaurants increased 2.6 percent just in the last year, but this is on top of the staggering 10 percent that food prices rose over the last year. So what used to be \$100 worth of groceries in 2019 now costs \$125. And just last week, it was revealed that food costs, compared to income, have hit a 33-year high with American consumers spending over 11 percent of their disposal income on food. That means that the last time Americans paid this much for food “Terminator 2” was in the movies, Michael Jordan had just won his second MVP award, and HP had introduced the first color scanner. That is how long ago this was.

Adding to this, U.S. home prices are at an alltime high. Housing costs have now become unaffordable for a record number of U.S. renters, and that is according to a recent Harvard study.

Make no mistake, this is the economy that President Biden campaigned on, and it is the economy that his policies of reckless spending and high taxes were destined to create.

The President has gone even as far as establishing a strike force—I don't know if we are going to hear about it tonight—a strike force on unfair and illegal pricing, which is nothing more than a cover so he can blame others for the effects of his policies.

Another issue that will forever define President Biden's tenure is the historic crisis we have seen at the southern border—something we have all addressed on the floor repeatedly—and the devastating consequences it has created. The most recent data shows over 176,000 crossings along the southern border this past January. This marks the worst January on record and the sixth consecutive month where a record was being set. That brings us to a total of 9 million—9 million—illegal border crossings under President Biden's watch. Additionally, there were another 7,000-plus migrant encounters at the southern border on Monday, marking the fourth day in a row of over 7,000 encounters.

While the White House remains committed to their message of no Executive action can alleviate this crisis, they fail to mention the Executive actions that they took literally hours after President Biden was sworn in. These Executive Orders on day one of Biden's administration dismantled the effective immigration policies of President Trump.

The truth is, President Biden can take basic steps and end this chaos, but in some situations—and far too many of them—it may already be too late. The barbaric murder of Laken Riley is a national tragedy and was completely avoidable.

The catch-and-release policies of President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas have allowed the catastrophe at our southern border to impact every community in our country and every State.

Crime is all too familiar to this administration, especially right here in the President's backyard. While the administration is touting a drop in crime across other cities, violent crime right here in Washington, DC, is up a staggering 39 percent. Multiple members of Congress have been recent victims of crime in this city, as have multiple members of my own staff.

We must remember that President Biden owns this issue more than he would like to admit. Last May, he vetoed bipartisan legislation to overturn police reforms right here in Washington, DC.

Speaking of ownership, another issue that President Biden owns is the recent weakness that America has displayed on the international stage. We are living in a time where our Nation faces the most dangerous global threats that we have seen in decades. Yet President Biden has proven to be a President of



weakness, while our adversaries are watching how the United States reacts to the challenges of our time. This display of weakness started with the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, which signaled unreliability to our allies and weakness to those who want to do us harm. Then President Biden did not establish a strong deterrent for Putin, suggesting that NATO and the United States might not take any action if Russia undertook a minor incursion. Next, the Biden administration engaged with Iran on fruitless nuclear talks while the regime built up their nuclear capabilities and their militias attacked our own U.S. troops. Now there have been over 170 attacks on servicemembers with minimal responses taken. This has also culminated most recently in the loss of three of our Army Reserve soldiers.

During the State of the Union tonight, President Biden will draw a proverbial line in the sand and will ask the American people: Which side are you on? I encourage my fellow Americans not to fall for this attempt to separate us or label us as enemies of one another; but rather, we should join together in realizing that it doesn't have to be this way and that the American people truly deserve better.

This leads to, perhaps, the biggest broken promise from the President; that was his pledge to unite our Nation. We are fractured; there is no doubt about it. In this administration, anyone who disagrees with their policies is an extremist and a threat to our freedoms.

I know the people of our country deserve better from the White House, and the state of our union has become weaker over the past 3 years. So I hope the President addresses these issues tonight in a meaningful way that doesn't finger point, doesn't blame, but that takes the issues and unites the country and finds solutions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as my colleague from West Virginia has noted, and as the Nation knows—the world knows—President Biden will deliver his third, perhaps final, State of the Union address tonight.

Obviously, the border is a major issue confronting the Nation, and I have to say that, coming from Texas with the 1,200 mile common border with Mexico, Washington has just recently acknowledged—the President has just recently acknowledged something that we have known has been a problem for a long, long time without really any help to deal with this flood of humanity and drugs across our southwestern border.

I expect that President Biden will do as he always does—blame somebody else for this problem, even though he has had the same tools that President Trump has had with which to deal with it from the day he stepped into the Oval Office.

The American people are pretty smart and they are pretty perceptive and they understand that the crisis at our border is a man-made crisis, and that man is President Biden. He has opted, rather than secure the border, to issue dozens of Executive orders dismantling piece by piece the border security protections that President Trump had put in place, things like the “Remain in Mexico” policy where people who would otherwise be released into the interior of the United States would have to remain in Mexico while their asylum claims have been determined.

Under President Biden, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has encountered nearly 7 million migrants. I have heard numbers as high as 9 million. The truth is we don't really have an accurate number because it is virtually uncontrolled, but we know that it is more than the past two administrations combined. In 3 years, President Biden has allowed more illegal migrant encounters across the border than in 12 years of President Obama's term and President Trump's.

Well, you would think, with President Biden knowing he has a huge political liability, that he would seek advice from the experts. But former U.S. Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz said that President Biden and Vice President HARRIS never even spoke to him during his time in office. This is the man, the expert, who is in charge of the border for the U.S. Government, and the President and the Vice President didn't even speak to him.

Well, because of the welcome mat that has been laid out by the Biden administration, border officials are preparing for yet another spike in the record levels of migration.

The Biden administration is under fire for reports that it flew 320,000 migrants from foreign countries directly into the United States without vetting them first.

Words fail to describe the unprecedented nature of this crisis. It is so bad, I keep asking myself: What is it going to take before the President wakes up? Mr. President, 7 to 9 million illegal entries into the country; 300,000 children placed with sponsors in the interior of the country and, as the New York Times noted, many of them forced into involuntary labor. And then when wellness checks were made to see where these children are after they are placed with these sponsors, in the case of the New York Times, they said that “85,000 of those sponsors didn't even answer the phone or the door.” So we don't know what happened to those children, those 300,000 children.

And then there are the drugs that flow across the border when the Border Patrol is overwhelmed with mass numbers of migrants.

Well, here is another problem. Those who are old enough to remember September 11, 2001, when 19 Saudi nationals flew two planes into the World Trade Center and crashed another one

at the Pentagon—19. Four nationals killed 3,000 Americans that day.

So far this year, the Border Patrol has apprehended—apprehended—169 individuals who were on the Terror Watchlist. So far this fiscal year, they have apprehended 49. But here is what should keep all of us awake at night: approximately 1.7 million “got-aways.”

In other words, a large number of these migrants turn themselves in knowing they are going to be released, and that is the easiest way to make it into the United States and probably end up staying for the rest of your life. But 1.7 million people who came across the border evaded law enforcement. They call those “got-aways,” people caught on cameras or some sensor.

How many more people on the Terror Watchlist were among those 1.7 million “got-aways”? It should alarm all of us to think about those who made it into this country who have not yet been caught.

Then there are the drugs. Last year, 108,000 Americans died of drug overdoses, 71,000 of those from fentanyl poisoning. Last week, the Border Patrol seized 2,800 pounds of meth, fentanyl, and heroin. That is great, but how many more of those drugs have made their way into the United States undetected? That is \$12 million worth of narcotics in just 1 week.

Of course, who is reaping the benefits of the current border policies? It is the drug cartels. It is the smuggling networks. They continue to get richer and richer and more powerful.

Over the weekend, Border Patrol arrested six sexual predators who were illegally crossing the border. Again, we don't know how many more were among the “got-aways” I mentioned earlier. This follows a nationwide law enforcement effort last month where U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement apprehended 275 known sex offenders who had entered the country illegally.

All this while the country continues to mourn the death of 22-year-old nursing student Laken Riley. As we all know by now, she was killed while jogging in broad daylight on the campus of the University of Georgia. Jose Antonio Ibarra, a 26-year-old Venezuela national who entered the United States illegally and was released by the Biden administration, has been charged with her murder.

This week, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre was asked if President Biden plans to address Laken's death during his State of the Union speech. She said she had nothing to share on that topic.

If the Biden administration had not abused the parole system—that means the catch-and-release by which individuals like Mr. Ibarra were simply released into the interior of the United States—Laken's death might have been prevented. But President Biden has no plans to even acknowledge her death, let alone take responsibility for it.

In the last 3 years, I have spoken on the floor of the Senate about these

issues more times than I can count because Texas is on the frontline but with precious little assistance from the Federal Government. That is why Governor Greg Abbott has used the National Guard and the Department of Public Safety to do what the Federal Government should have already been doing, and that is to provide security for our border.

This is one of the most urgent catastrophes of our time, and it is a huge political liability for the President and his party because they have been watching this catastrophe get worse and worse and worse and done next to nothing about it.

We reached a breaking point a long time ago, and now every State is paying the price for President Biden's failed policies, from Texas all the way to New York.

As long as the President refuses to do his job and enforce the laws already on the books, deadly drugs will continue to flow into our communities, dangerous criminals will threaten our citizenry, and many more lives will be lost.

I hope the President accepts responsibility for what has happened the last 3 years, and I hope his remarks reflect the urgency of this crisis that he created, but the truth is, I won't be holding my breath.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleagues and their comments, and I know that Senator HYDE-SMITH is also going to speak on this issue.

As we have heard, the President later today is going to talk about his record, and he is going to try to sell that record to the American people.

As we have heard, many of his policies are failures. This record is a broken record, and much of it, just as my colleague from Texas was saying, is a record that has failed the people of our States.

For 3 years, the American people have truly suffered immensely during this record of failure and broken promises. Some of the actions that President Biden has taken beginning on day one is he issued Executive order after Executive order.

Let's talk about day one as we set the framework for what he will talk about tonight as his 3-year record.

On day one, President Biden took actions pertaining to the border and illegal immigration, and here is what he did: He paused deportations—paused them. That means he put up a “halt” sign and said: You cannot deport people who have illegally entered the country. He limited which illegal aliens could be arrested. Now, that was an action that he took. He said: Well, you can't go arrest certain groups of illegal aliens—even though they have broken the law coming into this country. So he put those protections in place for people who had broken the

law entering the country illegally. He halted construction of the border wall, and he ended the “Remain in Mexico” policy.

Now, during his first 100 days, he took a total of 94 Executive actions that made the border less secure and weakened legal immigration and encouraged illegal immigration and tried to make illegal immigration legal. Because of that, since he took the oath of office, 9 million—9 million—illegal immigrants have entered this country. That is more than the population of 38 States.

Those are the actions he has taken.

In addition to the 9 million illegal immigrants, you have known and unknown “got-aways.” These unknown “got-aways” are untold numbers of drug traffickers, human traffickers, smugglers. That is what is coming into our country because of this porous border—in addition, tens of thousands of people from countries of interest; in addition, terrorists who have been apprehended at our southern border trying to enter illegally. Those are the ones we know about.

Americans are indeed—Tennesseans certainly are—enduring the consequences of this open border agenda. Over the past few weeks, we have seen countless illegal aliens who should have never been allowed to set foot in this country be arrested for sexual assault, rape, and murder.

One of the victims, Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student in Georgia, was allegedly killed by an illegal immigrant who was paroled into this country by the Biden administration.

Now, paroling someone into the country grants special privileges. They can get a work permit. They can get benefits. If you look at President Obama's record, he paroled about 5,600 people a year into the country and the same for President Trump. But President Biden has gone more than 200 times this every year. In 2022, he paroled 800,000 people into the country, and in 2023, 1.2 million people. One of these parolees is the alleged killer of Laken Riley. There are others who have committed rape against children, who have bludgeoned our citizens. President Biden's policies are directly responsible for these crimes.

Now, there is also a bucket of economic failures that I want to touch on. We all know that when President Biden came into office, inflation was 1.4 percent. Since then, we have seen inflation skyrocket, and we have seen Federal spending skyrocket. We know that trillions of dollars have been added to the debt. Much of this comes because of his agenda. A lot of it is his attack on energy and his push for the Green New Deal.

Now, President Biden had claimed that his agenda would—and I am going to quote him—that it would “grow the economy from the middle out and the bottom up.” Instead, what it has done is caused the worst inflation in four decades.

Since Inauguration Day for Joe Biden, prices have been on the uptick. When you talk to Tennesseans, they can tell you how much the cost of food is up. It is up at least about 20 percent; rent, housing is up over 20 percent; and then you look at the cost of energy, whether you are filling up the tank or whether you are paying the electric bill or the gas bill for heating and cooling the house. That is what this economy has done.

As we look at the issues, we know that the economy—we know that this has such a negative impact on the amount of money that people have in their pockets each month. In Tennessee, this means that in 2023 alone, an average family had to spend over \$10,000 more just to tread water, just to stay even.

So as we look at this, as we know the President is going to stand and insist that the state of the Nation is strong, we know that there are going to be millions of Americans who say: No. It is frayed. It is fractious. It is hurting.

People are broke. Our border is broken. Crime is up in our communities. All of this is directly related to the policies of President Biden and his agenda.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I also rise to discuss the Biden administration's failure to contain the crisis at our southern border and how that is having extreme consequences and endangering our very own citizens.

Time and time again, Republicans have warned about the damage being done to our country by open border policies launched on President Biden's first day in office.

For more than 3 years, we have witnessed this President and his administration tell us over and over that there is not a border crisis and that the border is secure. I, like most Americans, know that is absolutely not true.

President Biden will deliver his State of the Union Address tonight, and I hope the American people will listen with some level of skepticism should he discuss his recent election-year plans to address illegal crossings at the border. The American people deserve for him to be forthcoming about the border crisis, a crisis that is manifesting itself more and more in serious and violent crimes committed by illegal migrants allowed to stay in our country.

The American people deserve to know why or how Executive action would be better than simply enforcing the law—the laws that are currently already on the books. Yes, Executive orders have the force of law, but they are based on existing statutes. Simply put, this administration needs to enforce the law. Americans are taking the brunt of Joe Biden's policies as crime runs rampant at the hands of illegal immigrants.

Last year, Border Patrol agents encountered thousands of illegal aliens

with prior criminal convictions, including assault, rape, and murder. Make no mistake, it is thanks to Joe Biden's policies and his refusal to enforce the law that has allowed such criminals into our country, and now Americans are becoming victims of their crimes all across the country. Over just 2 weeks this January, law enforcement arrested more than 100 illegal immigrants in 25 different U.S. cities. Over half of the illegal aliens arrested had convictions or pending charges for assault against children, including sexual assault against children.

A month ago, just outside of Minneapolis, a man who was previously detained, dressed as a delivery driver, snuck into a home and murdered three people while two small children witnessed this crime.

Just a few weeks ago in New York, several migrants were arrested for assaulting a pair of police officers. Of course, they were almost immediately released when the Manhattan District Attorney's Office did not seek bail. They were seen smirking and using obscene gestures for the media, showing no remorse for their actions. From the same mob assault, one of the migrants allegedly involved was arrested again just days later—this time, for robbing a Macy's in Queens.

Now, just the other week, a University of Georgia nursing student, with her whole future ahead of her, went running on a popular trail in broad daylight only to be brutally murdered. The man charged with her murder entered our country illegally.

These crimes, combined with the liberal district attorneys and mayors across the country—those who advocate for sanctuary cities and other soft-on-crime policies—have created a nightmare for everyone who wants to live peacefully and safely in their homes and communities without violence.

Where is President Biden's compassion for American families and communities experiencing these horrible acts? During his brief and sanitized visit to Brownsville last week, why did the President dodge questions about the murder of 22-year-old Laken Riley at UGA? Why is his administration reluctant to prioritize their safety?

I pray that the perpetrators receive justice, and I pray the families of these victims receive God's comfort.

Sadly, my home State of Mississippi has also felt the consequences of Joe Biden's policies with the many instances of human trafficking.

Last year, four illegal immigrants were discovered with a 7-year-old migrant child after being pulled over and detained for driving without a license. After Homeland Security Investigations was contacted, the driver attempted to flee on foot and was captured. HSI determined the child was not related to anyone in the vehicle.

In another situation, a Mississippi Highway Patrol trooper identified an

illegal migrant driving on I-10, in Jackson County, with no ID. A passenger—also an illegal immigrant—revealed that they were on their way to Houston, TX, to pick up another man or woman and three or four children. After a legal search of the vehicle, items consistent with human trafficking were discovered in the vehicle.

Instances like these are, unfortunately, happening across the country, and our communities are in danger. If you think this isn't happening in your backyard, then think again. Because of the state of our country, there is growing concern and fear among Americans, who are wondering if they or someone they love will be the next target.

In fiscal year 2023, there were over 15,000 criminal noncitizen arrests. There were over 2,000 criminal illegal drug possessions and trafficking convictions. Additionally, there were almost 9,000 driving under the influence convictions. There have been nearly 200 murders committed by illegal immigrants since Joe Biden took office—200 lives lost under President Biden's watch. This is not how the greatest country in the world should operate.

Robberies, sexual assault, crimes against children, human trafficking, and murder are just some examples of the crimes these illegal migrants are willing to commit in our country. We have to stand against this.

President Biden claims he needs more authority to get control of the border. This is blatantly false. The previous administration successfully enforced border laws to get crossings to record lows. The Biden administration repeatedly refuses to acknowledge the border crisis for what it is—a crisis. He opened the border, and he can close it.

As the President prepares his State of the Union speech, I call on the Biden administration and the Democrats, who simply need to enforce the law. Let's just start with that. We must make this a priority. Americans deserve nothing less.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

#### SPENDING AND INFLATION

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues to discuss the Biden administration's failed policies and their impact not only on my State of North Dakota but on all Americans.

As we prepare to listen to the President give his State of the Union Address, I want to share my perspective about the past 3 years and where we are today. But it is not just my perspective; it is what my constituents are seeing on a day-to-day basis. They see a country that is less secure, a dollar that doesn't stretch as far as it used to, and policies from this administration that are making things worse.

The reckless tax-and-spend policies of this administration have led to increases in inflation levels that we haven't seen in decades. To this day, inflation remains persistently high,

and the deficit spending continues as our debt now totals more than \$34 trillion. Last month, the Congressional Budget Office published its 10-year Budget and Economic Outlook, which revealed that, this year, the interest payments on our national debt will exceed the spending on national defense.

In addition to rising interest payments that will crowd out our ability to fund our priorities in the future, this deficit spending has led to inflation that has made everything more expensive for all Americans. The Biden administration's tax, spend, and regulate policies have led to this inflation. In my State of North Dakota, according to the Consumer Price Index data, families have experienced a cumulative price increase of about 18 percent—18 percent—since President Biden took office. That means paying more for everything from groceries to housing to transportation and energy.

North Dakota is actually among the youngest States in the Nation, with the median age of just over 35 years of age. Many of our young North Dakotans are looking to buy homes and start families, but this administration's failed economic policies have caused the inflation that has simply put homeownership out of reach. According to Freddie Mac, a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage continues to hover at about 7 percent. Before Biden took office, it was less than 4 percent.

The bottom line is that the policies of this administration that the President calls Bidenomics gets you less—not more for less but less for more.

Mr. President, at the same time, President Biden is putting his Green New Deal agenda over our economic and national security interests.

The average price for a gallon of gas was about \$2.40 on January 20, 2021, when President Biden took office. This week, gasoline prices are 42 percent higher—\$1 higher. So, instead, of \$2.40, now you pay on average \$3.40 for every gallon. It is simple economics—energy prices remain high because demand exceeds supply. Because the cost of energy is built into every good and service that we consume, we need to increase the supply of energy to help bring down inflation. Yet instead of unleashing—unleashing—the full potential of our Nation's vast energy reserves, the Biden administration's regulatory onslaught will only favor foreign adversaries at the expense of our own domestic energy industry.

The Biden administration is imposing new costs and regulatory burdens on Federal energy leases, for example, while reducing what is available for new leasing. Maximizing access to new leasing today is directly tied to growing production and supply for the long term.

Further, the Biden administration unilaterally has now banned U.S. LNG export approvals, forcing our allies in Europe and Asia to increase their reliance on imports from Russia, Iran, and Qatar. According to the U.S. Energy

Information Administration, global energy demand is expected to grow across all sectors of the economy through 2050.

Our Nation is fortunate to have abundant energy reserves and the capacity to ramp up production and counter adversarial foreign producers from countries like Russia, Iran, and Venezuela, but the Biden administration continues to handcuff our producers with burdensome regulation after regulation. That is why President Biden needs to take the handcuffs off our energy producers and work with us to boost American energy independence instead of passing regulation after regulation that shuts our energy industry down.

Producing more energy here at home is the ultimate solution to not only lowering energy costs but to strengthening our national security and our geopolitical standing in the world.

Mr. President, in addition to those issues in regard to Bidenomics, I want to talk about his failure on the border.

The year 2023 was a record year for President Biden's border policy. It was recordbreaking. By the end of the year 2023, the United States saw the most ever annual encounters at the southern border—almost 2.5 million. It is mind-boggling—2.5 million in 2023. President Biden's border policies broke records again as over 300,000 illegal encounters took place in December—just in December, 1 month—300,000 in 1 month in December 2023, which is the most encounters in any single month during his administration.

The cause of this crisis is clear: President Biden's failure to secure the border—simply put, his failure to enforce the law. The duty of a President is to enforce the law. He is not doing it.

The American people suffer the consequences because the Biden administration refuses to enforce policies that protect our southern border, including reinstating the migrant protection protocols or the "Remain in Mexico" policy, enforcing Safe Third Country agreements, and resuming the construction of the border wall. The President's failed border policies have led to increased instances of human and drug trafficking at the southern border. It is not just human trafficking; it is the fentanyl. It is all of the problems that go with an open border.

The Biden administration must address the border crisis. The Biden administration must enforce the laws that kept monthly encounters to vastly, vastly lower numbers under the Trump administration, and they need to do it now because border security truly is national security.

In conclusion, we can reverse all of these metrics, but it is going to take the President embracing the realities facing American families. Given his track record these past 3 years, I am not optimistic that we will hear him signal a reversal of these policies tonight, but he needs to for the good of the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, President Abraham Lincoln once said that "no Administration by any extreme of wickedness or folly can . . . seriously injure the Government in the short space of [only] four years." That statement might need to be revised if Lincoln had witnessed the first 3 years of President Joe Biden.

Our country has been through a prolonged period of failure and crisis brought on by a weak leader who bows to his far-left base and pursues policies that hurt the very people he claims to help.

There is no better example of this than at the southern border, where President Biden has presided over the worst border crisis in U.S. history—millions of illegal crossings, hundreds of individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist, tens of thousands of pounds of deadly fentanyl, nearly 2 million known "got-aways," and millions more unknown "got-aways," including terrorists, human traffickers, and other bad actors.

The crisis at the border is a crisis of President Biden's own making. Starting on his very first day in office, President Biden has unleashed dozens of Executive actions that telegraphed that his administration was no longer interested in enforcing the law when it comes to illegal immigration. Here are some of the most devastating examples:

He halted construction of the border wall, leaving the physical defense of our Nation's border to scattered areas of old, rusty barbed wire. I have seen it with my own eyes.

He ended the "Remain in Mexico" policy that ensured that illegal aliens were turned back before they even arrived at the doorstep of our country. The result? Well, not only are untold millions being encountered right at the border, but when they are caught, the Biden administration releases about 75 percent of them into the interior of the United States, some with taxpayer-funded escorts and travel.

The Biden administration also halted deportation of those who illegally entered our country. In fact, just last year, Immigration and Customs Enforcement only deported 5 percent of the millions they encountered at the border.

Taken together, what is the message this President has sent to a would-be illegal immigrant? Well, for one, the United States won't construct physical barriers to stop you. We won't even lock the door to our own house, it seems. If you are caught, the United States will release you and resettle you with money out of our own taxpayers' pockets. And don't worry—per the Biden administration, the United States will never deport you.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why this crisis persists, but it doesn't have to be this way. Just 4

years ago, illegal immigration was at a record low. Make no mistake, President Biden already has the power to fix this. It was his Executive actions that on day one caused this mess, and he can clean it up by undoing those very same orders on day 1,142—today.

We are witnessing in real time a national decline, but the good news is, that decline is a choice, and our time for choosing is coming. It is not too late. Despite all of the things that are broken right now, we can still be a strong nation as long as we have a leader with the strength and the willingness to get the job done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### REMEMBERING PAT O'TOOLE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of an agricultural icon, Pat O'Toole. I am here in a bipartisan way with both Senators from Wyoming and both Senators from Colorado to talk about this remarkable man, who is a true cowboy and a dear friend.

Pat passed away from complications following his stroke, on February 25. He was surrounded by his family, including his loving wife Sharon.

Pat and Sharon met when they were students together at Colorado State University. They have three wonderful children and six grandchildren. We are honored to be joined today in the Senate Gallery by Pat's wife Sharon, along with their daughter, Bridget, and their granddaughter, Siobhan.

Pat and Sharon own and operate Ladder Ranch. It is located outside Savery, WY, along the Little Snake River. The ranch straddles the State lines of Wyoming and Colorado, which is why all four Senators are here today on the floor to pay honor, tribute, and recognition to this remarkable man. It is a large-scale cattle and sheep operation. It has been in Sharon's family since 1881. That is 9 years before Wyoming became a State. We are talking about a long history.

Pat and Sharon liked to tell people—they did when they came to Washington, and Pat would when he testified here on Capitol Hill—that they raised "cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, and children." They did it and do it very well.

I deeply admire Pat for his passionate work on conservation, on water, and on agriculture. I saw the difference that he made, that Pat personally made, by partnering with others regardless of whether they were Republicans or Democrats. Pat didn't care at all about party affiliations. He was famous for working with anyone, anywhere who was genuinely interested in making life better for our Western agriculture communities.

Pat also served Wyoming in the State legislature for 6 years—three full terms.

In 2005, Pat was elected president of the Family Farm Alliance. He brought this experience and expertise right here

to Congress. He testified many times before the committees in the U.S. House and Senate, and here is a point when he was testifying in a committee in which I was involved. Members in both Chambers quickly learned a valuable lesson. The lesson was this: Pat O'Toole was as reliable in a committee's witness seat as he was in a horse's saddle.

As ranking member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and former chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I had the privilege of calling on Pat to testify numerous times before the Senate in both committees.

Most recently, he testified at an Energy Committee hearing on extreme drought and on wildfires in the West. Pat's firsthand experience with active forest management as a tool to prevent wildfires provided the committee with a very much needed western perspective, as well as offering solutions.

Pat O'Toole leaves behind a legacy driven by his passion for conservation and his love of the land, especially in the Little Snake River Valley.

It was such a privilege to help induct Pat and Sharon both into the Wyoming Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2002, recognized statewide for their long history of service to the people in the State of Wyoming.

Pat truly represented the best of Wyoming and the best of western interests, and he did it with dedication and distinction. It was a great joy to know him and a great joy to work with him.

I would like now to yield the floor to my colleague from Wyoming, Senator CYNTHIA LUMMIS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, today, I rise also to pay tribute to a Cowboy State giant, colleague, and friend, Pat O'Toole.

Pat was not born in Wyoming, but you never would have guessed that. There was no one more dedicated to Carbon County or the Cowboy State than Pat.

When Pat met his wife Sharon, he fell in love not just with her but, as Senator BARRASSO said, his adopted home of Wyoming. Together, they raised cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, and children. My own daughter, Annaliese, was born the same month that Eamon O'Toole was born. Sharon and I enjoyed the fact that our children would get to grow up together. He often joked that he was raising a menagerie with Sharon.

His commitment to ranching stretched far beyond his property, as he would ultimately dedicate his life to serving the agriculture and conservation communities.

I had the privilege of meeting Pat when we served together in the Wyoming Legislature. His stories and infectious smile loomed large. He quickly earned a reputation for finding common ground with anyone. We always looked forward to hearing his stories

about nearly getting arrested in Tierra del Fuego, being accosted by a machine-gun-wielding police officer in Argentina during a revolution, or hitchhiking from Maine to Florida with a buddy in college. Pat O'Toole lived a very interesting and large life.

He was also larger than life in the best way, and he cared deeply for the people he served. Following his service in the Wyoming Legislature, Pat was appointed by President Clinton to the Western Water Policy Commission, and he focused on the future of water in the West. He was instrumental in providing very carefully thought-out testimony regarding the future of the Colorado River. We all benefit now, as Senator HICKENLOOPER, Senator BENNET, and I continue to work on Colorado River issues together.

The position he held on the Western Water Policy Commission deepened his love for conservation efforts and led him to serve on many advocacy groups to fight for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities until he died.

As much as Pat dedicated his life to protecting western landscapes, he would be the first to tell you that his family was his greatest achievement.

Please join me in keeping his family in your prayers as we come together to celebrate his life and the indelible impact he had on his beloved Wyoming.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I want to say what a great privilege it is to be out here today with my colleagues from Wyoming and my colleague Senator HICKENLOOPER from Colorado to celebrate Pat O'Toole's life.

Pat O'Toole was a rancher, as you have heard, a conservationist whose family's six-generation operation, the Ladder Ranch, straddles the Colorado and Wyoming border, as my colleague from Wyoming said.

The proud son of Irish immigrants, Pat was born in Pittsburgh, but like many of us, he felt a calling to the West. He attended Colorado State University, where he met his beloved wife Sharon, who is here today.

After graduation, they were both accepted into law school, but instead they pooled their savings to buy some old ewes and take over Sharon's family ranch. For 8 years, they lived in a cabin on Ladder Ranch without electricity or running water. That might sound like a hardship to a lot of people here, but knowing the two of them, I bet it wasn't. And they were in one of the most beautiful places on this planet. In the summer, they camped while herding sheep, and bit by bit, they built their herd.

Pat was a fervent advocate for the West. He cared deeply about all the wildlife in the West, the Colorado River, and protecting American agriculture.

Pat lived a life of service. He served as president, as you have heard, of the Family Farm Alliance for nearly 20

years. He sat on the boards of the Intermountain West Joint Ventures and Solutions from the Land and was, with Senator LUMMIS, a member of the Wyoming House of Representatives.

When I came to the Senate in 2009, Pat was kind enough to recognize my failings and my lack of background and lack of experience in the things he cared most about, and he was kind enough to bring me up to speed on Colorado and western agriculture. I am still trying to catch up.

This is a photo I wanted to bring today. This is a photo of Pat telling me what I need to know about western agriculture on his ranch. You can tell I am listening more intently than I often do, certainly on this floor, but there was not a word you wanted to miss from Pat. There was nobody better to be the guide of people in this place so far from the ranch where he and Sharon raised their family. And we needed to listen because ranching touches every major western issue: water, immigration, Tribal rights, conservation, and even access to healthcare. Pat cared about all those things.

Those who were lucky enough to know Pat know he had a lot of big ideas and he had the drive to get those big ideas done. He was a doer. And he also had an amazing Rolodex.

Most recently, Pat brought together a broad coalition with the goal of restoring the stressed landscapes of the Routt and Medicine Bow National Forests and the contiguous Yampa and Little Snake watershed. My staff and I were honored to be included in that coalition.

I should say that was one of the amazing things about Pat. He could not have cared less what your title was or whether you were a Senator or not. His interactions with the staff were just as significant, I think, and just as meaningful for getting something done as they were with elected officials.

And I hope and believe that that coalition will work to carry on Pat's legacy of conservation and tireless work to improve watershed health.

In 2018, I had the pleasure to visit Pat's ranch, nestled in the Little Snake River Valley, and saw firsthand the conservation practices that he and Sharon have put in place to restore fish habitat and improve the resilience of the operation. There are a lot of people who could learn from what they have done.

After touring the ranch, Pat brought together people from all over the West, Republicans and Democrats—as Senator BARRASSO said, it didn't matter; he never talked about what party anybody was in—to join us on their porch for a big cookout while we talked about the new generation of ranchers in the West and how we can leave our kids and our grandkids a better future.

He actually knew that while the State line between Colorado and Wyoming technically divided the ranch, that a political boundary like that was not the important boundary. What he

would tell you is that the watershed is what actually matters, and that is why it is not surprising that he brought together people—a rare occasion, really, for an elected official from Colorado to meet with people from the Wyoming Legislature who were there that day to hear what Pat had to say.

And we covered topics on that day that ranged from conservation throughout the West to how we could work together to protect our water and leave a viable future for the next generation of farmers and ranchers. There were always young people around Pat; there were that day and when he brought people to Washington as well.

And even though, as I mentioned, Pat and Sharon's house was in Wyoming, they made sure my staff and I had the farmhouse across the street on the Colorado side of the road where we could spend the night under our own stars, in our own State.

The next morning, at the end of our visit, Pat showed me around the barns and shared with me a branding iron from the Ladder Ranch, which I still have in my office in Denver; although, come to think of it, it could be of more use here in Washington, DC.

Anyone who knew Pat knew about his love for his family, and he proudly brought his children and grandchildren into every aspect of the ranch. It is an amazing testament, I think, to the way he approached that world and that business and that enterprise because each of us today is reminding people here today that he cherished the idea that their ranch raised “cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, and children.” I am sure not in that order. And he managed the ranch with these kids and these grandkids in mind.

I want to recognize Pat's wife Sharon, daughter Bridget, and granddaughter Siobhan, who are here in the Gallery. They are carrying on Pat's legacy and the legacy of Ladder Ranch.

When I was flying back last weekend from Ukraine, that is when I got a message that said that Pat had had a stroke and was in Grand Junction at the hospital. And I landed at the airport in Ireland—I suppose there is something in that—and was able to have a conversation with Sharon. And the first thing she wanted to tell me—she was by Pat's side in Grand Junction. The first thing she wanted to tell me was that Siobhan was coming back here to carry on Pat's legacy, to advocate as part of the Intermountain Joint Venture fly-in. Pat was on the board of that.

And they are all here today, and I want to thank them for traveling here to be here today. Our thoughts are with you and the entire Pat O'Toole family, but, really, they are for all of us in the West who have lost his presence but not his example.

Pat's life is evidence that division is not the way to make progress in our country and it is not the way to make progress in American agriculture when it comes to water. Pat showed us what

it takes to make headway on some of the thorniest issues that we confront. We would do well to remember that example every day.

He demonstrated the importance of finding common ground to build, little by little, toward something greater for the next generation. At least with me, he showed infinite patience. I hope that is something that we can all carry on in his absence. He was larger than life, and we will miss him dearly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Mr. President, I am not sure I can add too much more beyond what has already been said.

I come to the floor today to remember and add to the remembrances of the incredible life and the impactful legacy of Pat O'Toole. Senators BARRASSO and LUMMIS and my fellow Colorado Senator Mr. BENNET have been very eloquent. But I think sometimes, really, it has to be said by everyone if everything has already been said.

As was mentioned, he lived in the Little Snake River Valley that winds back and forth along the border of Colorado and Wyoming, and he did make a very big impression on both States. He may have legally resided in Wyoming, but both States claim him.

More than anything else, he was a westerner and, in many ways, a consummate westerner. Pat understood western water and agriculture. He understood conservation. And just as the West was built by barn raisings more than shootouts, he harnessed the power of collaboration to really get to the heart of the complex discussions on managing our water and our natural resources.

He was not only a graduate of Colorado State University; he was a longtime supporter. Obviously, he fell in love, met his wife, defined his future at CSU before he went off to South America for a little touring. He went on to serve as the longtime president of Family Farm Alliance, which stood up for irrigators all over the West and recognized the importance of food to the future of the country.

And he touched many different groups at that intersection between agriculture and the environment. His public service and engagement spanned decades, including service as a State legislator in Wyoming and as an appointee on President Clinton's Western Water Policy Commission.

But Pat's impact wasn't just limited to the West. He was well-known here on Capitol Hill. As each of the other Senators have said, he testified many times—more than 20 times—here in Congress. And this was not because he liked doing it or he enjoyed it, but he recognized he had a responsibility to share his expertise and to engage on legislation. He did it not because he found coming to Washington pleasurable but because he believed in the West and in his responsibility to make sure that decisions affecting the West

were made wisely. And he really pushed to make sure that we had advancements in western water management. As Western States continue to wrestle with the extreme droughts caused by climate change, Pat's wisdom is going to direct us to good solutions, and his attention to process is going to inform us.

I think it is important to remember that, no matter how many hats he wore, he was always a rancher at heart, raising “cattle, sheep, dogs, and children” on his family ranch. He was deeply committed to preserving the farming and ranching character that is so essential to the West, and he recognized the importance of conservation in protecting and maintaining that heritage. Pat's enduring love of the land was an example to all of us.

I understand and recognize the great loss to the family and appreciate that Sharon and Bridget and Siobhan are here. But, really, it is all of our loss, and he will be sorely missed by our entire country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled vote: Senator PETERS for up to 5 minutes, Senator LUJÁN for up to 5 minutes, Senator SCHMITT for up to 5 minutes, and Senator HAWLEY for up to 15 minutes.

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

#### NOMINATION OF ADRIENNE JENNINGS NOTI

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise now in support of Adrienne Noti's nomination to be an associate judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The DC Superior Court is the local trial court here in the Nation's Capital. It handles some of the highest case-loads in the entire country. It decides matters that impact the freedom, the livelihood, and the safety of families all across the District of Columbia.

Unfortunately, the superior court has struggled with high judicial vacancy rates in recent years. Mr. President, 12 of the 62 seats on the court are now vacant, and two more will open up in the coming months. This places serious burdens on current judges and delays resolutions for the parties before the court.

The District of Columbia deserves to have these seats filled by dedicated, qualified judges. Adrienne Noti is more than up for the job. She has spent the last 10 years as a magistrate judge on the DC Superior Court, and in that role she has worked across every division, from domestic violence to family law to landlord-tenant issues to criminal cases. She has proven herself to be fair and effective and has shown a deep commitment to the local community here in the District of Columbia.

Before she joined the DC Superior Court, Judge Noti spent a decade in family law, representing underserved

clients and teaching as a clinical law professor. She has spent her career fighting for equal justice and teaching others in the legal community how to do the same.

Judge Noti is highly qualified to serve as an associate judge on the DC Superior Court, and it is past time that we confirm her nomination.

While I am glad we will soon fill one vacancy on the superior court, we must take additional action to confirm the six other nominees that my committee has advanced this Congress, many with strong, strong bipartisan support.

These are not controversial nominations. And I hope that my colleagues will join me in working together to quickly confirm the other nominees and ease the vacancy crisis facing the superior court.

Today's vote is a critical step in that work. And I urge my colleagues to join me in confirming Judge Adrienne Noti to be an associate judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from New Mexico.

S. 3853

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, 78 years ago, 4-year-old Anastacio was living in Tularosa, NM, a city 40 miles away from the Trinity test detonation site.

Now, little Anastacio didn't know it at the time—none of the families there did—but the world they were living in was contaminated in radioactive particles from the first nuclear test.

And Anastacio grew to be a big family man, hunting and growing on the land enriched by a ditch system, an acequia system, that provided ample water and nourishment—great-grandparents, grandparents, mom and dads, children, and babies all eating and drinking contaminated food and water sources.

Later in life, Anastacio Cordova developed prostate cancer and tongue cancer. The cancer metastasized to his neck and throat before becoming inoperable and consuming his body.

His daughter Tina recalls him being only 125 pounds at the time of his death in 2013.

Today, March 7—11 years ago on this day—Anastacio left us. For Anastacio's family, this was just one heartbreak from a long list of family members who have died or became seriously ill from radiation exposure.

Tina Cordova—Anastacio's daughter—made it her life's mission to fight for justice and compensation for her family and the thousands of victims of our Nation's nuclear weapons program.

This is Tina. Rosalie is holding her. Tina is with us today. Bernice Gutierrez is here with us as well. This is Henry Herrera, from Tularosa, NM, and Beatrice Gutierrez and her friends at a very young age.

Now, Tina will be my guest tonight at this year's State of the Union, and I am honored to have her by my side in this cause.

Let me change that. I am honored that she allowed me on this journey with her to help other people.

Now, she was with me in Belen, NM, when the President of the United States, Joe Biden, was visiting to talk about some of the incredible opportunities that have been created for economic growth. When I was speaking before the President, I saw Tina in the audience. And I spoke momentarily about the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and about her, only to be surprised that when the President of the United States followed me, he looked at Tina and looked at everyone in the room and the cameras and said: You have my support to get this done.

Yesterday, the President of the United States issued a statement, a SAP, showing support for the passage of this legislation—the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act amendments—in addition to language that Senator JOSH HAWLEY has included in bringing attention to families who need help and need to be seen and heard and deserve compensation based on storage flaws and exposure to each and every one of them.

This is truly a bipartisan piece of legislation, an effort reaching out to colleagues in both Chambers, every one of our friends, asking them to take a hard look at this. Please give us a chance. Let us earn your support.

Not long ago, when Senator HAWLEY had an amendment with this language in it, "Oppenheimer" was hitting theaters across America, and everyone was talking about it, a film that was made in New Mexico.

Some people may recognize this from that film. Sixty-two U.S. Senators that day stood up and raised their hand and said: Yes, the United States needs to move forward, take responsibility, give recognition to all of these families across America. Unfortunately, it was not included in the National Defense Authorization Act.

Well, on Sunday, there is something happening in America called the Oscars. And there are a lot of incredible actors and actresses who will be recognized because of the story they told with "Oppenheimer." That story left out an important part, the families we are fighting for today.

While many of them will receive Oscars, no doubt, I hope that none of those actors and actresses who are up giving their remarks when they receive an Oscar for telling the story of Dr. Oppenheimer forget about these families, that they think about them. And the same advocacy that I have heard from many of these incredible artists, I hope one of them is willing to say something. But if not, I hope they reflect on it.

Now, I will close by saying this. This particular legislation is not just about New Mexico or Missouri. This legislation will help our brothers and sisters in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, across New Mexico, Utah, and Guam. It will provide more support to

uranium miners in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, North Dakota, and South Dakota, reaching out to our brothers and sisters in Missouri and Tennessee and Alaska and in Kentucky. We have to get this done.

Now, I want to add that since this bill has been scheduled for a vote, I have heard from more colleagues about their communities that have been harmed by our Nation's complicated nuclear legacy. Specifically, people in Pike and Scioto out in Ohio; Armstrong County, PA; and communities near the Hanford site in Washington have been exposed to radiation, and they deserve justice too.

Senator BROWN, Senator CASEY, Senator MURRAY, and Senator CANTWELL, you have my commitment that as this effort moves through the legislative process, I will work with you to also deliver justice for your constituents so we can work as a family.

As I close, I ask all my colleagues to please—please—take a look at this. Please reflect. Sixty-two votes on the first vote. I hope we can send a message to all of those advocates and families across America that they are heard and seen and that we will see a stronger showing this afternoon.

Generations of families wiped out by lung, stomach, prostate, thyroid, skin, breast, and tongue cancer didn't get the glossy Hollywood treatment. And the U.S. Congress has not made any significant progress in correcting these injustices since 2000. Shame on us.

A lot of us have been praying about this and reflecting on it. And I certainly hope that we have a resounding vote in just a few short minutes to show our American brothers and sisters that we love them too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, in March of 1865, President Lincoln said this:

Let us strive on to finish the work . . . to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.

That is why we are here today. We are here today to continue to work, to finish the work, to honor the lives of those who have borne this Nation's battles, who have rallied to this Nation's flag in every hour of danger, the people who won World War II, who won the Cold War, who helped rebuild Europe and Japan and our allies, the people who have built this country and are now waiting for us to help them. That is what we are about today.

There is a reason that we succeeded over the last half century. It is because of the working people of this country in Missouri and in New Mexico and in Nevada and Colorado and Idaho and Texas and Wyoming and everywhere else from coast to coast. It is because the working people of this country went to the uranium mines for our nuclear program, went to the processing

sites to make our weapons, volunteered for our Army, went overseas to fight, or just raised their families with dignity and honor.

That is why we have a United States of America. That is why we are the United States of America. But we have not done right by those good people. We have turned our back on them because so many of them were poisoned by their own government, by nuclear waste and radiation, by nuclear tests that were done without their knowledge, by the nuclear material and the mines that they weren't told about. The government exposed them over a period of decades to nuclear radiation waste and, in almost every case, did nothing about it. In many cases, they lied to them about it. This isn't right. This isn't just.

That is why we are here today. It is the pride of this Nation that when we won the Second World War, when we won the Cold War, we rebuilt the land of our former enemies. I am as proud of that as I ever have been.

But now it is time to rebuild these communities. It is time to finish the work in the United States of America. It is time to turn to the men and women who have borne the brunt of the battle, the men and women who gave their health and, in many cases, their lives for their Nation.

That is what we are here for today on the floor. This isn't about a handout. This isn't about some kind of welfare program. This is about doing basic justice for the working people of this Nation whom their own government has poisoned.

This is the day when we break the cycle of lies from the government; when we break the cycle of passing the buck and irresponsibility from the government; when we say to the people of America: We will honor you; when we say to the working people of this country: We are here for you; when we acknowledge to these Americans: You built this country. We will honor you. That is why we are here today.

The Senate has a chance today to make right what has been wrong, to right 50 years of wrongs, 50 and 60 years of Americans ignored, exploited, and lied to. Today, we can begin to right those wrongs. That is why we are here.

I want to recognize now my friend, my colleague from the great State of Missouri, a man who grew up in the St. Louis region right by one of these nuclear processing facilities and the landfill where the government dumped the waste and then lied about it, a man I am proud to have in this fight, Senator ERIC SCHMITT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. I rise today with my friends from New Mexico and my colleague who has shown great leadership in this to defend and support the people who have been impacted—who, quite literally, have been poisoned by their own government.

As was mentioned, I grew up in Bridgeton, MO. Bridgeton is ground

zero, the epicenter of some of the waste that was dumped—the hazardous, the toxic, the radioactive waste that was dumped there.

Just to take a step back. After World War II, St. Louis, the city itself, was the main population center. St. Louis County, which lies to the west of St. Louis City, had a lot of open land, a lot of opportunity. And the folks coming back from World War II who wanted to start a better life found that American dream in St. Louis County, where I grew up.

As they traveled west to places like Bridgeton and other ZIP Codes that are now included in this bill, something else was following them. Something else was headed west, and it was this radioactive waste that they had no idea was in their water, below their feet, affecting them, poisoning them, and killing them.

I just think back—my parents still live there, by the way. I think back to those friends and those neighbors I had, and, as Senator HAWLEY mentioned, these are folks—these are the waitresses; these are the truck drivers; these are the hairstylists—these are people who go to work every single day, and they just want a better life for their kids. They might teach in that local school. They were creating these communities that were new.

But, again, their government had dumped toxic materials that were poisoning them. What they wanted, again, was to live the American dream. By no fault of their own, they happened to live in an area—whether they were downwind or whether it was in their water—that has impacted, not just their lives but their families and generations of their families.

This legislation won't make them whole, but it is some measure of compensation, some measure of justice.

I know some people have talked about costs. Look, we do a lot of things here. We spend a lot of money, and we can debate on whether or not that is worth it or not, or whether these are our priorities. But I think, if we took off the red jerseys and took off the blue jerseys and really focused on what we should really be doing here in a government that is supposed to have limited powers, one of the things that we should be doing is protecting our own citizens.

That is what this vote is about. It is living up to the promise that we made to the people when we got elected, which was that we were going to fight for them. And this is an opportunity to go do that. It is the ability, in a number of ZIP Codes and in States across this country, for people who worked there who helped—Senator HAWLEY mentioned—who helped build America back up or were working to save civilization, in many ways, in the middle of the last century. It is for us to make sure we are doing everything we can to see that some measure of justice is served.

I would just ask my fellow colleagues to look within their hearts or imagine

looking in the eyes of some of the people who are here today who have been impacted, because these folks don't have powerful lobbyists. The people who come to our offices asking about something that is in some bill—the people who have been affected—they don't have those powerful forces in play.

This is something that bubbled up in a bipartisan way, again, to support the people we represent who have been impacted. I am proudly a supporter of this and will do everything I can to help get this passed so these folks get the justice that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. When I have come to this floor in weeks and months past to talk about this cause—because it is more than an issue. It is a cause. It is a cause of justice. It is a cause of doing right by other fellow Americans. When I have come in weeks past, I have often shown the pictures and told the stories of people who have given their health or given their lives for their country. Today, I don't have any pictures with me because today, in the Gallery, we have Missourians themselves and New Mexicans themselves and Arizonans themselves and members of the Navajo Nation themselves. They are here right now, sitting right there, traveling great distances, and I just want to call out a few of their names.

Mary Dickson is here from Utah. Sherrie Hanna is here from Arizona. Laura Greenwood is here from Texas. Phil Harrison is here, and Leslie Begay and Rose Harrison and Tina Cordova, all from New Mexico. And Linda Perez has come all the way from Guam—all the way from Guam. Tona Henderson has come from Idaho and Paula Terry also. And from the great State of Missouri, Dawn Chapman, who will be my guest tonight at the State of the Union. And Karen Nickel and Ashley and Christen and Chantelle and Tricia Byrnes are all here. And from the Navajo Nation, Justin and Kyle. And there are more in the Gallery, as well, from all over this country, representing every segment of this country, representing the great heritage of this country, representing the great communities of this country.

I think of the Navajo Nation. Fifty percent of the uranium that was mined in this country for our nuclear program—half of it—came from the Navajo Nation—workers from the Navajo Nation who, if I am not mistaken, also volunteered for this Nation's armed services at a percentage higher than any other community in America.

These folks represent here today the best of our Nation. They are America. They are here. They are here for us to honor them.

You know, as Americans, we make a commitment to each other. It is what it means to be an American. We promise that we will live by the ideals that we hold together and by the things



that we love together, and we promise to stand by one another. This is about standing by one another. This is about seeking that justice that President Lincoln spoke about so many Marches ago. And now, on this March day in the year 2024, the U.S. Senate has the opportunity to do its part—its small part—to continue to make this Nation what it could be, what we promised it will be, and to put right things that have been wrong.

I will end with this, Madam President. As we speak, the government is testing under the homes in St. Louis—under people’s basements in St. Louis—for radioactive contamination. After saying for decades there was no contamination to be concerned about, there was nothing we should worry about, now they are testing in our homes. They have already shut down schools. The water in the creeks is contaminated. Landfills are contaminated. The soil has been contaminated. Today, we say: Enough. Today, we turn the page. Today, we begin something new.

For those folks who are watching now from Missouri, whether from their living rooms while their homes are being tested or high schools while hoping for something better, let’s see the U.S. Senate at work. Let’s see what we can do to keep the promises we have made to each other as Americans.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON S. 3853

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for 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. HAWLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT).

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 75 Leg.]

YEAS—69

|              |              |            |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin      | Gillibrand   | Murray     |
| Bennet       | Graham       | Ossoff     |
| Blackburn    | Hagerty      | Padilla    |
| Blumenthal   | Hassan       | Peters     |
| Booker       | Hawley       | Reed       |
| Boozman      | Heinrich     | Risch      |
| Braun        | Hickenlooper | Rosen      |
| Brown        | Hirono       | Rounds     |
| Butler       | Kaine        | Rubio      |
| Cantwell     | Kelly        | Sanders    |
| Cardin       | King         | Schatz     |
| Casey        | Klobuchar    | Schmitt    |
| Coons        | Lujan        | Schumer    |
| Cortez Masto | Markey       | Shaheen    |
| Cotton       | Marshall     | Sinema     |
| Crapo        | McConnell    | Smith      |
| Cruz         | Menendez     | Stabenow   |
| Daines       | Merkley      | Sullivan   |
| Duckworth    | Moran        | Tester     |
| Durbin       | Murkowski    | Van Hollen |
| Fetterman    | Murphy       | Vance      |

|         |        |            |
|---------|--------|------------|
| Warner  | Warren | Whitehouse |
| Warnock | Welch  | Wyden      |

NAYS—30

|          |            |            |
|----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Grassley   | Paul       |
| Budd     | Hoeven     | Ricketts   |
| Capito   | Hyde-Smith | Romney     |
| Carper   | Johnson    | Scott (FL) |
| Cassidy  | Kennedy    | Scott (SC) |
| Collins  | Lankford   | Thune      |
| Cornyn   | Lee        | Tillis     |
| Cramer   | Lummis     | Tuberville |
| Ernst    | Manchin    | Wicker     |
| Fischer  | Mullin     | Young      |

NOT VOTING—1

Britt

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). On this vote, the yeas are 69, the nays are 30.

Under the previous order, the 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill is passed.

The bill (S. 3853) was passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

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

VOTE ON NOTI NOMINATION

All postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. 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 New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted “nay.”

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 76 Ex.]

YEAS—51

|              |              |           |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Baldwin      | Heinrich     | Peters    |
| Bennet       | Hickenlooper | Reed      |
| Blumenthal   | Hirono       | Rosen     |
| Booker       | Kaine        | Schatz    |
| Brown        | Kelly        | Schumer   |
| Butler       | King         | Shaheen   |
| Cantwell     | Klobuchar    | Sinema    |
| Cardin       | Lujan        | Smith     |
| Casey        | Manchin      | Stabenow  |
| Coons        | Casey        | Tester    |
| Cortez Masto | Collins      | Menendez  |
| Cotton       | Coons        | Merkley   |
| Crapo        | Cortez Masto | Murkowski |
| Cruz         | Duckworth    | Murphy    |
| Daines       | Durbin       | Murray    |
| Duckworth    | Fetterman    | Ossoff    |
| Durbin       | Hassan       | Padilla   |

NAYS—45

|           |         |         |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Barrasso  | Capito  | Crapo   |
| Blackburn | Cassidy | Cruz    |
| Booker    | Moran   | Daines  |
| Braun     | Cotton  | Ernst   |
| Budd      | Cramer  | Fischer |

|            |           |            |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Graham     | Lummis    | Schmitt    |
| Grassley   | McConnell | Scott (FL) |
| Hagerty    | Moran     | Scott (SC) |
| Hawley     | Mullin    | Sullivan   |
| Hoeven     | Paul      | Thune      |
| Hyde-Smith | Ricketts  | Tillis     |
| Johnson    | Risch     | Tuberville |
| Kennedy    | Romney    | Vance      |
| Lankford   | Rounds    | Wicker     |
| Lee        | Rubio     | Young      |

NOT VOTING—4

|            |          |
|------------|----------|
| Britt      | Marshall |
| Gillibrand | Sanders  |

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). 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.

The Senator from Florida.

(The remarks of Mr. SCOTT of Florida pertaining to the introduction of S. Res. 580 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

NOMINATION OF ADEEL A. MANGI

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have an extraordinary responsibility as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee—important legislation and, probably more important, the filling of vacancies in our Federal judiciary.

Under article III of our Constitution, we create judges, and there are approximately 890 of these Federal judges across the United States. As vacancies occur, as they often do, the Senate Judiciary Committee, working with the White House and Members of the Senate, has to do background checks on these individuals, submit them to the FBI for further background checks, do our own due diligence, consider them in an open hearing before the committee, and ultimately vote in committee before they come to the floor for advice and consent.

So far this year—I should say in this term—under President Biden, we have had 181 Federal judges who have gone through this process—been cleared on the floor, reported out of the Senate—and are now serving their Nation in this capacity.

I can tell you that it is not an easy process. Lengthy questionnaires are given to each nominee to identify so many details of their lives, I find it hard to believe they kept track and record of it, but they did. Then, of course, Agencies call to verify the contents and answers in those questionnaires. Then they go through close scrutiny by the staff of the Judiciary Committee on both sides, Democrats and Republicans. Then comes the day of reckoning when they have their hearing in a public setting. Many of these nominees are questioned extensively by members of the committee. I will tell you, politics ain’t beanbag, and when it comes to the questions asked of judicial nominees, it is a serious process.

We have gone through more than 200 under the Biden administration in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Some of them have had a tough time of it, many of them had an easy time of it, but they all go through the same process.

One of the most important accomplishments of this administration has been the confirmation of highly qualified, I believe evenhanded judges to the Federal bench.

As I mentioned, to date, we have confirmed 181 lifetime judges, including a number of firsts—the first Black woman and public defender on the Supreme Court of the United States, the first Muslim-American judge on a district court, the first Asian-American judge on the Seventh Circuit. We should add another first to that list—Adeel Mangi to the Third Circuit.

Mr. Mangi is a highly qualified nominee with incredible credentials and more than two decades of litigation experience. He would be the first Muslim American to ever serve on a Federal appellate court.

Nevertheless, he is going through scrutiny unlike anything I have ever seen. He has been criticized and questioned in a way that I have never seen before in the committee. Unfortunately, many of the questions that have been raised about Mr. Mangi and his background have created suspicions in people's minds that his religion is the reason for the questioning.

Treatment of this highly qualified nominee has sometimes reached an all-time low. At the hearing in December, committee Republicans subjected Mr. Mangi to combative lines of questioning about the Israel-Hamas war. This is a man who is seeking to serve on a Federal bench in appellate court. The questions that are asked of him were more appropriately asked of the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense.

At one point, a Republican Senator asked this Muslim American the following question: Do you celebrate the anniversary of 9/11 in your home? Think about that for a second. Because he is Muslim, this Senator thought it was appropriate to ask him whether he celebrated 9/11 in his home. He, of course, said no. He was a resident of New York and thought it was a tragedy that occurred in our Nation, and he had friends and family who were affected by that tragedy.

During his hearing, under oath, Mr. Mangi unequivocally condemned anti-Semitism in all forms and condemned any acts of terrorism no fewer than 10 times. Think of that. Because he is a Muslim American, he was asked 10 different times whether he was anti-Semitic. He, of course, said no on each occasion. He also repeatedly denounced any form of hatred or bigotry in his answers to written questions.

Any insinuation that Mr. Mangi is anti-Semitic is rooted in prejudice that has no place in our country, and claims that were made are false. As he ex-

plained, "I have [] worked extensively to advance religious liberty, which I consider to be a fundamental American value, and to combat religious bigotry against any religious group. I have been proud to represent a unique and massive coalition that I built over many years involving major Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and other religious groups on matters of common interest."

Mr. Mangi has also been unfairly attacked for his nominal affiliation with the Alliance of Families for Justice. Critics have falsely claimed that because of his minimal involvement with this organization, he has somehow associated himself with violent criminals and supports "cop killers." That charge was made on the floor of the Senate against Mr. Mangi.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As a longtime corporate lawyer, Mr. Mangi has never said or written anything—anything—that suggests he supports individuals who have murdered members of law enforcement. He has never—never—represented or otherwise provided legal counsel to anyone accused of killing a police officer.

During the Trump administration, Republicans voted unanimously to confirm two judges who had personally represented individuals who had killed police officers.

Let me add quickly that everyone in America has the right to counsel. The crimes they may be charged with could be horrendous, but they still have the right to legal representation.

But to think that they would accuse Mr. Mangi of somehow supporting cop killers when he has never been involved with a client charged with that crime—the treatment of Mr. Mangi by some Republicans puts their hypocrisy on full display. There cannot be one standard for Republican appointees and another for Democratic appointees.

Mr. Mangi is eminently qualified. He is a graduate of Oxford and Harvard Law School. He spent more than two decades in private practice at a pre-eminent law firm, focusing on complex commercial litigation. He has served as counsel of record in more than 30 matters before Federal appellate courts, as well as eight amicus briefs submitted to the Supreme Court.

Throughout his career, Mr. Mangi has also demonstrated a deep commitment to pro bono work. In fact, he has devoted more than 4,000 hours to representing clients in religious discrimination, employment discrimination, and asylum cases.

Given Mr. Mangi's record, he has earned the support of a wide range of organizations, including organizations representing more than 1 million Jewish Americans.

Listen to what the National Council of Jewish Women had to say about Mr. Mangi:

He is highly qualified to serve on this court, bringing a wealth of professional and personal experience in addition to extraordinary legal qualifications.

Yet some of the Republican Senators on the committee suggested he was anti-Semitic, prejudiced against Jewish people. This endorsement by the National Council of Jewish Women clearly says otherwise.

Following Mr. Mangi's hearing, the Anti-Defamation League, an organization which is dedicated to rooting out prejudice against Jewish people, sent a statement to the committee, unsolicited by me, in which they said:

Berating the first American Muslim federal appellate judicial nominee with endless questions that appear to have been motivated by bias towards his religion is profoundly wrong.

Mr. Mangi also has the support of a number of law enforcement organizations, from the New Jersey chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives to the Hispanic American Law Enforcement Association.

Mr. Mangi stated:

I am ready and prepared to be held accountable for any statement that I have ever made, any word that I have ever written, or any action that I have ever taken.

He went on to say:

I am not and should not be held accountable for statements made by people I do not know at events that I was not involved in.

Mr. Mangi is right. He should be judged based on his record, not on dishonest, bad-faith insinuations.

I urge my colleagues to dismiss the smear campaign against Mr. Mangi and support his nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks, I just want to associate myself with the remarks of the chair of the Judiciary Committee about the nominee. Everything he said is true. I share his horror at the vilification of him, which I do believe is based on his faith, and he would be an outstanding member of the Federal court.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your defense on behalf of an excellent nominee.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. President, I am here to talk about the post office and the frustration we are having in Vermont with the management of the post office, starting with Mr. DeJoy, our Postmaster General, and his total disregard for what is happening to our postal service in Vermont.

Let me start by saying what the specific incident is that is just baffling to Senator SANDERS, to Congressman BALINT, to Governor Scott, and to me. We had a flood in July. The postal building in Montpelier was flooded and damaged, and it is not going to be opened for years. We have to get another location for our post office. That was July. It is March now. We have no new postal service, no new postal building.

The workers, whom we are absolutely indebted to, the postal workers—they

are fantastic throughout the State of Vermont. They work under very difficult circumstances. They are understaffed, overworked, and they do everything they can to get the mail delivered.

So they are doing what they can, but they don't have a place for postal boxes. They don't have a place where they can sort the mail. They don't have a place—actually, Montpelier residences and businesses don't have a Postal Service they can come to, to pick up their mail. And it is going on and on and on. And despite the efforts of Governor Scott, who has made suggestions on where we could put a replacement location, despite the entreaties of Senator SANDERS and Congresswoman BALINT and me, we get literally no response, and that is the part that is so astonishing to me.

We try to get a meeting with Postmaster General DeJoy. We send letters, we make phone calls, and there is no response.

Montpelier, right now, has the distinction of being the only capital city in the country that doesn't have a post office. We don't have a McDonald's either. We are OK with that. But we are not OK with not having a post office where people can pick up their medications, their Social Security checks, where businesses can drop off their mail going out to customers.

And what is so aggravating to all of us is there is no response from the management. That is their job. They just blow us off.

And can you imagine what it is like if you are a citizen and you are trying to get some response on the basic right that you have to get your mail on time, the basic right and the confidence you should have that you will get your prescription medication on time, when, not only do they get ignored when they are making a reasonable request—hey, where is our post office?—the Members of Congress don't even get a response.

And, you know, for a while I thought: Maybe DeJoy doesn't like me. He doesn't like SANDERS. He doesn't like BALINT. Maybe he doesn't like our government.

But do you know what? That isn't what it is about. I wish it was personal. But what I am finding out from talking to my colleagues is that this problem of postal mismanagement and disregard—and disregard—for the legitimate concerns of our citizens is widespread.

So, for instance, in Tennessee, my colleague—my former colleague in the House, TIM BURCHETT, is trying to figure out how to get stuff delivered. His folks need medications. They need the checks—the Social Security checks. He tried to get the Postal Service to respond. I am talking, again, about the management, because Tim, like me, is really admiring of the work of the postal workers. They were concerned that he couldn't get a meeting.

Finally, the Postal Service sent some people a couple hundred miles to his

district. They sat there for 15 minutes and made no response whatsoever to the entreaties of the people who had asked for that meeting. And then they vanished—no response, no action.

My colleague Senator SMITH is in Minnesota. There is a rural post office there where people have been told to prioritize the delivery of Amazon packages—that is a private company having the Postal Service doing the last bit of work to get that package to the home—but to prioritize that for Amazon over the delivery of everyday mail for people who are citizens of that small town.

And then, in Colorado, small ski towns in Colorado are waiting weeks or months at a time to get their mail. The Wall Street Journal did a story about this, and I want to quote it.

A citizen there said: "Christmas cards began arriving in February. But what's not funny at all"—he was kind of philosophical about it—"is [that] driver's licenses, disability payments, election ballots, [and] prescriptions" were not arriving for months as well.

I mean, this is the United States of America. The Postal Service is older than the Constitution itself. The original infrastructure that we began building were roads to connect one postal service to another. That is what it was about, and it is getting wrecked.

And the wreckage by Postmaster General DeJoy is reflected in his unresponsive attitude toward everyday Americans in every district of this country, and it has got to end.

There is independence with the Postal Service. That is to avoid Congressional meddling. But do you know what? Is it Congressional meddling when we are sticking up for the businesses in our communities, for the senior citizens in our communities, for the kids who, in fact, do like getting cards from their grandfather and their grandmother? No. I don't think that is meddling. That is demanding service.

What is unacceptable is a postal management service that won't even pick up the phone and meet with Members of Congress on behalf of their citizens or, more importantly, get the job done on behalf of all of the people we represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss with my colleagues the fact that Agencies of the Federal Government aren't very insightful to make sure that taxpayers' money is spent properly and also to say how they are not cooperating with the constitutional responsibility of Congress to make sure the money is spent in a legal way.

In this case, I am here to talk about the Environmental Protection Agency.

On April 13, I began an investigation into an EPA program called the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement

Program. Now that is quite a name, isn't it?

On February 22 of this year, I issued a preliminary report on my investigation. That EPA program dishes out millions of taxpayer dollars to left-leaning nonprofits. The funding is from President Biden's American Rescue Plan, which was opposed by Senate Republicans.

According to the EPA, the purpose of this environmental justice program is to address environmental and public health issues in underserved communities.

As part of that program, the EPA sent 34 individual nonprofits a combined \$4.3 million, with each receiving up to \$200,000.

I think the money was meant to be spent for the purpose of improving the environment—and I don't have any trouble with that—but I think you will see that the grantees didn't use the money for what it was intended for.

Now, I wrote to all 34 grantees because I wanted to know how they spent that taxpayer money. I wrote to the EPA because I wanted to know how it was conducting oversight of that spending. You see, it isn't only Congress that has a responsibility to see that the money is spent responsibly and according to Congress's will, but it is also up to these Agencies to make sure that they spend the money accordingly.

It is a pretty simple request. I want EPA to show their work, how the taxpayers' money is being spent. Well, this EPA, apparently, to them that question is just too much for them to handle.

So guess what happened after I sent the oversight letters. The EPA interfered and told these 34 grantees that they—meaning the EPA—would handle the Grassley request. This led many grantees to refuse compliance with any congressional oversight request and also obstruct my efforts of getting answers for the taxpayers.

Some grantees were so emboldened by EPA's obstructive conduct that they sent my staff emails. And this is just one example of the emails:

We report to EPA and they're responding on our behalf. You can make your request to them. We won't be responding further. Don't contact us any further.

That is how they treat this Senator doing his constitutional responsibilities, and, obviously, you can tell by that quote that this is very much obstruction.

What the Biden EPA has done is to obstruct a core constitutional requirement of the Congress; that is, knowing how appropriated taxpayer money is being used by the executive branch. Moreover, the EPA couldn't even respond on behalf of grantees, and it is pretty simple because the EPA doesn't even possess the records that I was requesting from the nonprofits. That is a whole different problem for the EPA.

Specifically I asked grantees—and this is a quote from my letter:

Provide all records showing how the taxpayer money your organization received was spent. In your production, please provide a financial summary showing what the taxpayer money was spent on.

Amazingly, the EPA can't fulfill this request for grantees because, at this point in the life cycle of the grant, it doesn't possess the records that show how taxpayer money has been spent.

Accordingly, except for my asking these questions, the EPA wouldn't have possessed these records at this point in the grant program. The EPA only has financial records showing how much money the grantees had drawn down from the overall grant.

The EPA emailed my staff this:

At the current stage in the grant process, this is the only document detailing financial progress that grantees are required to submit to the Agency.

For context, the "only document" referred to by the EPA doesn't show how, and on what, taxpayer money was being spent by each grantee.

Now, that is beyond embarrassing. It is a disgrace and a slap in the face to the taxpayers who worked so hard for their money that the EPA has failed to track their money. The EPA is throwing taxpayers' money around without a care in the world.

My preliminary oversight report also found that some of the projects didn't even pass the smell test. For example, grantees that did respond to us reported projects like empathetic listening training, tree walk-and-talks, making musical presentations to their communities, and buying clothing. And it turns out the lion's share of the money, so far, is being used for more salaries of the people who are on the nonprofit payroll and also other employee benefits.

Many of the 34 grantees were unable to provide records showing how much money their projects could cost. Some were able to provide those records I asked for. Then why didn't all of the grantees? Well, I think, going back to what I previously said, the EPA said you didn't have to answer.

I think the taxpayers have a right to know these financial details. With America suffering from record inflation and being forced to make difficult financial decisions, the EPA's obstructive conduct toward the Congress and the EPA's weak and incompetent oversight all are insults to the American taxpayer.

To make it worse, the EPA program I have talked about is just getting started. The EPA plans to spend tens of millions of dollars more in coming years on similar programs and has spent, according to what I have been able to assess at this point—that means for more salaries and benefits probably for the employees of the organizations as opposed to helping solve our environmental problems.

I imagine one would be hard-pressed to find any American taxpayer who would be satisfied with the EPA's conduct in how this money is being spent.

It is time for the EPA to do real oversight of how all this money is spent.

The American taxpayers deserve better from its government, so, as usual, the Grassley oversight will continue.

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.

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

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

#### ANTITRUST APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator KLOBUCHAR on the floor today. Senator KLOBUCHAR is the chair of the Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. I chair the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee, and we are here to do a colloquy about the work of the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division and its funding.

First of all, I would like to thank my friend from Minnesota for her tireless work to strengthen competition policy and protect consumers. In particular, I want to commend her for her leadership on the Merger Fee Modernization Act, her bipartisan bill that was signed into law at the end of 2022. That bill modernized the merger fee filing structure for the first time in decades, resulting in more funding for the antitrust enforcers at the Justice Department.

Today, we are considering fiscal year 2024 funding for the CJS bill as part of the six-bill minibus that is before the Senate. I can state with certainty that as a direct result of Senator KLOBUCHAR's leadership, the bipartisan, bicameral appropriations package that the Senate is considering provides the highest ever appropriation for the Antitrust Division in the Agency's 121-year history.

The Antitrust Division plays a vital role in promoting competition and cracking down on monopolistic practices that hurt U.S. consumers. That is why despite the extremely tight fiscal constraints for this year's budget, we fought off the House Republicans' attempts to gut funding for the Division and to impede its vital work. I am proud that we managed to secure increased funding for the Division in extremely tough bipartisan negotiations. And I want to thank the staff of the Commerce, Science and Justice Appropriations Subcommittee for their good work.

House Republicans wanted to cut antitrust by \$32 million or 14 percent. We ended up providing antitrust with a 3.6 percent increase compared to last year. It is one of the only Agencies within the bill to receive an increase, and we fought for this increase because the Antitrust mission is as critical as ever.

Decades of consolidation have left Americans with less choice and less innovation, and the effects of that consolidation can be felt in all facets of American life. So this funding will further the Agency's critical mission to promote competition and level the playing field for the American people.

Now, the Antitrust Division is funded primarily through fees that are paid by companies seeking to merge. My colleague's legislation increases fees that are paid by large corporations and big mergers and decreases those on small businesses and smaller mergers. And for the first time, it adjusts the filing fee amounts each year based on changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Hopefully, I got that right, Senator KLOBUCHAR.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Thank you, Senator SHAHEEN. I am pleased to be here with my colleague from New Hampshire.

Mr. President, as I said when I came to the floor earlier this week, I appreciate the tough negotiations that my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, including Senator SHAHEEN with her very important subcommittee, had to go through in crafting this bill. There are many good things in it; and, crucially, it keeps the Federal Government open and working for the American people.

However, as I noted last week, the technical language released by the Appropriations Committee on Sunday restricts the Antitrust Division from using funds generated from merger filing fees that exceed the appropriated amount collected in fiscal year 2024 to enforce our competition laws without a separate act of Congress.

So the reason this has become a major deal for many of us that are simply interested in allowing the Department of Justice to do its work on some very important cases, which are well-publicized that are pending now, is that it conflicts with the intent of Senator GRASSLEY's and my bill that passed last Congress by an 88-to-3 vote. This law provides enforcers with the resources necessary to take on the anticompetitive practices by the biggest companies the world has ever known, an acknowledgment that the world has changed.

Prior to Sunday, appropriators had, for decades, allowed the Antitrust Division to retain and use all merger filing fees it collected without limit. This makes sense. If the fees collected are high, that means the mergers are rampant; and if mergers are rampant, the Antitrust Division needs additional funding to review and challenge anticompetitive mergers when they are anticompetitive, while simultaneously maintaining its non-fee-generating work of prosecuting price-fixing conspiracies and opposing monopolistic behavior.

Unfortunately, the language in the current appropriations bill could divert fees away from the Antitrust Division in fiscal year 2024 if those fees exceeded

\$233 million, potentially eroding the intent of the bill that Senator GRASSLEY and I passed, along with Senator LEE, with overwhelming bipartisan support a little over a year ago.

Yesterday, Senator GRASSLEY and I, along with a bipartisan group that led the bill in the House, made clear that the bill's unambiguous intent was to allow the Antitrust Division to retain and use all fees generated from the new fee structure.

Just to clarify with my friend from the great State of New Hampshire, I ask her if she shares the understanding that it is the intent of the Merger Filing Fee Modernization Act to provide additional resources to the Antitrust Division by increasing merger filing fees.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. As someone who voted for that bill and who thinks it was a good bill, I certainly do agree with that; and I hope that, in fact, going forward, we will see the Antitrust Division produce more fees so that we can get over the amount in the future as we look at putting together the appropriations bill for 2025.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Well, thank you, Senator SHAHEEN.

I also understand that this year's appropriations bill, as I noted, was a product of negotiations in especially difficult circumstances. Given this situation, I thank you and Senator MURRAY for successfully fighting to secure an increase in funds compared to last year for the Antitrust Division.

But as we have noted, this year's compromise would restrict the Antitrust Division's access to merger filing fees in years when those filing fees exceed the appropriated amount should not and cannot set a precedent for future appropriations bills. This language is limited to this bill and this bill only. Moving forward, we must include language that allows the Antitrust Division to retain and use the additional fees it collects under our bill—the bill that was passed with 88 votes in this Chamber, signed into law by the President, and, of course, passed by the House, and was consistent with decades of precedent to empower the Antitrust Division to enforce our competition laws.

One last question of the Senator from New Hampshire, and that is: Will you commit to prioritizing and doing everything in your power to include language that will allow the Antitrust Division to retain and use all the fees it collects above the appropriated amount in future budgets consistent with the law's intent?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Absolutely, and I hope in 2025, we are able to convince our Republican colleagues in the House that this is something that the original legislation that you and Senator GRASSLEY passed intended, and that they will support that. And if we start from now, hopefully, we can engage Senator GRASSLEY and Senator LEE to help us do that with the House Republicans.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Senator SHAHEEN. And as we know, there are major, major investigations—some suits already have been filed. Actually, from the prior administration going forward into this administration, they have been bipartisan in that way, as well as ongoing investigations.

So I do thank you for your commitment and look forward to working closely with you and the Democratic and Republican Members of the Appropriations Committee on the fiscal year 2025 budget process to uphold this commitment.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator KLOBUCHAR. As we know, we are about to start the 2025 appropriations process. So we will begin very soon, and I look forward to you and your staff working closely with us as we try to provide the desired outcome intended by the legislation.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Thank you, Senator SHAHEEN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

#### STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, later this evening, we are going to hear the President of the United States tout the successes of his administration over the last year. He will say that our country is in a better place because of his leadership.

Are you ready?

Are you looking forward to hearing how grocery costs, energy costs, and the gas prices have all gone down over the last year? Maybe you are eager to hear about Joe Biden's solution to the historic border crisis—one which he created, by the way—that has crushed our rural hospitals, our schools, and other public resources.

So let me save you some time. Here is how President Biden's speech is going to go. The economy has never, ever been better.

This is a lie. Grocery prices are up 21 percent; gas prices are up 32 percent; inflation is up 18 percent; credit card debt for the average American is at an all-time high. Do those numbers sound like the economy is better than ever?

Well, I don't think so.

He will say America has never been safer.

This is a lie. Cities across the country are experiencing surges of homicides, muggings, and carjackings. New York City just deployed the National Guard to combat subway crime.

Let me read that one more time. New York City just deployed the National Guard to combat subway crime.

I never thought I would see it. This is obviously a Democratic city.

Washington, DC—right here, our Nation's Capital—saw, last year, its deadliest year in almost two decades.

That doesn't sound like this administration and its Democratic allies have prioritized the safety and security of Americans, which, by the way, is any—any—administration's top responsibility.

Joe Biden will turn to Ukraine next and say that, by continuing to send billions of dollars to secure their border, we will protect our country—billions more dollars. Yet that is another lie. We have already spent and sent over to Ukraine \$120 billion, only to watch their war descend into a yearslong stalemate, with hundreds of thousands of people killed and no end in sight.

We are \$34 trillion in debt and borrowing an additional \$80,000 per second. You heard me right. We are borrowing \$80,000 per second. That is \$4.6 million a minute. We are increasing the debt at a rate of \$2.5 trillion per year.

Our munitions are depleted because the President has continued to give it away to other countries. We are defenseless; we are broke; and we have little to show for it. Our streets should be made of gold. We should have fast trains across the country. Our airports should be immaculate. We have nothing to show for a \$34 trillion debt.

President Biden will also say the border crisis should have been solved with the Biden-Schumer border deal and complain that Republicans blocked the bill from moving forward. I was looking forward to this bill, but, surprisingly, this is another lie.

The Biden-Schumer border deal was a border giveaway. The bill did not stop the administration from paroling thousands of people per day into our country. To me, that was what a border bill was supposed to be about.

The bill did not authorize funding to complete the border wall. It is simple: Put up a wall. We just put one outside the Capitol here today to keep the mean people from coming to this speech tonight.

The bill will not stop funding sanctuary cities where criminal aliens are protected from deportations.

The President will claim he has done everything he can do to secure the border but that Republicans have tied his hands. That is what he will say. To clarify, the President of the United States will claim, at the end of the night, he cannot secure the Nation's border. How embarrassing. What a shameless dereliction of duty and a bold-faced lie. He thinks that Americans are either too stupid to see what is going on here or he might think they just don't care, but I think they do. He is wrong on both counts. Tuesday's primary race results proved just how wrong he is.

When I last spoke on the floor 1 week ago, I said I would be back the next time an American was killed by an illegal alien. Well, here I am, and it is far too soon.

This past weekend, 27-year-old Washington State Patrol Trooper Christopher Gadd was killed by an illegal alien. This is he right here. Raul Benitez Santana—a Mexican citizen, drunk and high behind the wheel—crashed his car into Trooper Gadd and killed him. Trooper Gadd was a husband, a father, a brother, and a son. Benitez Santana has been arrested

multiple times before since he has been in the United States illegally—illegally—over the last 10 years, and this man lay dead today because of that. He has been charged several times for driving with a suspended license in addition to possession of marijuana and domestic abuse.

He should have been deported long ago, but he wasn't. Now Trooper Gadd is dead. Does anybody care other than his family?

Sadly, Marysville, WA, where the crash occurred, is a sanctuary jurisdiction. I still haven't figured that out. You know, I have spoken about sanctuary jurisdictions before. They are cities, counties, and States where locally elected officials prohibit police from cooperating with Federal law enforcement officers to get criminal aliens out of our communities and into removal proceedings to be deported, but if you are in one of these sanctuary cities, that doesn't happen.

This tragic event is but one in a pattern of occurrences happening across our country in which the lives of U.S. citizens are put at risk because of Joe Biden's refusal—absolute refusal—to secure the border.

So, earlier today, the House of Representatives voted on the Laken Riley Act. We talked about her a couple of weeks ago here, right on this floor—a young lady who was killed by an illegal alien at the University of Georgia.

The Laken Riley Act would mandate the detention of illegal aliens charged with crimes as small as shoplifting. That is exactly what Laken Riley's killer had been arrested for previously. By the way, he had also been arrested for endangering a minor before he was charged with Laken Riley's murder. This bill today that was voted on in the House—170 Democrats voted against this bill.

The blame for the state of this country rests solely with President Biden. He is the boss; he is the leader—period.

Does he care about you? Does he care about you as a taxpayer and a citizen of this country? He doesn't show it.

Does he care about your family? Does he care about keeping them safe or is it just by luck that nothing happens to you? I don't think he does.

Will he protect you? I don't think so. He hasn't shown that. He didn't protect Laken Riley or Trooper Gadd here. I am sure he won't talk about Laken or Trooper Gadd in his speech tonight, but he should. Their names should come up. Their families are grieving. It is just unfortunate that he doesn't take the leadership role and the blame. These two Americans don't support his narrative of a successful Presidency.

He is going to say he has had a successful first 3 years and his last year was successful, but we have lost a lot of people because of the decisions that he has made at the border, and there have been many, not just these two. One is too many.

I don't know how many people will support this talk tonight. I am anxious

to hear it. I am anxious to hear what his writers got together and said about our country and what has happened over the last year and what he foresees in the future. It had to be hard.

Unless drastic changes are made to our Nation's leadership in the very near future, I think the American citizens are going to be on their own. It is just going to be by luck whether you are going to make it or not make it. I am not talking about just financially. I am talking about life or death, because we are losing people almost daily.

So, on that, I am looking forward to hearing President Biden's speech tonight. I hope the American people will listen in—listen in hard—on what is going on, because this is our country, and our country is in trouble. I hope to God that we make the right decisions come this November. God bless.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Hawaii.

#### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, women and families across the country are confronting impossible choices because of Republican extremism on abortion.

Do you risk your own health with a high-risk pregnancy or do you risk being thrown in jail for trying to get an abortion? Do you stay in a State that forces you to carry for months a nonviable pregnancy to term? Do you travel hundreds of miles in secret to get access to a legal abortion in some other jurisdiction?

If these choices sound awful, it is because they are.

The chaos and the suffering created by Republicans is not just limited to red States. These attacks affect everyone.

Take Hawaii, which legalized abortion over 50 years ago and has some of the strongest protections in the country. Yet there is a case before the Supreme Court right now trying to prevent people from accessing medication abortion by telehealth. That means, if you live on an island like Kauai and rely on telehealth to get reproductive care, you would have to take off work and get on a plane to access services.

So, if you are in a blue State, thinking "I am safe," you are not. Republicans are coming after all of it, and no one and nothing is off limits. Attacks on abortion threaten the entire system of reproductive care, including things like contraception, family planning programs, and early miscarriage care. Hospitals and doctors are terrified of providing care that will cost them their licenses or land them in jail.

For instance, if you are an OB/GYN in a State like Texas, you might be forced to delay or deny treatment to a patient with an ectopic pregnancy because there is enough gray area that the State can arbitrarily decide that you broke the law and punish you for providing lifesaving care. Doctors are not lawyers, and many in these States are understandably either retiring early or quitting or moving to a State

that doesn't make criminals out of them simply for doing their jobs.

I am joined here in the Gallery today by an OB/GYN resident from Hawaii, Dr. Olivia Manayan. Born and raised in Honolulu, Dr. Manayan is currently a chief resident at the University of Hawaii, and next year, she will begin her specialization in complex family planning—focusing on abortion training, complex contraception, and reproductive justice. We need more people like Dr. Manayan, not fewer—people who are passionate about providing accessible and equitable care to their communities. We ought to be celebrating their contributions, but, instead, Republicans are hard at work criminalizing the whole profession.

Republicans are coming after all of it, and they are not going to stop. They have said what they are going to do, and now they are doing it. I think the challenge for those of us on this side of the aisle is that what they are doing is so bananas; it is so offensive; it is so cruel; it is so unpopular that, when we describe it accurately, it sounds like we are being hyperpartisan and freaking out for no reason. That is what it sounds like—I grant you that—but it is literally what is happening: IVF, banned. Contraception, not sure. Ectopic pregnancy, you have got to carry that to term. A nonviable pregnancy, you have to carry that to term and prove that it is nonviable even if your doctor says it is nonviable.

The cruelty knows no end. So, if you are a person who thinks, "Hey, you know, I am kind of uncomfortable with abortion, and so maybe I think I am pro-life," I want you to understand what it means to be pro-life in the context of this 50-year fight to eliminate women's control over their own bodies. They are not stopping at Roe. They are not stopping at IVF. They are not stopping at contraception. They are not stopping. They want to control people's bodies.

Stopping all of this means fighting with as much coordination and passion as the anti-abortion movement has been doing for decades. And that includes men too. This can't solely be a women's issue. We don't get to sit this one out. These extreme policies affect everybody and everyone wishing to start a family or caring for someone who is pregnant, and so we all need to get involved.

When and if we have the House and the Senate and the Presidency, we should enshrine all of these reproductive freedoms in Federal statutory law.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, the Senate will soon vote—how soon, unclear—but soon vote on an appropriations package which, among other bills, includes one from the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Subcommittee, which I chair. I want to take a moment to talk about what is in it and why it matters so much.

The United States is experiencing an unprecedented housing shortage.

Homes are increasingly out of reach for so many families and individuals, and homelessness continues to rise to record levels. There is no question that the Federal Government must act.

No appropriations bill—especially one negotiated under difficult spending caps demanded by House Republicans—is going to solve our decades-long housing problem. But what this bill does is provide funding for rental and homelessness assistance for millions of Americans.

It also provides \$100 million for the Yes in My Backyard Program, which will incentivize building housing and eliminating exclusionary zoning policies that have long kept housing supply down.

The bill also includes funding to modernize transportation and make it safer and more accessible. It fully funds the Federal Aviation Administration so that it can staff up and maintain a world-class air traffic control system.

Also included is the funding for the Federal Railroad Administration, which, in part, will help to improve rail safety in the wake of the East Palestine train derailment.

Crucially, the bill provides vital funding to improve Tribal housing and transportation infrastructure, including more than \$1.3 billion for the NAHASDA Native-American Housing Block Grant Program. That is a record increase for Tribal housing of more than \$300 million, which will help Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians build affordable housing in their communities and address their unique and urgent housing needs.

As always, these bills are the product of a lot of hard work and patience, especially from our excellent staff. That has been particularly true this year. They have worked so hard—long, long hours. When we make a deal, the work begins. Whenever we decide that we have consummated our deal, they don't get to say: Look, I am in the middle of a kid's baseball game or I am at a doctor's appointment or I am on a run or I just woke up. They have to get to work and draft the legislation. So lots of them have spent a lot of sleepless nights. My staff, the Republican staff on the T-HUD Committee, our House counterparts, all of the people in leadership on both teams, everybody worked their butt off to make this possible. I just want to appreciate them.

I also want to take a moment to thank Ranking Member CINDY HYDE-SMITH, the subcommittee members, as well as our counterparts in the House—Representatives Cole and Quigley—who worked in good faith throughout the process to get us here.

There is a lot more that we need to do to invest in housing and transportation around the country, but this bill funds enormously important priorities and projects that so many Americans rely upon. It is essential that we pass it, along with the rest of the bills.

We have a deadline of tomorrow night at midnight. I am confident that

we will make that deadline, but we have got to run this thing across the finish line.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

The majority leader.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar No. 532, 533; that there be 2 minutes for debate, equally divided, in the usual form on each nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, further, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the following nominations en bloc: Calendars No. 360, 280, 361, 362, 363, 359, 258, 118, 119, 120, 531; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc, without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the en bloc nominations of Douglas Dziak, of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for the remainder of the term expiring October 26, 2024; Fara Damelin, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Federal Communications Commission. (New Position); Andrew N. Ferguson, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of seven years from September 26, 2016; Andrew N. Ferguson, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2023.

(Reappointment); Melissa Holyoak, of Utah, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of seven years from September 26, 2018; Rebecca Kelly Slaughter, of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2022. (Reappointment); Loren E. Sweatt, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2023; Loren E. Sweatt, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2026. (Reappointment); Linda A. Puchala, of Maryland, to be Member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2024. (Reappointment); Linda A. Puchala, of Maryland, to be Member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2027. (Reappointment); Deirdre Hamilton, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2025. (Reappointment); Kelly Harrison Rankin, of Wyoming, to be United States District Judge for the District of Wyoming?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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.

#### UNITED STATES SENATE FELLOWSHIP REGULATIONS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD updated United States Senate Fellowship Regulations.

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

#### U.S. SENATE STARS OF VALOR FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM REGULATIONS

##### ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION ON MARCH 5, 2024

1.0 Scope—Senate Resolution 442 (117th Congress) established the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Gold Star Family Fellowship and Senate Resolution 443 (117th Congress) established the McCain-Mansfield Fellowship. These programs create fellowship positions within the Senate that provide qualified military veterans and their family members with career transition and development opportunities. These regulations describe the administration, eligibility criteria, selection, and placement procedures of the programs.

2.0 Definitions—For purposes of these regulations, the following terms shall have the meaning specified.

2.1 Disabled means a Veteran with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or greater.

2.2 Family Member means a widow or widower (remarried or not); parent (mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother through adoption, father through adoption, and foster parent who stands in loco parentis); child, stepchild, or adopted child; or brother, sister, half-brother, or half-sister.

2.3 Fellow means an individual serving in the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program.

2.4 Participating Senate Office means the personal office of a Senator that chooses to employ a Fellow and for which a Fellow is available by operation of the priority system described in section 5.0 of these regulations.

2.5 Program means the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program.

2.6 Rules Committee means the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

2.7 SAA means the Senate Sergeant at Arms.

2.8 Stars of Valor Fellowships Program means the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Gold Star Family Fellowship established by Senate Resolution 442 (117th Congress) and the McCain-Mansfield Fellowship established by Senate Resolution 443 (117th Congress).

2.9 U.S. Armed Forces shall have the same meaning as set forth in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4).

2.10 Veteran shall have the same meaning as set forth in 38 U.S.C. 101(2).

2.11 Wounded shall have the same meaning as set forth in 10 U.S.C. 1129.

3.0 General Program Information—The SAA, in consultation with the Rules Committee, is responsible for the Program's administration.

3.1 Availability. The number of fellowships available is contingent on appropriations.

3.2 Duty Station. Fellows are detailed to a Participating Senate Office in the District of Columbia or a state. Fellows may request specific location assignments, but such requests are not guaranteed.

3.3 Duration. Fellowships are expected to last 24 months and are contingent upon employee conduct and performance, as well as the Senator's continued tenure.

3.3.1 If, for any reason, a Senator leaves office, a Fellow placed with that Participating Senate Office may, upon the determination of the SAA after consultation with the Rules Committee, be reassigned for the remainder of the 24 months to another Participating Senate Office or be terminated.

3.4 Appointment Selection. The SAA is responsible for advertising Program vacancies, forwarding qualified candidates to Participating Senate Offices for consideration and selection, submitting selected candidates for a background check by the U.S. Capitol Police, appointing Fellows, coordinating Fellow onboarding, and setting compensation of Fellows.

3.5 Senate Office Responsibility. Participating Senate Offices are required to sign a Statement of Understanding with the SAA. The Statement of Understanding shall memorialize the terms and conditions governing the SAA's placement of a Fellow to a Participating Senate Office. Official travel for any Fellow shall be at the sole expense of the Participating Senate Office pursuant to the United States Senate Travel Regulations and as memorialized in the Statement of Understanding.

3.6 Program Employment Policies. Program employment policies for Fellows shall be set forth in a Program handbook prepared by the SAA, in consultation with the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment. To the maximum extent possible, the Program handbook will establish that the policies set by the Participating Senate Office govern in matters concerning a Fellow's day-to-day employment. In matters where the Program handbook and the Participating Senate Office's policies conflict, the Program handbook will control.

3.7 Employment Exclusions. For purposes of the Program's administration only, all Fellows shall be considered employees of the SAA; however, no Fellow shall be included in the SAA's full-time employee count, and no Fellow's compensation shall be included in the determination of the aggregate gross compensation limit for employees of the SAA. The compensation paid to a Fellow serving in Participating Senate Office shall not be included in the determination of the aggregate gross compensation for employees employed by the Senator under section 105(d)(1) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968.

4.0 Program Eligibility Criteria—

4.1 SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Gold Star Family Fellowship candidates. The SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Gold Star Family Fellowship candidates must be a Family Member of a U.S. Armed Forces Servicemember who died in the line of duty or a Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces who died of service-connected injuries. To qualify for the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Gold Star Family Fellowship, a candidate must submit the following:

4.1.1 For eligibility through Servicemember's death in the line of duty: DD Form 1300, "Report of Casualty," or DD Form 2064, "Certificate of Death (Overseas)," and documentation of kinship with Servicemember, such as a marriage license or birth certificate.

4.1.2 For eligibility through Veteran's death due to service-connected injuries: Documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs and documentation of kinship with Servicemember, such as a marriage license or birth certificate.

4.2 McCain-Mansfield Fellowship candidates. McCain-Mansfield Fellowship candidates must be a Wounded or Disabled Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. To qualify for the McCain-Mansfield Fellowship, a candidate must submit the following:

4.2.1 Submit DD Form 214 or other official documentation confirming an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions;

4.2.2 Have been released from active duty within the last five years;

4.2.3 Qualify as Wounded or Disabled, and provide official documentation thereof, which may include a DD Form 214 or other documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

4.2.4 Confirm a terminal pay grade at or below E-5 (Enlisted), CW-2 (Chief Warrant Officers), or O-3 (Officers).

4.2.4.1 Veterans promoted to the pay grades of E-6, W-3, or O-4 within six months of separation from active duty are eligible.

5.0 Priority Order for Fellow Assignments—The SAA shall assign fellowships to Senators in the following order and subject to available appropriations:

5.1 The SAA shall use Senatorial seniority to offer one Fellow to the senior Senator from each state.

5.2 The SAA shall then use Senatorial seniority to offer one Fellow to the junior Senator from each state.

5.3 If the SAA has offered Fellows to all Senators as detailed in sections 5.1 and 5.2, and still has fellowship candidates to place, then the SAA shall repeat the assignment process detailed in sections 5.1 and 5.2.

5.4 If a Senator declines to participate in the Program they are not eligible to be assigned a Fellow until the SAA has offered a Fellow to all other Senators through the assignment process detailed in sections 5.1 and 5.2.

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### TRIBUTE TO EARLE THOMPSON

● Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, every single day, our veterans use the skills and discipline they learned in uniform to build up our country. Countless veterans pass on these lessons to others. Colonel Earle Thompson, from Lake Martin, is one such example.

Colonel Thompson began his military service by signing up for the U.S. Army after graduating from Carroll High School in Ozark. This was the start of an accomplished 36-year-military career. Earle went on to get his bachelor's degree from the University of South Alabama. He balanced being a fulltime student while serving in the Alabama National Guard. After college, he transitioned to the Air Force, where he would serve 28 years across the globe, including combat sorties in Panama and Operation Desert Storm. He took full advantage of the training we have to offer right here in Alabama, particularly at Maxwell Air Force Base. There, he went through Squadron Officer's School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College.

Since retirement, Earle has been doing his part to help students make the most of Alabama's resources for successful careers. For the last 13 years, he has been using his military experience to lead aviation training at Auburn University. He serves as the deputy director for Defense Research Programs, where he teaches air traffic control and aerodynamics. His work helps address the shortage of both commercial and military pilots in the U.S.

Additionally, Earle serves as the chair of the Auburn University Regional Airport Safety Committee. He is also actively involved in Opelika First Baptist Church, where he sings in the choir. Earle spent 36 years protecting our Nation, and now, he is raising up the next generation of pilots who will help Alabama soar to new heights. It is my honor to recognize Colonel Earle Thompson as the March Veteran of the Month. ●

## PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON MARCH 7, 2024—PM 41

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States which was ordered to lie on the table:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Good evening, Mr. Speaker, Madam Vice President, Members of Congress, My Fellow Americans.

In January 1941—President Franklin Roosevelt came to this chamber to speak to the Nation. He said—"I address you at a moment unprecedented



in the history of the Union". Hitler was on the march. War was raging in Europe. President Roosevelt's purpose was to wake up the Congress and alert the American people that this was no ordinary moment. Freedom and democracy were under assault in the world.

Tonight—I come to the same chamber to address the Nation. Now it is we who face an unprecedented moment in the history of the Union. And yes—my purpose tonight is to both wake up this Congress and alert the American people that this is no ordinary moment either.

Not since President Lincoln and the Civil War have freedom and democracy been under assault here at home as they are today. What makes our moment rare is that freedom and democracy are under attack both at home and overseas at the very same time.

Overseas—Putin of Russia—is on the march. Invading Ukraine—and sowing chaos throughout Europe and beyond. If anybody in this room thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine—I assure you—he will not.

But Ukraine can stop Putin—if we stand with Ukraine. And provide the weapons it needs to defend itself. That is all Ukraine is asking. They are not asking for American soldiers. In fact—there are no American soldiers at war in Ukraine. And I am determined to keep it that way.

But now—assistance for Ukraine is being blocked by those who want us to walk away from our leadership in the world. It wasn't that long ago when a Republican President—Ronald Reagan—thundered—"Mr. Gorbachev—tear down this wall".

Now—my predecessor—a former Republican President—tells Putin—"Do whatever the hell you want." A former American President actually said that—bowing down—to a Russian leader. It's outrageous. It's dangerous. It's unacceptable.

America is a founding member of NATO—the military alliance of democratic nations—created after World War II to prevent war and keep the peace.

Today—I've made NATO stronger than ever. We welcomed Finland to the Alliance last year. And just this morning—Sweden officially joined NATO—and their Prime Minister—is here tonight.

Mr. Prime Minister—welcome to NATO—the strongest military alliance the world has ever known.

I say this to Congress—we must stand up to Putin. Send me the Bipartisan National Security Bill. History is watching. If the United States walks away now—it will put Ukraine at risk. Europe at risk. The free world at risk—emboldening others who wish to do us harm.

My message to President Putin is simple. We will not walk away. We will not bow down. I will not bow down. History is watching.

Just like history watched 3 years ago on January 6th. Insurrectionists

stormed this very Capitol and placed a dagger at the throat of American democracy. Many of you were here on that darkest of days. We all saw with our own eyes these insurrectionists were not patriots. They had come to stop the peaceful transfer of power and to overturn the will of the people.

January 6th—the lies about the 2020 election—and the plots to steal the election—posed the gravest threat to our democracy since the Civil War.

But they failed. America stood strong—and democracy prevailed. But we must be honest—the threat remains—and democracy must be defended.

My predecessor and some of you here—seek to bury the truth of January 6th. I will not do that. This is a moment—to speak the truth and bury the lies. And here's the simplest truth. You can't love your country—only when you win.

As I've done ever since being elected to office—I ask you all—without regard to party—to join together—and defend our democracy! Remember—your oath of office—to defend against all threats—foreign and domestic. Respect free and fair elections! Restore trust in our institutions! And make clear—political violence—has no place in America! History is watching.

And history is watching another assault on freedom. Joining us tonight—is Latorya Beasley—a social worker from Birmingham, Alabama. 14 months ago tonight—she and her husband welcomed a baby girl—thanks to the miracle of IVF. She scheduled treatments to have a second child. But the Alabama Supreme Court shut down IVF treatments across the State unleashed by the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade. She was told her dream would have to wait. What her family has gone through should never have happened. And unless the Congress acts—it could happen again.

So tonight—let's stand up for families like hers! To my friends across the aisle—don't keep families waiting any longer. Guarantee the right to IVF nationwide!

Like most Americans—I believe—Roe v. Wade got it right. And I thank Vice President HARRIS for being an incredible leader defending reproductive freedom and so much more.

But my predecessor—came to office determined to see Roe v. Wade overturned. He's the reason it was. In fact—he brags about it. Look at the chaos.

Joining us tonight is Kate Cox—a wife and mother from Dallas. When she became pregnant again the fetus had a fatal condition. Her doctors told Kate that her own life—and her ability to have children in the future—were at risk. Because Texas law banned abortion Kate and her husband had to leave the State to get the care she needed. What her family has gone through should never have happened as well.

But it is happening to so many others. There are State laws banning abortion—criminalizing doctors—and forc-

ing survivors of rape and incest to leave their States as well.

Many of you in this chamber—and my predecessor—are promising to pass a national ban on reproductive freedom. My God—what freedoms will you take next?

In its decision to overturn Roe v. Wade—the Supreme Court majority wrote—"Women are not without electoral or political power." No kidding. Clearly those bragging about overturning Roe v. Wade have no clue about the power of women in America.

They found out though—when reproductive freedom was on the ballot and won—in 2022—2023—and they will find out again—in 2024. If Americans send me a Congress that supports the right to choose—I promise you—I will restore Roe v. Wade—as the law of the land—again!

America—cannot go back. I am here tonight—to show the way forward. Because I know how far we've come. Four years ago next week—before I came to office—our country was hit by the worst pandemic and the worst economic crisis in a century. Remember the fear. Record job losses. A record spike in murder. A raging virus that would take more than 1 million American lives and leave millions of loved ones behind. A mental health crisis of isolation and loneliness. A President—my predecessor—who failed the most basic duty any President owes the American people—the duty to care. That is unforgivable.

I came to office determined to get us through one of the toughest periods in our Nation's history. And we have. It doesn't make the news—but in thousands of cities and towns—the American people are writing the greatest comeback story never told. So let's tell that story—here and now.

America's comeback is building a future of American possibilities—building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up—not the top down—investing in all of America—in all Americans—to make sure everyone has a fair shot and we leave no one behind!

The pandemic no longer controls our lives. The vaccines that saved us from COVID are now being used to help beat cancer. Turning setback into comeback. That's America!

I inherited an economy that was on the brink—now our economy is the envy of the world! 15 million new jobs in just 3 years—that's a record. Unemployment at 50-year lows. A record 16 million Americans are starting small businesses and each one is an act of hope. With historic job growth and small business growth for Black—Hispanic—and Asian-Americans.

800,000 new manufacturing jobs in America and counting. More people have health insurance than ever before. The racial wealth gap is the smallest it's been in 20 years. Wages keep going up and inflation keeps coming down! Inflation has dropped from 9 percent to 3 percent—the lowest in the world!

And now—instead of importing foreign products and exporting American

jobs—we're exporting American products and creating American jobs—right here in America. Where they belong! And the American people are beginning to feel it.

Buy American has been the law of the land since the 1930s. Past administrations—including my predecessor—failed to Buy American. Not. Any. More. On my watch—Federal projects like helping to build American roads—bridges—and highways will be made with American products—built by American workers—creating good-paying American jobs!

Thanks to my CHIPS and Science Act—the United States is investing more in research and development than ever before. During the pandemic—a shortage of semiconductor chips drove up prices for everything—from cell phones to automobiles. Well—instead of having to import semiconductor chips—which America invented I might add—private companies are now investing billions of dollars to build new chip factories here in America! Creating tens of thousands of jobs—many of them paying over \$100,000 a year and don't require a college degree.

In fact—my policies have attracted \$650 billion of private sector investments in clean energy and advanced manufacturing—creating tens of thousands of jobs here in America!

Thanks to our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—46,000 new projects have been announced across your communities modernizing our roads and bridges—ports and airports—and public transit systems. Removing poisonous lead pipes—so every child can drink clean water without risk of getting brain damage.

Providing affordable—high speed Internet for every American—no matter where you live. Urban—suburban—and rural communities—in red States and blue. Record investments in tribal communities.

Because of my investments—family farms are better able to stay in the family—and children and grandchildren won't have to leave home to make a living. It's transformative.

A great comeback story—is Belvidere, Illinois. Home to an auto plant for nearly 60 years. Before I came to office—the plant was on its way to shutting down. Thousands of workers feared for their livelihoods. Hope was fading. Then I was elected to office and we raised Belvidere repeatedly—with the auto company—knowing unions make all the difference.

The UAW worked like hell to keep the plant open and get those jobs back. And together—we succeeded! Instead of an auto factory shutting down an auto factory is re-opening—and a new state-of-the-art battery factory is being built to power those cars. Instead of a town being left behind—it's a community moving forward again! Because instead of watching auto jobs of the future go overseas—4,000 union workers—with higher wages—will be building that future—here in America!

Here tonight—is UAW President Shawn Fain—a great friend and a great labor leader. And Dawn Simms—a third generation UAW worker in Belvidere. Shawn—I was proud to be the first President in American history to walk a picket line. And today—Dawn has a job in her hometown providing stability for her family and pride and dignity. Showing once again Wall Street didn't build this country! The middle class built this country! And unions built the middle class!

When Americans get knocked down—we get back up! We keep going! That's America! That's you—the American people! It's because of you America is coming back! It's because of you our future is brighter! And it's because of you—That tonight—we can proudly say—the State of our Union is strong and getting stronger!

Tonight—I want to talk about the future of possibilities that we can build together. A future where the days of trickledown economics are over and the wealthy and biggest corporations no longer get all the breaks.

I grew up in a home where not a lot trickled down on my dad's kitchen table. That's why I'm determined to turn things around so the middle class does well—the poor have a way up and the wealthy still does well. We all do well. And there's more to do to make sure you're feeling the benefits of all we're doing.

Americans pay more for prescription drugs than anywhere else. It's wrong and I'm ending it. With a law I proposed and signed and not one Republican voted for—we finally beat Big Pharma!

Instead of paying \$400 a month for insulin—seniors with diabetes only have to pay \$35 a month! And now—I want to cap the cost of insulin at \$35 a month for every American who needs it!

For years—people have talked about it—but I finally got it done—and gave Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs—just like the VA does for our veterans. That's not just saving seniors money. It's saving taxpayers money—cutting the Federal deficit by \$160 billion—because Medicare will no longer have to pay exorbitant prices to Big Pharma.

This year—Medicare is negotiating lower prices for some of the costliest drugs on the market that treat everything from heart disease to arthritis. Now it's time to go further and give Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for 500 drugs over the next decade. That will not only save lives—it will save taxpayers another \$200 billion!

Starting next year—that same law caps total prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare at \$2,000 a year—even for expensive cancer drugs that can cost \$10,000—\$12,000—\$15,000 a year. Now—I want to cap prescription drug costs at \$2,000 a year—for everyone!

Folks—the Affordable Care Act is still a very big deal. Over one hundred million of you can no longer be denied

health insurance because of pre-existing conditions. But my predecessor—and many in this chamber—want to take that protection away by repealing the Affordable Care Act. I won't let that happen! We stopped you 50 times before—and we will stop you again!

In fact—I am protecting it and expanding it. I enacted tax credits—that save \$800 per person—per year—reducing health care premiums for millions of working families. Those tax credits expire next year. I want to make those savings permanent!

Women are more than half of our population but research on women's health has always been underfunded. That's why we're launching the first-ever White House Initiative on Women's Health Research—led by Jill—who is doing an incredible job as First Lady. Pass my plan for \$12 billion—to transform women's health research and benefit millions of lives across America!

I know the cost of housing is so important to you. If inflation keeps coming down—mortgage rates—will come down as well. But I'm not waiting. I want to provide an annual tax credit that will give Americans \$400 a month—for the next 2 years—as mortgage rates come down—to put toward their mortgage when they buy a first home or trade up for a little more space.

My Administration is also eliminating title insurance fees for federally backed mortgages. When you refinance your home—this can save you \$1,000 or more. For millions of renters—we're cracking down on big landlords who break antitrust laws by price-fixing and driving up rents. I've cut red tape—so more builders can get Federal financing—which is already helping build a record 1.7 million housing units nationwide. Now pass my plan to build and renovate 2 million affordable homes—and bring those rents down!

To remain the strongest economy in the world—we need the best education system in the world. I want to give every child a good start by providing access to pre-school for 3- and 4-year-olds. Studies show that children who go to pre-school are nearly 50 percent more likely to finish high school and go on to earn a 2- or 4-year degree no matter their background. I want to expand high-quality tutoring and summer learning time and see to it that every child learns to read by third grade.

I'm also connecting local businesses and high schools so students get hands-on experience and a path to a good-paying job whether or not they go to college. And I want to make college more affordable. Let's continue increasing Pell Grants for working- and middle-class families and increase our record investments in HBCUs and Minority-Serving Institutions.

I fixed student loan programs—to reduce the burden of student debt for nearly 4 million Americans—including

nurses—firefighters—and others in public service—like Keenan Jones—a public-school educator in Minnesota—who's here with us tonight. He's educated hundreds of students so they can go to college—now he can help his own daughter pay for college. Such relief is good for the economy because folks are now able to buy a home—start a business—even start a family. While we're at it—I want to give public school teachers a raise!

Now—let me speak to a question of fundamental fairness for all Americans. I've been delivering real results in a fiscally responsible way. I've already cut the Federal deficit by over one trillion dollars. I signed a bipartisan budget deal that will cut another trillion dollars over the next decade.

And now—it's my goal to cut the Federal deficit \$3 trillion more by making big corporations and the very wealthy finally pay their fair share. Look—I'm a capitalist. If you want to make a million bucks—great! Just pay your fair share in taxes. A fair tax code is how we invest in the things that make a country great—health care—education—defense—and more.

But here's the deal. The last administration enacted a \$2 trillion tax cut that overwhelmingly benefits the very wealthy and the biggest corporations—and exploded the Federal deficit. They added more to the national debt than in any Presidential term in American history. For folks at home—does anybody really think the tax code is fair? Do you really think the wealthy and big corporations need another \$2 trillion in tax breaks? I sure don't. I'm going to keep fighting like hell to make it fair!

Under my plan—nobody earning less than \$400,000 will pay an additional penny in Federal taxes. Nobody. Not one penny. In fact—the Child Tax Credit I passed during the pandemic—cut taxes for millions of working families and cut child poverty in half. Restore the Child Tax Credit—because no child should go hungry in this country!

The way to make the tax code fair is to make big corporations and the very wealthy finally pay their share. In 2020—55 of the biggest companies in America made \$40 billion in profits and paid zero in Federal income taxes. Not anymore!

Thanks to the law I wrote and signed—big companies now have to pay a minimum of 15 percent. But that's still less than working people pay in Federal taxes.

It's time to raise the corporate minimum tax to at least 21 percent so every big corporation finally begins to pay their fair share. I also want to end the tax breaks for Big Pharma—Big Oil—private jets—and massive executive pay! End it now!

There are 1,000 billionaires in America. You know what the average Federal tax rate for these billionaires is? 8.2 percent! That's far less than the vast majority of Americans pay.

No billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than a teacher—a sanitation

worker—a nurse! That's why I've proposed a minimum tax of 25 percent for billionaires. Just 25 percent. That would raise \$500 billion over the next 10 years.

Imagine what that could do for America. Imagine a future with affordable child care—so millions of families can get the care they need and still go to work and help grow the economy.

Imagine a future with paid leave—because no one should have to choose between working and taking care of yourself or a sick family member.

Imagine a future with home care and elder care—so seniors and people living with disabilities can stay in their homes and family caregivers get paid what they deserve!

Tonight—let's all agree once again to stand up for seniors! Many of my Republican friends want to put Social Security on the chopping block. If anyone here tries to cut Social Security or Medicare—or raise the retirement age—I will stop them!

Working people who built this country pay more into Social Security than millionaires and billionaires do. It's not fair. We have two ways to go on Social Security. Republicans will cut Social Security and give more tax cuts to the wealthy. I will protect and strengthen Social Security—and make the wealthy pay their fair share!

Too many corporations raise their prices to pad their profits—charging you more and more for less and less. That's why we're cracking down on corporations that engage in price gouging or deceptive pricing from food to health care to housing.

In fact—snack companies think you won't notice when they charge you just as much for the same size bag—but with fewer chips in it. Pass Senator BOB CASEY's bill to put a stop to shrink-flation!

I'm also getting rid of junk fees—those hidden fees added at the end of your bills without your knowledge. My Administration just announced—we're cutting credit card late fees from \$32 to just \$8. The banks and credit card companies don't like it. Why? I'm saving American families \$20 billion a year with all of the junk fees I'm eliminating.

And I'm not stopping there. My Administration has proposed rules to make cable—travel—utilities—and online ticket sellers tell you the total price upfront—so there are no surprises. It matters. And so does this.

In November—my team began serious negotiations with a bipartisan group of Senators. The result was a bipartisan bill with the toughest set of border security reforms we've ever seen in this country.

That bipartisan deal would hire 1,500 more border security agents and officers. 100 more immigration judges to help tackle a backlog of 2 million cases. 4,300 more asylum officers—and new policies so they can resolve cases in 6 months instead of 6 years. 100 more high-tech drug detection machines to

significantly increase the ability to screen and stop vehicles from smuggling fentanyl into America.

This bill would save lives. And bring order to the border. It would also give me—as President—new emergency authority to temporarily shut down the border when the number of migrants at the border is overwhelming.

The Border Patrol Union endorsed the bill. The Chamber of Commerce endorsed the bill. I believe that given the opportunity—a majority of the House and Senate would endorse it as well.

But unfortunately—politics have derailed it so far. I'm told my predecessor called Republicans in Congress and demanded they block the bill. He feels it would be a political win for me—and a political loser for him.

It's not about him or me. It'd be a winner for America! My Republican friends—you owe it to the American people to get this bill done. We need to act. And if my predecessor is watching—instead of playing politics and pressuring Members of Congress to block this bill—join me in telling Congress to pass it!

We can do it together. But here's what I will not do. I will not demonize immigrants—saying they “poison the blood of our country”—as he said in his own words. I will not separate families. I will not ban people from America because of their faith.

Unlike my predecessor—on my first day in office I introduced a comprehensive plan to fix our immigration system—secure the border—and provide a pathway to citizenship for DREAMERS—and so much more. Because—unlike my predecessor—I know who we are as Americans.

We are the only Nation in the world with a heart and soul—that draws from old and new. Home to Native Americans whose ancestors have been here for thousands of years. Home to people from every place on Earth. Some came freely. Some chained by force. Some when famine struck—like my ancestral family in Ireland. Some to flee persecution. Some to chase dreams that are impossible anywhere but here in America.

That's America—where we all come from somewhere—but we are all Americans. We can fight about the border—or we can fix it. I'm ready to fix it. Send me the border bill now!

A transformational moment in our history happened 59 years ago today—in Selma, Alabama. Hundreds of foot soldiers for justice marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge—named after a Grand Dragon of the KKK—to claim their fundamental right to vote.

They were beaten—bloodied—and left for dead. Our late friend and former colleague John Lewis was at the march. We miss him. Joining us tonight are other marchers who were there—including Bettie Mae Fikes—known as the “Voice of Selma”. A daughter of gospel singers and preachers—she sang songs of prayer and protest on that Bloody Sunday to help

shake the Nation's conscience. Five months later—the Voting Rights Act was signed into law.

But 59 years later—there are forces taking us back in time. Voter suppression. Election subversion. Unlimited dark money. Extreme gerrymandering.

John Lewis was a great friend to many of us here. But if you truly want to honor him and all the heroes who marched with him—then it's time for more than just talk. Pass and send me the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act!

And stop denying another core value of America—our diversity—across American life. Banning books. It's wrong! Instead of erasing history—let's make history!

I want to protect other fundamental rights! Pass the Equality Act—and my message to transgender Americans—I have your back! Pass the PRO Act for workers' rights! And raise the Federal minimum wage—because every worker has the right to earn a decent living!

We are also making history by confronting the climate crisis—not denying it. I'm taking the most significant action on climate ever in the history of the world.

I am cutting our carbon emissions in half by 2030. Creating tens of thousands of clean-energy jobs—like the IBEW workers building and installing 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations. Conserving 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030. Taking historic action on environmental justice for fence-line communities smothered by the legacy of pollution.

And—patterned after the Peace Corps and Ameri Corps—I've launched a Climate Corps to put 20,000 young people to work at the forefront of our clean energy future. I'll triple that number this decade.

All Americans deserve the freedom to be safe. And America is safer today than when I took office. The year before I took office—murders went up 30 percent nationwide—the biggest increase in history.

That was then. Now—through my American Rescue Plan—which every Republican voted against—I've made the largest investment in public safety ever.

Last year—the murder rate saw the sharpest decrease in history. And violent crime fell to one of the lowest levels in more than 50 years.

But we have more to do. Help cities and towns invest in more community police officers—more mental health workers—and more community violence intervention. Give communities the tools to crack down on gun crime—retail crime—and carjacking. Keep building public trust—as I've been doing by taking executive action on police reform and calling for it to be the law of the land! Directing my Cabinet to review the Federal classification of marijuana and expunging thousands of convictions for mere possession—because no one should be jailed just for using or possessing marijuana!

To take on domestic violence—I am ramping up Federal enforcement of the Violence Against Women Act that I proudly wrote—so we can finally end the scourge of violence against women in America!

And there's another kind of violence I want to stop. With us tonight is Jazmin—whose 9-year-old sister Jackie was murdered with 21 classmates and teachers at her elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Soon after it happened, Jill and I went to Uvalde and spent hours with the families. We heard their message—and so should everyone in this chamber—do something.

I did do something by establishing the first-ever Office of Gun Violence Prevention in the White House that Vice President HARRIS is leading. Meanwhile—my predecessor told the NRA he's proud he did nothing on guns when he was President. After another school shooting in Iowa—he said we should just “get over it.”

I say we must stop it. I'm proud we beat the NRA when I signed the most significant gun safety law in nearly 30 years! Now we must beat the NRA again! I'm demanding a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines! Pass universal background checks! None of this violates the Second Amendment—or vilifies responsible gun owners.

As we manage challenges at home—we're also managing crises abroad—including in the Middle East. I know the last 5 months have been gut-wrenching for so many people—for the Israeli people—the Palestinian people—and so many here in America.

This crisis began on October 7th with a massacre by the terrorist group Hamas. 1,200 innocent people—women and girls—men and boys—slaughtered—many enduring sexual violence. The deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. 250 hostages.

Here in the chamber tonight are American families whose loved ones are still being held by Hamas. I pledge to all the families that we will not rest until we bring their loved ones home. We will also work around the clock to bring home Evan and Paul—Americans being unjustly detained all around the world.

Israel has a right to go after Hamas. Hamas could end this conflict today by releasing the hostages—laying down arms—and surrendering those responsible for October 7th. Israel has an added burden because Hamas hides and operates among the civilian population. But Israel also has a fundamental responsibility to protect innocent civilians in Gaza.

This war has taken a greater toll on innocent civilians than all previous wars in Gaza combined. More than 30,000 Palestinians have been killed. Most of whom are not Hamas. Thousands and thousands are innocent women and children. Children also orphaned. Nearly 2 million more Palestinians under bombardment or dis-

placed. Homes destroyed—neighborhoods in rubble—cities in ruin. Families without food, water, medicine. It's heartbreaking.

We've been working non-stop to establish an immediate ceasefire that would last for at least 6 weeks. It would get the hostages home—ease the intolerable humanitarian crisis—and build toward something more enduring.

The United States has been leading international efforts to get more humanitarian assistance into Gaza. Tonight—I'm directing the United States military to lead an emergency mission to establish a temporary pier in the Mediterranean—on the Gaza coast—that can receive large ships carrying food—water—medicine—and temporary shelters. No U.S. boots will be on the ground. This temporary pier would enable a massive increase in the amount of humanitarian assistance getting into Gaza every day.

But Israel must also do its part. Israel must allow more aid into Gaza—and ensure that humanitarian workers aren't caught in the cross fire. To the leadership of Israel, I say this—humanitarian assistance cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip. Protecting and saving innocent lives has to be a priority.

As we look to the future—the only real solution is a two-state solution. I say this as a lifelong supporter of Israel—and the only American President to visit Israel in wartime.

There is no other path that guarantees Israel's security—and democracy. There is no other path that guarantees Palestinians can live with peace and dignity. There is no other path that guarantees peace between Israel and all of its Arab neighbors—including Saudi Arabia.

Creating stability in the Middle East also means containing the threat posed by Iran. That's why I built a coalition of more than a dozen countries to defend international shipping and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. I've ordered strikes to degrade Houthi capabilities and defend United States Forces in the region. As Commander in Chief—I will not hesitate, to direct further measures to protect our people and military personnel.

For years—all I've heard from my Republican friends—and so many others—is that China's on the rise—and America is falling behind. They've got it backward. America is rising. We have the best economy in the world. Since I've come to office—our GDP is up. And our trade deficit with China is down to the lowest point in over a decade.

We're standing against China's unfair economic practices. And standing up for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. I've revitalized our partnerships and alliances in the Pacific. I've made sure that the most advanced American technologies can't be used in China's weapons.

Frankly—for all his tough talk on China—it never occurred to my predecessor to do that. We want competition

with China—but not conflict. And we are in a stronger position to win the competition for the 21st Century against China—or anyone else for that matter.

Here at home—I've signed over 400 bipartisan bills. But there's more to do to pass my Unity Agenda. Strengthen penalties on fentanyl trafficking. Pass bipartisan privacy legislation to protect our children online—harness the promise of A.I. and protect us from its peril—ban A.I. voice impersonation—and more!

And keep our one truly sacred obligation: To train and equip those we send into harm's way and care for them and their families when they come home—and when they don't. That's why I signed the PACT Act—one of the most significant laws ever—helping millions of veterans who were exposed to toxins and who now are battling more than 100 cancers. Many of them didn't come home. We owe them and their families.

And we owe it to ourselves to keep supporting our new health research agency called ARPA-H—and remind us that we can do big things like end cancer as we know it!

Let me close with this. I know I may not look like it—but I've been around a while. And when you get to my age—certain things become clearer than ever before.

I know the American story. Again and again—I've seen the contest between competing forces in the battle for the soul of our Nation. Between those who want to pull America back to the past and those who want to move America into the future.

My lifetime has taught me to embrace freedom and democracy. A future based on the core values that have defined America. Honesty. Decency. Dignity. Equality. To respect everyone. To give everyone a fair shot. To give hate no safe harbor.

Now—some other people my age see a different story. An American story of resentment—revenge—and retribution.

That's not me. I was born amid World War II—when America stood for freedom in the world. I grew up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and Claymont, Delaware, among working people who built this country.

I watched in horror as two of my heroes—Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy—were assassinated—and their legacies inspired me to pursue a career in service. A public defender—county councilman—elected United States Senator at 29—then Vice President to our first Black President—now President with our first woman Vice President.

In my career—I've been told I'm too young—and I'm too old. Whether young or old—I've always known what endures. Our North Star. The very idea of America—that we are all created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout our lives.

We've never fully lived up to that idea—but we've never walked away from it either. And I won't walk away from it now.

My fellow Americans—the issue facing our Nation isn't how old we are—it's how old are our ideas? Hate—anger—revenge—retribution—are among the oldest of ideas. But you can't lead America with ancient ideas that only take us back.

To lead America—the land of possibilities—you need a vision for the future of what America can and should be. Tonight—you've heard mine.

I see a future where we defend democracy—not diminish it. I see a future where we restore the right to choose and protect other freedoms—not take them away.

I see a future where the middle class finally has a fair shot—and the wealthy finally have to pay their fair share in taxes.

I see a future where we save the planet from the climate crisis and our country from gun violence.

Above all—I see a future for all Americans! I see a country for all Americans! And I will always be a President for all Americans! Because I believe in America! I believe in you—the American people. You're the reason I've never been more optimistic about our future!

So let's build that future together! Let's remember who we are! We are the United States of America. There is nothing beyond our capacity when we act together!

May God bless you all.

May God protect our troops.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 7, 2024.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 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 bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3821. An act to reauthorize the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:47 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 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.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

#### MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 3821. An act to reauthorize the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

#### 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-3730. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "EPA Clean School Bus Program: Third Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 2023"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3731. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Director of the Migratory Bird Program, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Permits for Incidental Take of Eagles and Eagle Nests" (RIN1018-BE70) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 28, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3732. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The CY 2020 Competitive Acquisition Ombudsman Report to Congress"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3733. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Section 1332 State Innovation Waivers"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3734. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress: Best Practices in the Money Follows the Person Demonstration"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3735. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicaid Program; Disproportionate Share Hospital Third-Party Payer Rule" (RIN0938-AV00) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2024; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3736. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Prescription Payment Plan: Final Part One Guidance on Select Topics, Implementation of Section 1860D-2 of the Social Security Act for 2025, and Response to Relevant Comments" received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2024; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3737. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Health Resources Priorities and Allocations System" (RIN0908-AA00) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 8, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3738. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Workforce Policy and Innovation, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; Redefinition of the Northeastern Arizona and Utah Appropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Areas" (RIN3206-AO61) received in the Office of the President of the

Senate on March 5, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3739. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Workforce Policy and Innovation, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Advancing Pay Equity in Governmentwide Pay Systems" (RIN3206-A039) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3740. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Workforce Policy and Innovation, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "General Schedule Locality Pay Areas" (RIN3206-A058) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3741. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Workforce Policy and Innovation, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; North American Industry Classification System Based Federal Wage System Wage Surveys" (RIN3206-A064) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3742. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Workforce Policy and Innovation, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; Abolishment of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, as a Nonappropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Area" (RIN3206-A060) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3743. A communication from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "CFPB FY 2023 Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act Report"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3744. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal package to re-authorize four key Department of Homeland Security authorities that have expired or will expire during fiscal year 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3745. A communication from the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Annual Sunshine Act Report to Congress for calendar year 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3746. A communication from the Director of the Office of Financial Reporting and Policy, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "FY 2023 Agency Financial Report"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3747. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Report of the United States Government (Financial Report)"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3748. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to

law, the Department's 2023 FAIR Act Inventory of Inherently Governmental Activities and Inventory of Commercial Activities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

#### PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-100. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Montana expressing support of hydropower and the Federal Columbia River Power System and opposing the breach of the lower Snake River dams; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

#### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

Whereas, organizations throughout the Northwest have made proposals to breach the lower Snake River dams; and

Whereas, hydropower is a premier renewable resource that provides reliable, cost-effective, carbon-free electricity; and

Whereas, hydropower plays a critical role as our nation works to maintain an affordable, reliable, and resilient grid, which is an important cornerstone of our domestic energy system; and

Whereas, hydropower has become increasingly important to the grid as policies are adopted to increase electrification of other sectors of the economy, such as transportation and heating; and

Whereas, hydroelectric generation is unique in its ability to instantly increase or decrease generation to balance generation and electric demand; and

Whereas, hydropower provides a foundation for reliability that is necessary with decreasing levels of baseload power and firm dispatchable power and with increasing levels of variable nondispatchable renewable resources, such as wind and solar; and

Whereas, the recently concluded Columbia River System Operation environmental impact statement studied the environmental, biological, power supply, and socioeconomic impacts of the entire Federal Columbia River Power System, which is marketed by the Bonneville Power Administration. This multiyear, \$50.4 million analysis concluded the lower Snake River dams play a critical role in the Northwest power system and economy and their impact on salmon populations has been mitigated successfully through extensive fish and wildlife programs funded by regional ratepayers; and

Whereas, on an annual basis, the dams on the lower Snake River provide an average of 1,000 megawatts of electricity, enough to serve over 800,000 Northwest businesses, industries, and households, including in western Montana; and

Whereas the continued operation of the lower Snake River dams is central to reliably meeting the region's clean energy goals, providing dispatchable capacity to prevent blackouts, and ramping capability to integrate other renewable resources; and

Whereas the lower Snake River dams can provide over 2,600 megawatts of sustained peaking capacity that represents a quarter of the Federal Columbia River Power System's reserves holding capacity; and

Whereas, with weather events like ice storms and extreme cold and heat waves, the lower Snake River dams have also proved to be critical to maintaining electric grid reliability and public safety; and

Whereas, breaching the lower Snake River dams and replacing them with other non-emitting resources could raise Bonneville Power Agency's power supply rates by up to

50%. For most utilities relying on the agency, that translates to a 25% rate increase for their customers; and

Whereas, the lower Snake River dams contribute to the region's economy by providing irrigation, recreation, employment, and inland waterway transportation; and

Whereas, if successful in breaching the lower Snake River dams, Montana's federally owned dams and others in the Northwest that produce carbon-free, affordable power could be targeted for breaching; and

Whereas, breaching the lower Snake River dams or Montana's federally owned hydropower-producing dams, including Hungry Horse Dam, Libby Dam, Yellowtail Dam, Canyon Ferry Dam, and Fort Peck Dam, would greatly increase the risk of blackouts and raise power costs for electric cooperative members in Montana and public power across the Northwest. Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Montana:*

That the Montana Legislature hereby stands opposed to the breaching of any of the federally owned hydropower-producing dams, especially those on the lower Snake River, in the Northwest, and in the State of Montana; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the governors of all states served by the Bonneville Power Administration, including California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, and to each member of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate.

#### EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. BROWN for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

\*Ron Borzekowski, of Maryland, to be Director, Office of Financial Research, Department of the Treasury, for a term of six years.

By Mr. DURBIN for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Amir H. Ali, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Melissa R. DuBose, of Rhode Island, to be United States District Judge for the District of Rhode Island.

Sunil R. Harjani, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

Robert J. White, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Jasmine Hyejung Yoon, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Virginia.

Joshua S. Levy, of Massachusetts, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts for the term of four years.

Rebecca C. Lutzko, of Ohio, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio for the term of four years.

Roy W. Minter, Jr., of Georgia, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Georgia for the term of four years.

Almo J. Carter, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the United States Parole Commission for a term of six years.

\*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 3890. A bill to prohibit certain off-post demonstrations; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 3891. A bill to amend the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to update and expand Federal economic development investment in the economic recovery, resiliency, and competitiveness of communities, regions, and States across the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 3892. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to increase access to community health workers under the Medicare and Medicaid programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 3893. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require the promulgation of cybersecurity and digital service regulations relating to the use of EBT cards under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 3894. A bill to prohibit the granting or renewing of security clearances to a person who has expressed support for a foreign terrorist organization, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or any affiliate of such Corps, including Hamas and Hezbollah, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

S. 3895. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to require the Congressional Budget Office to provide an inflation estimate with respect to legislation with a significant impact on the gross domestic product of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

### SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LEE, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. DAINES):

S. Res. 580. A resolution expressing opposition to congressional spending on earmarks; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 581. A resolution affirming the support of the United States for the Republic of North Macedonia's accession to the European Union; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 582. A resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. Res. 583. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the National League of Cities and the support it provides to municipalities across the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. Con. Res. 30. A concurrent resolution expressing support for the recognition of March 10, 2024, as "Abortion Provider Appreciation Day"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 740

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 740, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 799

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 799, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare coverage for all physicians' services furnished by doctors of chiropractic within the scope of their license, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 928, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prepare an annual report on suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 963

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 963, a bill to provide enhanced student loan relief to educators.

S. 1071

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1071, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide students with disabilities and their families with access to critical information needed to select the right college and succeed once enrolled.

S. 1207

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1207, a bill to establish a National Commission on Online Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1248

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California

(Ms. BUTLER) 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. 1273

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1273, a bill to require a study on Holocaust education efforts of States, local educational agencies, and public elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes.

S. 1274

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1274, a bill to permanently exempt payments made from the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account from sequestration under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

S. 1400

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1400, a bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to modify the delivery of technical assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 1409

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1409, a bill to protect the safety of children on the internet.

S. 1677

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1677, a bill to secure the Federal voting rights of persons when released from incarceration.

S. 1706

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1706, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for qualified business income.

S. 1753

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1753, a bill to amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to allow individuals with drug offenses to receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 1943

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

S. 2245

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota

(Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2245, a bill to require a review of women and lung cancer, and for other purposes.

S. 2337

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2337, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate certain limitations with respect to pre-production plastic pellet pollution, and for other purposes.

S. 2671

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2671, a bill to prohibit the Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration from issuing a rule or promulgating a regulation requiring certain vehicles to be equipped with speed limiting devices, and for other purposes.

S. 2781

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2781, a bill to promote remediation of abandoned hardrock mines, and for other purposes.

S. 2801

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) 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. 2861

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2861, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in society.

S. 2897

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2897, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to molecularly targeted pediatric cancer investigations, and for other purposes.

S. 3099

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3099, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to further develop and support the adoption of a voluntary streamlined permitting and inspection process for authorities having jurisdiction over the permitting of qualifying distributed energy systems, and for other purposes.

S. 3381

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from North Da-

kota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3381, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow intangible drilling and development costs to be taken into account when computing adjusted financial statement income.

S. 3401

At the request of Mr. WELCH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3401, a bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to authorize the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to carry out research and development on a single index insurance policy, and for other purposes.

S. 3502

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3502, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prevent consumer reporting agencies from furnishing consumer reports under certain circumstances, and for other purposes.

S. 3526

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3526, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require a lactation space in each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S. 3734

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3734, a bill to require submission of the National Security Strategy and the budget of the President before the President may deliver the State of the Union address.

S. 3746

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3746, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain spouses eligible for services under the disabled veterans' outreach program, and for other purposes.

S. 3760

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3760, a bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out emergency watershed protection measures on National Forest System land, and for other purposes.

S. 3775

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) 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. 3818

At the request of Mr. RICKETTS, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added

as cosponsors of S. 3818, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to include fuel for ocean-going vessels as additional renewable fuel for which credits may be generated under the renewable fuel program.

S.J. RES. 62

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 62, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relating to "Importation of Fresh Beef From Paraguay".

S.J. RES. 63

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 63, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Employee or Independent Contractor Classification Under the Fair Labor Standards Act".

S. RES. 545

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 545, a resolution recognizing the importance of trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea.

AMENDMENT NO. 1624

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1624 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1625

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1625 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 580—EX-PRESSING OPPOSITION TO CONGRESSIONAL SPENDING ON EAR-MARKS

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LEE, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. DAINES) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations:



S. RES. 580

Whereas fiscal year 2022 marked the return of “congressionally directed spending” and “community project funding”, also known as “earmarks”, after a 12-year hiatus;

Whereas the return of earmarks marked the return of lawmakers using their powers to circumvent the rules of the Senate in order to direct taxpayer dollars to wasteful projects;

Whereas, while Congress has the power of the purse, it must be prescriptive and effective in funding programs, projects, and activities of the Federal Government, which is now more than \$34,000,000,000,000 in debt, rather than focus on funding earmarks that are wasteful in nature;

Whereas the 118th Congress has re-instituted and embraced the wasteful practice of earmarking, as shown by the more than 5,000 requests for earmarks in the House of Representatives and the more than 19,000 requests for earmarks in the Senate for fiscal year 2024;

Whereas Congress has already dramatically increased earmarking since its return, increasing from \$9,000,000,000 for 4,970 earmarks passed in fiscal year 2022 to \$15,300,000,000 for 7,234 earmarks passed in fiscal year 2023;

Whereas the reckless, 1,653 page, \$1,700,000,000,000 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328) enacted in December 2022, appropriated billions of dollars to earmarks even though the United States is more than \$34,000,000,000,000 in debt and experiencing the highest level of inflation seen in 40 years;

Whereas the massive, fiscal year 2023 omnibus spending bill included funding for earmarks, including \$3,600,000 for the Michelle Obama Trail in Georgia, \$2,500,000 for a Chinatown arts building in San Francisco, \$7,000,000 to fix staircases in the city of Pittsburgh, \$12,000,000 for a pedestrian walkway in Vermont, and \$3,000,000 for a theater and event space in Pennsylvania, in addition to other earmark projects such as botanical gardens in California, bike parking in Maryland, streetscaping in Connecticut, and a dance festival in Massachusetts;

Whereas the fiscal year 2024 minibus spending bill released on March 3, 2024, includes 605 pages of earmarks with 6,630 individual projects totaling \$12,700,000,000, including \$3,500,000 for Michigan’s Thanksgiving Parade Foundation, \$1,000,000 for an environmental justice center in New York City, \$500,000 for gardens in San Francisco, \$4,000,000 for a waterfront walkway in New Jersey, theater and opera house renovations in Georgia and Pennsylvania, and city hall renovations in Washington and Rhode Island;

Whereas former Senator Tom Coburn condemned the use of earmarks as a “gateway drug to overspending” and former Senator John McCain called earmarks “the gateway drug to corruption and overspending in Washington”;

Whereas several former Members of Congress and lobbyists have been convicted of crimes related to earmarking;

Whereas it is crucial that Congress spend taxpayer dollars wisely and with the best return on investment, especially during times of historic inflation and Federal debt levels; and

Whereas Congress must stop this reckless Federal spending and corrupt political dealing, start paying down the debt of the United States, and get the United States back on track: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the use of “congressionally directed spending” and “community project funding”, known as “earmarks”, to direct and appropriate taxpayer dollars in any form;

(2) reaffirms the previous ban on the use of earmarks and affirms to restore the ban permanently and immediately; and

(3) affirms the need for Congress to reign in overspending to help curb the inflation crisis that is crippling the families of the United States.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, since Joe Biden took office, inflation has exploded 17.9 percent. Prices on everything, especially groceries, are sky-high, and hard-working Americans are not able to keep up.

So think about what that means. If you haven’t seen your pay rise by more than 17.9 percent since January 2021, you are behind because of Joe Biden’s inflation.

We know that is the reality for millions of Americans because real average weekly earnings have fallen 4.3 percent since Joe Biden took office.

So when the press and Biden administration says: Good news, inflation is cooling, nobody in the real world is buying it because they see it is a lie each and every day.

Unless we see significant deflation, which will only happen if we cut spending, then there won’t be relief from the massive damage that Biden’s inflation has already caused.

One of the best ways to cut reckless spending is to take a serious look at earmarks. Now, I appreciate that Congress rightfully holds the purse strings under the Constitution. And my colleagues in the Senate know their States better than the Biden administration does. This is not about taking away authority from Congress. Neither Congress nor the President’s Agencies should waste your money.

Earmarks are pet projects that only benefit a small number of people; they are not voted on separately by Members of Congress. American taxpayers should not be used as a political piggybank.

Earmarks have been so badly abused that we can’t let it go on like this any longer. The time for forgiveness has passed.

In just the Senate, Members requested more than 6,000 earmarks to waste your tax dollars on projects like \$3.5 million for Michigan’s Thanksgiving Parade Foundation; \$1 million for an environmental justice center in New York—New York City has a budget already of \$106 billion; don’t you think they can do this on their own—\$1 million for a social justice organization in San Francisco to make building improvements; \$5 million for a theater, opera house, and other renovations in Georgia and Pennsylvania and city hall renovations in Washington and Rhode Island.

Why does the Federal Government have to pay for this? The States and local governments should take the lead here.

Today, the U.S. national debt is nearly \$35 trillion. That is about \$6.5 trillion more than it was when Biden took office.

Here is an even more disturbing figure: Since January 20, 2023, about 14

months ago, the national debt has grown by more than \$3 trillion. This explosion of America’s national debt is a grave threat to the civility and security of our country, and it is not going to stop unless we force change.

As someone who grew up in public housing and watched my mom struggle to put food on the table and pay taxes all of her life, I am furious about just how much failure in Washington is hurting hard-working families like my mom all across—families in Florida and all across the country.

Again, we have seen inflation increase 17.9 percent since Joe Biden took office. In my home State of Florida, that means families have to spend \$11,400 more to buy the same things. That is nearly \$1,000 more a month each and every single month just to get by the same way they did the day before Biden took office.

The status quo is burying America alive. That is why I am hoping all of my colleagues will join me in supporting the resolution against earmarks I will be filing today.

My resolution condemns the use of congressionally directed spending and community project funding, known as earmarks, to direct and appropriate taxpayer dollars in any form; reaffirms the previous ban on the use of earmarks and affirms to restore the ban permanently and immediately; and affirms the need for Congress to rein in overspending to help curb the inflation crisis that is crippling the families of the United States.

Debt matters because it fuels inflation. Just remember that. Debt fuels inflation. It makes it harder for the Federal Government to do the things it promised to do, like build roads and fund Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and national defense.

Americans know that the debt and inflation crisis we find ourselves in today was 100 percent preventable.

I believe we ought to fund the things that matter in government, like national defense, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, but that is not going to happen if we don’t stop spending money on these worthless projects.

If we truly intend to protect and preserve these programs and the core services and responsibilities the Federal Government is charged with providing to American taxpayers, we have to cut the reckless spending. If nothing changes, the interest on our debt, which is already costing us \$870 billion this year—more than we spend on defense—is going to keep going up. Soon, the government will not be able to keep its promise. That is not fair to each of you, and we should not let that happen.

We all need to work together to end earmarks and protect American taxpayer dollars.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 581—AFFIRMING THE SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 581

Whereas the Republic of North Macedonia peacefully asserted and achieved independent statehood in 1991, during the course of the former Yugoslavia's violent disintegration, and has since become a secure, democratic, and prosperous country and a key United States ally and strategic partner in the Western Balkans;

Whereas North Macedonia affirmed its commitment to joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1993, adopted major defense reforms, built a modern, professional defense force, and became the 30th NATO alliance member on March 27, 2020;

Whereas, in 1993, the National Guard State Partnership Program was established between the State of Vermont and the Republic of North Macedonia;

Whereas North Macedonia was the first Western Balkan country to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) and became an official EU candidate country in 2005;

Whereas, in 2008, the United States signed a Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation with North Macedonia;

Whereas, on June 17, 2018, the foreign ministers of the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Macedonia signed the Prespa Agreement, resolving a bilateral dispute that had hindered North Macedonia's EU membership bid;

Whereas, in March 2020, European Union member states endorsed opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia, and pursuant to a July 2022 protocol, North Macedonia committed to adopt certain constitutional changes in order to resolve an additional bilateral disagreement;

Whereas, in June 2022, North Macedonia became the first Western Balkan country to start a strategic dialogue with the United States, marking a significant bilateral milestone and step toward implementation of the Declaration of Strategic Partnership;

Whereas, in November 2023, the European Commission outlined a new growth plan to provide Western Balkans countries certain EU membership benefits ahead of accession, boost economic growth, and accelerate socio-economic convergence with the EU;

Whereas North Macedonia remains an important European Union and United States security partner and NATO ally, providing Ukraine with humanitarian aid and considerable military equipment, voting in favor of United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions against Russian aggression, and adopting all European Union Russian sanctions;

Whereas, on November 29, 2023, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with North Macedonia's Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani and commended North Macedonia's strong contributions and leadership as the Chair-in-Office to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and reaffirmed the United States would remain a steadfast partner and ally in support of North Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic path;

Whereas, in November 2023, the European Commission adopted the 2023 Enlargement

Package and assessed that North Macedonia has continued to fully align with the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy; and

Whereas the Government of North Macedonia has made significant progress in its work to join the European Union: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) appreciates North Macedonia's active role in regional cooperation and long-standing commitment to the European Union accession process;

(2) recognizes that there is strong support for EU membership across North Macedonia's multiethnic communities and that North Macedonia's diverse cultural heritage would be strengthened through EU membership;

(3) encourages the Government of North Macedonia to continue its important work toward membership in the European Union, as well as efforts to further peace, stability, and prosperity in Eastern Europe;

(4) recognizes the cooperation between the State of Vermont and North Macedonia and the joint military partnership between the Vermont National Guard and the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia;

(5) recognizes the significant evidence of the benefits of North Macedonia's membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in closer economic and political ties and in its commitment to foster regional stability and the principle of mutual defense;

(6) recognizes the importance of European Union membership for North Macedonia for its economic growth, strengthening of its democratic institutions and norms, and bolstering [the] rule of law in Southeast Europe;

(7) encourages the Government of North Macedonia to undertake the reforms necessary to advance their European Union membership;

(8) calls on the President, the Secretary of State, and European allies to advocate for the opening of the first European Union negotiation cluster with North Macedonia without further bilateral conditions;

(9) urges the President and the Secretary of State to continue to—

(A) work closely with the Government of North Macedonia; and

(B) support European Union enlargement for the Western Balkans, including North Macedonia on its European Union path; and

(10) affirms the desire of the United States Government and American people to strengthen the transatlantic partnership with the European Union and all member countries.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 582—SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 582

Whereas, as of March 2024, there are approximately 4,045,000,000 women and girls in the world, making up ½ of the world's population;

Whereas women and girls around the world—

(1) have fundamental human rights;

(2) play a critical role in providing and caring for their families and driving positive change in their communities;

(3) contribute substantially to food security, economic growth, the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the sustainability of peace and stability;

(4) are affected in different and often disproportionate ways by global, country, and community circumstances, including economic downturns, global health concerns, conflict, and migration; and

(5) must have meaningful protections and opportunities to more fully participate in and lead the political, social, and economic lives of their communities and countries;

Whereas the advancement and empowerment of women and girls around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States and is critical to the achievement of global peace, prosperity, and sustainability;

Whereas, on October 6, 2017, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-68; 131 Stat. 1202) was enacted into law, which includes requirements for a government-wide "Women, Peace, and Security Strategy" to promote and strengthen the participation of women in peace negotiations and conflict prevention overseas, enhanced training for relevant United States Government personnel, and follow-up evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategy;

Whereas the United States Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, dated October 2023, recognizes that—

(1) the "implementation of the [Women, Peace, and Security] agenda is both a moral and a strategic imperative for U.S. foreign policy and national security", reiterating that "the status of women and the stability of nations are inextricably linked";

(2) the challenges posed to the United States and the global community cannot be solved without addressing the inequities faced by ½ of the world's population; and

(3) the United States must "eliminate barriers to women's meaningful participation . . . in peace and security decision-making processes" in order to "achieve and safeguard our national security priorities" and achieve "sustainable peace, international security, and economic stability";

Whereas, according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (commonly referred to as "UN Women"), peace negotiations are more likely to end in a peace agreement when women and women's groups play a meaningful role in the negotiation process;

Whereas, according to a study by the International Peace Institute, a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in criminal justice professions and security forces vastly enhances the effectiveness of the resulting workforces;

Whereas, despite the contributions of women to society, hundreds of millions of women and girls around the world continue to be denied the right to participate freely in civic and economic life, lack fundamental legal protections, and remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse;

Whereas, every year, approximately 12,000,000 girls are married before they reach the age of 18, which means that—

(1) nearly 33,000 girls are married every day; or

(2) nearly 23 girls are married every minute;

Whereas, despite global progress, it is predicted that by 2030 more than 150,000,000 more girls will marry before reaching the age of 18, and approximately 2,400,000 girls who are married before reaching the age of 18 are under the age of 15;

Whereas girls living in countries affected by conflict or other humanitarian crises are often the most vulnerable to child marriage,

and 9 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are considered fragile or extremely fragile;

Whereas, on August 15, 2021, the Taliban entered Kabul, Afghanistan, and toppled the elected government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, resulting in de facto Taliban rule over the people of Afghanistan;

Whereas the Taliban continues to restrict the ability of women and girls to exist in Afghan society, including by—

(1) prohibiting girls from going to school past sixth grade, including banning women from attending university;

(2) limiting the employment that women can pursue outside of their households;

(3) mandating that women cover their heads and faces in public and punishing those who wear brightly colored clothing;

(4) restricting the independent movement of women and girls;

(5) closing domestic abuse shelters, sometimes forcing residents to return to their abusive families;

(6) preventing women aid workers from operating in Afghanistan, thus restricting operations in support of humanitarian assistance for all Afghans;

(7) jailing women human rights defenders; and

(8) limiting access to women's healthcare, including preventative and emergency services, and requiring a male chaperone at most clinics and hospitals;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (commonly referred to as "UNICEF")—

(1) globally, 1 in 5 girls between the ages of 10 and 19 have experienced recent intimate partner violence;

(2) approximately 120,000,000 girls worldwide, about 1 in 10, have experienced forced sexual acts; and

(3) an estimated 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas the overall level of violence against women is a better predictor of the peacefulness of a country, the compliance of a country with international treaty obligations, and the relations of a country with neighboring countries than indicators measuring the level of democracy, level of wealth, or level of institutionalization of the country;

Whereas women around the world remain vastly underrepresented in government positions, as women account for only 25.6 percent of national parliamentarians and 21 percent of government ministers;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth, self-reliance, and political and social stability;

Whereas, although the United Nations Millennium Project reached the goal of achieving gender parity in primary education in most countries in 2015, the COVID-19 global pandemic has deepened gender inequality in education and more work remains to be done to achieve gender equality in primary and secondary education, particularly in secondary education worldwide as gender gaps persist and widen, by addressing—

(1) discriminatory practices;

(2) harmful cultural and social norms;

(3) inadequate sanitation facilities, including facilities to manage menstruation;

(4) child, early, and forced marriage;

(5) poverty;

(6) food insecurity and malnutrition;

(7) early pregnancy and motherhood;

(8) conflict and insecurity; and

(9) other factors that favor boys or devalue girls' education;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—

(1) approximately 118,500,000 girls between the ages of 6 and 17 remain out of school;

(2) girls living in countries affected by conflict are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys;

(3) girls are twice as likely as boys to never set foot in a classroom; and

(4) up to 30 percent of girls who drop out of school do so because of adolescent pregnancy or child marriage;

Whereas women around the world face a variety of constraints that severely limit their economic participation and productivity and remain underrepresented in the labor force;

Whereas, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—

(1) agriculture and food systems are a major source of livelihoods, particularly for rural women;

(2) wage and productivity gaps persist in agriculture and food systems, despite the crucial role that women play in those sectors;

(3) the work of women in agriculture and food systems is more likely than that of men to be part-time, irregular, informal, vulnerable, labor-intensive, and low-skilled;

(4) in countries reporting on Sustainable Development Goal 5.a.1, more men than women are owners or have rights to agricultural land;

(5) the gender gap in food insecurity is growing and has reached 4.3 percentage points, with more women experiencing severe and moderate food insecurity in all regions than men; and

(6) the empowerment of women can have important benefits for agricultural productivity, nutrition, and food security;

Whereas the economic empowerment of women is inextricably linked to a myriad of other internationally recognized human rights that are essential to the ability of women to thrive as economic actors, including—

(1) living lives free of violence and exploitation;

(2) achieving the highest possible standard of health and well-being;

(3) enjoying full legal and human rights, such as access to registration, identification, and citizenship documents, and freedom of movement;

(4) access to formal and informal education;

(5) access to, and equal protection under, land and property rights;

(6) access to fundamental labor rights;

(7) the implementation of policies to address disproportionate care burdens; and

(8) receiving business and management skills and leadership opportunities;

Whereas the Millennium Challenge Corporation (commonly referred to as the "MCC"), an independent United States foreign assistance agency, recognizes that inequality and the exclusion of women from economic opportunities can inhibit efforts to promote economic growth and reduce poverty and decrease a country's economic growth trajectory, which is why the gender policy of the MCC requires gender inequalities to be identified and considered in every stage of agreements with participating countries;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, global maternal mortality decreased by approximately 38 percent from 2000 to 2017, yet approximately 810 women and girls continue to die from preventable causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth each day, and 94 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries, putting the global community off-track to meeting Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 for reducing maternal deaths;

Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that

women and girls comprise approximately ½ of the 78,900,000 refugees and internally displaced or stateless individuals in the world;

Whereas the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022, has resulted in a disproportionate number of women and children seeking safety outside of Ukraine;

Whereas those women and girls, like women and girls in all humanitarian emergencies, including those subject to forced displacement, face increased and exacerbated vulnerabilities to—

(1) gender-based violence, including rape, child marriage, domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation and assault;

(2) disruptions in education and livelihood;

(3) lack of access to health services; and

(4) food insecurity and malnutrition;

Whereas malnutrition poses a variety of threats to women and girls specifically, as malnutrition can weaken their immune systems, making them more susceptible to infections, and affects their capacity to survive childbirth, and children born of malnourished women and girls are more likely to have cognitive impairments and higher risk of disease throughout their lives;

Whereas it is imperative—

(1) to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and girls; and

(2) to afford women and girls every opportunity to be equal members of their communities; and

Whereas March 8, 2024, is recognized as International Women's Day, a global day—

(1) to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future; and

(2) to recognize the obstacles that women face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes that the fundamental human rights of women and girls have intrinsic value that affect the quality of life of women and girls;

(3) recognizes that the empowerment of women and girls is inextricably linked to the potential of a country to generate—

(A) economic growth and self-reliance;

(B) sustainable peace and democracy; and

(C) inclusive security;

(4) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women human rights defenders, activists, and civil society leaders, who have worked throughout history to ensure that women and girls are guaranteed equality and fundamental human rights;

(5) applauds the women around the world who stand against oppression in any form and fight for a better future, especially in Ukraine, Iran, and Afghanistan;

(6) recognizes the unique cultural, historical, and religious differences throughout the world and urges the United States Government to act with respect and understanding toward legitimate differences when promoting any policies;

(7) reaffirms the commitment—

(A) to end discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(B) to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of women and girls;

(C) to pursue policies that guarantee the fundamental human rights of women and girls worldwide; and

(D) to promote meaningful and significant participation of women in every aspect of society and community, including conflict prevention, protection, peacemaking, and peacebuilding;

(8) supports sustainable, measurable, and global development that seeks to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and

(9) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 583—RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES AND THE SUPPORT IT PROVIDES TO MUNICIPALITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 583

Whereas the National League of Cities is the oldest and largest organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States, representing the interests of more than 19,000 cities, towns, and villages across the country and collectively more than 218,000,000 residents;

Whereas the National League of Cities, originally named the American Municipal Association, was founded in 1924 in Lawrence, Kansas, by State municipal leagues seeking more coordination and national representation as cities, towns, and villages expanded rapidly following the Industrial Revolution;

Whereas, today, the National League of Cities works in partnership with 49 State municipal leagues across the country to strengthen local leadership, drive innovation, and influence policies that impact local programs and operations;

Whereas, as the voice in Washington that represents cities, towns, and villages across the United States, the National League of Cities has successfully championed Federal legislative solutions that support municipalities and has worked closely with Congress, educating Members of Congress on the realities of local implementation of proposed Federal legislation;

Whereas the National League of Cities has a history of championing the passage of foundational Federal legislation and bolstering Congress' efforts to strengthen essential services that municipalities provide to their communities;

Whereas the National League of Cities is proud that 21 percent of the membership of the Senate and the House of Representatives, or 115 elected Members of Congress, are former local elected officials;

Whereas the National League of Cities supported the creation of the Former Local Elected Officials Caucus, which brings together Members of Congress who previously served in local government, to improve intergovernmental partnership and ensure that the voices of local governments are heard in Federal decision-making; and

Whereas, two National League of Cities' presidents, Senator Richard G. Lugar, former mayor of Indianapolis, Indiana, and Senator George Voinovich, former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, went on to have distinguished careers in the United States Senate and worked closely with local leaders to strengthen the Federal-local partnership: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the United States Senate recognizes—

(1) the 100th anniversary of the National League of Cities; and

(2) the role that the National League of Cities will play in the next century in supporting municipalities with—

- (A) unparalleled research;
- (B) technical expertise; and

(C) relentless advocacy as a key partner in preserving and strengthening the Federal-local partnership.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 30—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE RECOGNITION OF MARCH 10, 2024, AS "ABORTION PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY"

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. CON. RES. 30

Whereas March 10 has been established as a day to show appreciation for the essential, high-quality care that abortion providers and staff provide to their communities and those traveling to their communities, and to celebrate their courage, compassion, and dedication to their work;

Whereas March 10 was selected for "Abortion Provider Appreciation Day" in honor of Dr. David Gunn, who was killed on March 10, 1993, outside his abortion clinic in Pensacola, Florida, by a White supremacist and anti-abortion extremist in the first known instance of the murder of an abortion provider;

Whereas abortions are provided in-person and through telehealth by facilities such as independent clinics, Planned Parenthood health care centers, hospitals, and private offices of doctors, and all of the staff working for those facilities are essential to ensuring patients receive needed care;

Whereas, on June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States erroneously overturned *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 597 U.S. 215 (2022) (referred to in this preamble as "the Dobbs decision"), reversing decades of legal precedent affirming the right to an abortion and unleashing devastation on an already precarious abortion access landscape;

Whereas, following the Dobbs decision, States across the United States moved to further restrict access to abortion care and 21 States have banned some or all access to an abortion;

Whereas, because of State abortion bans and restrictions, scores of clinics and health care centers in already underserved areas have closed, forcing more patients to travel out-of-State for abortion care, increasing wait times, straining already thin resources, and pushing people farther and farther away from their homes;

Whereas abortion providers and all staff play a critical role in a world where it has become increasingly difficult for individuals to receive essential and time-sensitive care once those individuals have made decisions that are right for their bodies, lives, and futures;

Whereas abortion providers and all staff help to ensure that all individuals who can become pregnant can make their own decisions about their bodies and their pregnancies, and support the decisions of their patients by treating them with dignity, empathy, compassion, and respect, despite numerous challenges due to abortion bans and restrictions;

Whereas abortion providers and all staff play an essential role within the reproductive justice framework, which was created by 12 Black women in 1994, who formulated a

human rights framework that demands every person has the human right to bodily autonomy, which includes the right to choose if, when, and how to have children and the right to parent children in safe and sustainable communities;

Whereas individuals seeking abortion care across the United States also rely on the work of abortion funds and practical support organizations to access abortion care for themselves and their families;

Whereas abortion funds and practical support organizations that rely on donations face increasing demand following the Dobbs decision as individuals are forced to travel longer distances, find childcare or lodging, and raise money to obtain an abortion and cover associated costs;

Whereas restrictions on abortion care have far-reaching consequences that deepen existing inequities and worsen health outcomes for pregnant people and people giving birth;

Whereas people who are denied abortion care are more likely to experience high blood pressure and other serious medical conditions during the end of pregnancy, remain in relationships where interpersonal violence is present, and experience poverty;

Whereas research shows that States that have more abortion restrictions are also States that have poorer maternal health outcomes;

Whereas the effects of the Dobbs decision were immediate and disastrous, with abortion being entirely banned in 14 States as of March 2024;

Whereas 1 in 3 women of reproductive age, plus more trans and nonbinary people, are blocked from accessing an abortion in their home State;

Whereas restricting and banning access to abortion care—

(1) limits the ability of current and future providers to obtain necessary education and training in abortion care;

(2) exposes the remaining abortion providers and clinic staff to increased levels of harassment and politically motivated restrictions; and

(3) creates and increases the out-of-pocket costs and logistical burdens that patients face to get care to a level that is sometimes insurmountable, forcing patients to remain pregnant;

Whereas the 2022 Violence and Disruption Report of the National Abortion Federation found an alarming escalation in incidents of obstruction, vandalism, and trespassing at abortion clinics, with abortion providers reporting an alarming rate of death threats and threats of harm, and documented 218 incidents in 2022;

Whereas Black, indigenous, and other providers and patients of color face heightened levels of threats, harassment, and violence as compared to their White counterparts;

Whereas the Dobbs decision has emboldened antiabortion individuals and groups to continue to harass providers and the patients they care for;

Whereas the Dobbs decision threatens the ability of abortion providers and staff to serve their patients; and

Whereas, in the face of multifaceted attacks on their work, abortion providers remain an essential and valued part of their communities, providing high-quality, compassionate, and necessary health care, and courageously delivering that care despite pressures, restrictions, political interference, and violent threats to their personal safety: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring)*, That Congress—

(1) recognizes "Abortion Provider Appreciation Day" on March 10, 2024, to celebrate the courage, compassion, and high-quality care that abortion providers and staff offer

to patients and their families across the United States;

(2) lauds communities across the United States who are proud to be home to abortion providers and staff;

(3) affirms the commitment of Congress to ensuring the safety of abortion providers, the ability of abortion providers to continue providing the essential care their patients need, and the right of patients to access abortion care no matter where they live, free from fear of violence, criminalization, or stigma;

(4) condemns the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States to limit abortion care, which has had a devastating impact on abortion providers and the communities they care for, threatening the work and livelihoods of providers and staff, and worsening the strain on providers who work in States where abortion is still available; and

(5) declares a vision for a future liberated from all abortion restrictions and bans, and affirms the commitment of Congress to working toward that goal in partnership with providers, patients, advocates, and their communities.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1627. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1628. Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1629. Ms. LUMMIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1630. Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1631. Ms. LUMMIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1632. Ms. LUMMIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1633. Mr. JOHNSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1634. Mr. HAGERTY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1635. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1636. Mr. RISCH (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1637. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1638. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1639. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him

to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1640. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1641. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1642. Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. SCHMITT, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1643. Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. VANCE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1644. Mr. CRAMER (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1645. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1646. Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1647. Mr. TILLIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1648. Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1649. Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. STABENOW) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1650. Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. STABENOW) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1651. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1652. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1653. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1654. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1655. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1656. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1657. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1658. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1659. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1660. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1661. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1662. Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1663. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1664. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1665. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1666. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1667. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1668. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1669. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1670. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1671. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1672. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1673. Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Ms. WARREN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1674. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1675. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1676. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1677. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1678. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1679. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1680. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1681. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1682. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1683. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1684. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1685. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1686. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1687. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1688. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1689. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1690. Mr. CORNYN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

#### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

**SA 1627.** Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

##### SEC. \_\_\_\_ ZERO-BASED BUDGETS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the meaning given the term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) ZERO-BASED BUDGET.—The term “zero-based budget” means a systematic budget analysis in support of decision making in which managers—

(A) examine current objectives, operations, and costs;

(B) consider alternative ways of carrying out a program or activity; and

(C) rank different programs or activities by order of importance to the organization.

(b) ZERO-BASED BUDGETS.—Every sixth year, each agency shall submit to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Committee on the Budget of the Senate and the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives a zero-based budget for the next fiscal year and each of the 4 ensuing fiscal years.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—In addition to the zero-based budget required under subsection (b), each agency, except the Department of Defense and the National Nuclear Security Administration shall submit recommendations for which programs Congress should cut or reduce appropriations in an amount that equals not less than a 2-percent reduction from the previous year appropriation in discretionary spending.

**SA 1628.** Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an

amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. 1\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to develop or implement the proposed National Recovery Plan of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for gray wolves in the lower 48 States.

**SA 1629.** Ms. LUMMIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title V of division D, insert the following:

##### LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. 5\_\_\_\_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Energy to promulgate new or finalize proposed rules unless the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration determines that the rule will not raise consumer energy prices.

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

##### LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. 4\_\_\_\_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate new or finalize proposed rules unless the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration determines that the rule will not raise consumer energy prices.

**SA 1630.** Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. 1\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to finalize, implement, administer, or enforce the following proposed rules:

(1) The proposed rule of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revision of Regulations for Interagency Cooperation” (88 Fed. Reg. 40753 (June 22, 2023)).

(2) The proposed rule of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing Endangered and Threatened Species and Designating Critical Habitat” (88 Fed. Reg. 40764 (June 22, 2023)).

(3) The proposed rule of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Regulations Pertaining to Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants” (88 Fed. Reg. 40742 (June 22, 2023)).

**SA 1631.** Ms. LUMMIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. 2\_\_\_\_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act may be used to carry out to carry out the program for Federal employees at the Department of the Interior entitled “Acknowledging Ecogrief and Developing Resistance” or any other counseling session, workshop, or meeting relating to ecological grief, ecogrief, or eco-resilience for Federal employees at the Department of the Interior.

**SA 1632.** Ms. LUMMIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. 2\_\_\_\_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to carry out cashless entrance fee policies at units of the National Park System.

**SA 1633.** Mr. JOHNSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this division may be used to provide Federal funds to a local jurisdiction that refuses to comply with a request from the Department of Homeland Security to provide advance notice of the scheduled date and time a particular illegal alien is scheduled to be released from local custody.

**SA 1634.** Mr. HAGERTY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place under the heading “GENERAL PROVISIONS—DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE” in title I of division C, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to—

(1) conduct a decennial census that does not collect and make publicly available the number of individuals per State who are—

(A) citizens of the United States;

(B) nationals of the United States but not citizens of the United States;

(C) aliens lawfully residing in the United States; or

(D) aliens unlawfully residing in the United States; or

(2) report to the President an apportionment population that includes individuals who are not citizens of the United States.

**SA 1635.** Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ PROTECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

(a) **SHORT TITLES.**—This section may be cited as the “Protect Our Law Enforcement with Immigration Control and Enforcement Act of 2024” or the “POLICE Act of 2024”.

(b) **ASSAULT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.**—Section 237(a)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1227(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(G) **ASSAULT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Any alien who has been convicted of, who admits having committed, or who admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of, any offense involving the assault of a law enforcement officer is deportable.

“(ii) **CIRCUMSTANCES.**—The circumstances referred to in clause (i) are that the law enforcement officer was assaulted—

“(I) while he or she was engaged in the performance of his or her official duties;

“(II) because of the performance of his or her official duties; or

“(III) because of his or her station as a law enforcement officer.

“(iii) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subparagraph—

“(I) the term ‘assault’ has the meaning given that term in the jurisdiction where the act occurred; and

“(II) the term ‘law enforcement officer’ is a person authorized by law—

“(aa) to apprehend, arrest, or prosecute an individual for any criminal violation of law; or

“(bb) to be a firefighter or other first responder.”

(c) **REPORT ON ALIENS DEPORTED FOR ASSAULTING A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.**—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit an annual report to Congress, and make such report publicly available on the website of the Department of Homeland Security, that identifies the number of aliens who were deported during the previous year pursuant to section 237(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as added by subsection (b).

**SA 1636.** Mr. RISCH (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. 1 \_\_\_\_.** None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for—

(1) the study of removal of powered Federal dams in the Northwestern Division of the Corps of Engineers;

(2) the study of power, flood control, or navigation replacement related to those dams;

(3) technical assistance related to those dams; or

(4) the study or consideration of operational changes that differ from current operations at those dams.

**SA 1637.** Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end add the following:

**SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 7 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

**SA 1638.** Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike “7 days” and insert “8 days”.

**SA 1639.** Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end add the following:

**SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 9 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

**SA 1640.** Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike “9 days” and insert “10 days”.

**SA 1641.** Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1, line 1, strike “10 days” and insert “11 days”.

**SA 1642.** Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. SCHMITT, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction,

the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In section 542 of title I of division C, strike “up to .07 percent of amounts made available to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration by such Act shall be available for salaries and expenses, administration, and oversight of programs administered by such Administration that receives appropriations by such Act, in addition to amounts previously made available for such purpose:” and insert “\$110,657,000 of amounts made available to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for administrative purposes for grants for broadband deployment under section 60102 of title I of division F of such Act and appropriated under title II of division J of such Act shall be rescinded as of the date of enactment of this Act, and \$226,343,000 of funds from the same accounts shall be available for salaries and expenses, administration, and oversight of programs administered by such Administration that receives appropriations by such Act, in addition to amounts previously made available for such purpose: *Provided*, That none of such amounts shall be used for Algorithmic Justice:”.

**SA 1643.** Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. VANCE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF FUNDS FOR PROVIDING FUNDING TO AIRPORT OWNERS OR OPERATORS THAT USE AIRPORT PROPERTY TO SHELTER OR HOUSE ALIENS NOT PROPERLY ADMITTED.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide funding to an airport owner or operator that uses any facility classified for aeronautical or non-aeronautical uses on airport property to provide shelter or housing for an alien who has not been admitted (as such terms are defined in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)), unless such shelter or housing is on a short-term emergency basis made necessary by a specified disaster. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the term “specified disaster” means any fire, flood, explosion, hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought for which a disaster declaration is made by the Federal Government or a State pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

**SA 1644.** Mr. CRAMER (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO PAUSE PERMITTING OF LNG EXPORTS.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal funds shall be used to facilitate or implement the Department of Energy supplemental review of economic and environmental analyses used to permit liquefied natural gas exports under the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717 et seq.).

**SA 1645.** Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ .** Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, none of the funds made available by this Act may be used for grants for the Economic Development Initiative related to West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc., or WE ACT Environmental Justice.

**SA 1646.** Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**EXTENSION OF SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000**

**SEC. 1 \_\_\_\_ .** (a) **SECURE PAYMENTS FOR STATES AND COUNTIES CONTAINING FEDERAL LAND.**—(1) Section 101 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7111) is amended, in subsections (a) and (b), by striking “2023” each place it appears and inserting “2026”.

(2) Section 103(d)(2) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7113(d)(2)) is amended by striking “2023” and inserting “2026”.

(b) **EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT SPECIAL PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND.**—(1) Section 205(a)(4) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(a)(4)) is amended by striking “December 20, 2023” each place it appears and inserting “December 20, 2026”.

(2) Section 208 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7128) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “2025” and inserting “2028”; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking “2026” and inserting “2029”.

(c) **EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO EXPEND COUNTY FUNDS.**—Section 305 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7144) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “2025” and inserting “2028”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “2026” and inserting “2029”.

(d) **RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PILOT PROGRAM EXTENSION.**—Section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125) is amended by striking subsection (g) and inserting the following:

“(g) **PILOT PROGRAM FOR RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS BY REGIONAL FORESTERS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary concerned shall establish and carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary concerned shall allow the regional forester with jurisdiction over a unit of Federal land to appoint members of the resource advisory committee for that unit, in accordance with the applicable requirements of this section.

“(2) **RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGIONAL FORESTER.**—Before appointing a member of a resource advisory committee under the pilot program under this subsection, a regional forester shall conduct the review and analysis that would otherwise be conducted for an appointment to a resource advisory committee if the pilot program was not in effect, including any review and analysis with respect to civil rights and budgetary requirements.

“(3) **SAVINGS CLAUSE.**—Nothing in this subsection relieves a regional forester or the Secretary concerned from an obligation to comply with any requirement relating to an appointment to a resource advisory committee, including any requirement with respect to civil rights or advertising a vacancy.

“(4) **TERMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.**—The authority provided under this subsection terminates on October 1, 2028.”.

**SA 1647.** Mr. TILLIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ .** None of the funds provided by this Act, or provided from any accounts in the Treasury of the United States derived by the collection of fees available to the agencies funded by this Act, may be used by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to finalize, issue, or implement any rule, notice of proposed rulemaking, or order setting any tobacco product standard that would prohibit menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes, or prohibit characterizing flavors in all cigars and their components and parts.

**SA 1648.** Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . SUPPORTING HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available to entities under section 2001(b)(1) of Public Law 117-2 shall remain available to those entities for purposes authorized under such section through September 30, 2025.

**SA 1649.** Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. STABENOW) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year

ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division B, strike section 763.

**SA 1650.** Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. STABENOW) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division B, strike section 770.

**SA 1651.** Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

**LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS**

**SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_ .** None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to develop, finalize, issue, or use assessments under the Integrated Risk Information System of the Environmental Protection Agency (commonly referred to as “IRIS”).

**SA 1652.** Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

**LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS**

**SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_ .** None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act or any other Act may be used by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to develop, finalize, or enforce the proposed rule of the Environmental Protection Agency entitled “Standards of Performance for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources and Emissions Guidelines for Existing Sources: Oil and Natural Gas Sector Climate Review” (87 Fed. Reg. 74702 (December 6, 2022)), or a substantially similar rule.

**SA 1653.** Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

**LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS**

**SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_ .** None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act or any other Act may be used by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce the final rule of the Environmental Protection Agency entitled “Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air



Quality Standards for Particulate Matter” (89 Fed. Reg. 16202 (March 6, 2024)).

ADDITIONAL USE OF FUNDS

SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_\_. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency may use appropriations for clean air programs made available under this Act—

(1) to improve air quality monitoring data by—

(A) addressing air quality impacts from wildfires, prescribed burns, and other fugitive emissions from nonpoint sources; and

(B) analyzing, quantifying, and addressing air quality impacts from foreign sources; and

(2) to improve air quality modeling tools and policies.

SA 1654. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by any division of this Act may be obligated or expended to issue an interim or final rule that amends or replaces the rule on speed restrictions to protect North Atlantic Right Whales under section 224.105 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on January 3, 2023, until the date on which—

(1) the mitigation protocols required under section 11303(e) of the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 (16 U.S.C. 1391(e)) have been fully developed and deployed; and

(2) the Secretary of Commerce has submitted a report on how the mitigation protocols will inform any proposed changes to section 224.105 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, to—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SA 1655. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. No Federal funding appropriated to the Department of Justice may be disbursed to—

(1) any State, local, Tribal, or territorial governmental entity that facilitates or encourages unlawful activity, including unlawful entry, human trafficking, human smuggling, drug trafficking, and drug smuggling;

(2) any State, local, Tribal, or territorial governmental entity to provide, or facilitate the provision of, transportation, lodging, or immigration legal services to inadmissible aliens who enter the United States after the date of the enactment of this Act;

(3) any nongovernmental organization that facilitates or encourages unlawful activity, including unlawful entry, human trafficking, human smuggling, drug trafficking, and drug smuggling; or

(4) any nongovernmental organization to provide, or facilitate the provision of, transportation, lodging, or immigration legal services to inadmissible aliens who enter the United States after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 1656. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. **WAIVER OF DOMESTIC PROCUREMENT PREFERENCE WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN STATE VETERANS HOME PROJECTS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall waive under subsection (b) of section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act (subtitle A of title IX of division G of Public Law 117-58) the domestic content procurement preference under such section with respect to a project for the construction of State home facilities with respect to which the application under section 8135 of title 38, United States Code, for such project was submitted on or before April 15, 2022, and included in the “VA State Home Construction Grants Priority List FY 2023”, dated June 1, 2023.

(b) STATE HOME DEFINED.—In this section, the term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code.

SA 1657. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. **LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY TO WORK WITH GOVERNMENT OF CHINA ON REGULATING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used by the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to enter into negotiations with officials from the Government of the People’s Republic of China or issue guidelines with cooperation from officials from such government regarding artificial intelligence policy regulation, coordination, and collaboration without specific authorization in law.

SA 1658. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to implement the

pause in the issuance of new export licenses involving certain firearms, related components, and ammunition as identified in the Bureau of Industry and Security’s “Firearms Pause & Review: Frequently Asked Questions” dated October 27, 2023.

SA 1659. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. **PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR HOUSING, OR FACILITATING THE HOUSING OF, ALIENS AT AIRPORTS.**

None of the funds made available by this Act or any other Act may be used for the purpose of housing, or facilitating the housing of, aliens at airports.

SA 1660. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide Federal funds to a local jurisdiction that routinely refuses to comply with a request from the Department of Homeland Security to provide advance notice of the scheduled release dates and times for illegal aliens in local custody.

SA 1661. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. **DREDGING.**

None of the funds made available under this Act shall be used to enforce section 55109 of title 46, United States Code, or section 55110 of such title with respect to dredged material.

SA 1662. Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. **BROADBAND SERVICE FUNDS LIMITATION.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of any division of this Act, no amounts previously appropriated or appropriated under this Act shall be made available for use by

the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to encourage eligible entities to set, freeze, or cap rates charged by a provider of broadband service under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program or to approve the initial or final proposal of an eligible entity that sets, freezes, or caps rates charged by a provider of broadband service, submitted as part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program.

**SA 1663.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON FUNDING FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used—

- (1) for—
  - (A) in the Department of Commerce—
    - (i) the Equity (DEIA) Council;
    - (ii) in the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Office; or
    - (iii) in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—
      - (I) the Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights;
      - (II) the Diversity and Inclusion Management Advisory Council; or
      - (III) the Diversity and Professional Advancement Working Group;
    - (B) in the Department of Justice—
      - (i) the Chief Diversity Officer;
      - (ii) in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Diversity and Career Impact Program;
      - (iii) in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion;
      - (iv) the Antitrust Division Diversity Committee; or
      - (v) the National Resource Center for Justice-Involved LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit Youth;
    - (C) in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity; or
    - (D) in the National Science Foundation—
      - (i) the Office of Equity and Civil Rights;
      - (ii) the Advancing Informal STEM Learning Program; or
      - (iii) the Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate;
  - (2) to implement, administer, apply, enforce, or carry out—
    - (A) Executive Order 13985 (5 U.S.C. 601 note; relating to advancing racial equity and support for undeserved communities through the Federal Government), as amended before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act;
    - (B) Executive Order 14091 (88 Fed. Reg. 10825; relating to further advancing racial equity and support for undeserved communities through the Federal Government), as amended before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act;
    - (C) Executive Order 14035 (42 U.S.C. 2000e note; relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the Federal workforce), as amended before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act; or
    - (D) the People with Disabilities Program of the Federal Aviation Administration; or
  - (3) to conduct any diversity, equity, inclusion, or implicit bias training.

**SA 1664.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ .** None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to allow the Bureau of the Census to include aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States in rendering apportionment determinations in any decennial census.

**SA 1665.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM.**

None of the funds made available by this Act for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program may be obligated or expended.

**SA 1666.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to perform, promote, counsel, or provide referrals for the provision of hormonal treatments or surgical care to affirm a person's chosen identity of his or her sex, if that chosen identity is incongruent with such person's biological sex.

**SA 1667.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR ABORTION.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to perform, promote, counsel, or provide referrals for abortions.

**SA 1668.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year

ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to fund military construction projects related to climate adaptation at the Department of Defense.

**SA 1669.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR MILITARY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN UKRAINE.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to fund permanent, minor, or temporary military construction projects in Ukraine.

**SA 1670.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR MILITARY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN CERTAIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for a military construction project in a foreign country with which the United States maintains a status of forces agreement that has not been subject to a review of legal protections afforded to members of the Armed Forces by the Secretary of Defense during fiscal year 2024, other than those projects related to housing or the provision of medical services for members of the Armed Forces.

**SA 1671.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO CONSTRUCT OR MODIFY FACILITIES TO HOUSE ALIENS ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.**

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to construct or modify facilities to house aliens (as defined in section 101(a)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(3))) on military installations of the United States.

**SA 1672.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR OFFICE OF RESOLUTION MANAGEMENT, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be obligated or expended by the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion of the Department of Veterans Affairs or for any diversity, equity, and inclusion office, position, or activity at the Department.

**SA 1673.** Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Ms. WARREN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . ANTITRUST DIVISION FUNDS.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of any division of this Act—

(1) all fees collected for premerger notification filings under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976 (15 U.S.C. 18a), regardless of the year of collection shall be retained and used for necessary expenses in the “salaries and expenses, Antitrust Division” appropriation, and shall remain available until expended; and

(2) any funds credited to the “salaries and expenses, Antitrust Division” appropriation as offsetting collections during the current fiscal year shall be available for obligation, without regard to the limitations under the heading “salaries and expenses, Antitrust Division”.

**SA 1674.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

Sec. \_\_\_\_ . None of the funds made available by this Act may be used—

(1) to carry out Socially Disadvantaged Applicant funding under Farm Service Agency farm loan programs; or

(2) for Department of Agriculture loan programs that use race as a criteria for eligibility.

**SA 1675.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title III of division D, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . NO FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT ENERGY CONSERVATION STANDARD FOR CONSUMER FURNACES.**

No funds made available under this division may be used by the Secretary of Energy to implement or enforce the final rule of the Department of Energy entitled “Energy Conservation Standards for Consumer Furnaces” (88 Fed. Reg. 87502 (December 18, 2023)).

**SA 1676.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . CIVIL PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO DISCLOSE AGRICULTURAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT.**

Section 3(b) of the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 3502(b)) is amended by striking “shall not exceed” and inserting “shall be not less than”.

**SA 1677.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title III of division D, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . NO FUNDS TO FINALIZE A RULE RELATING TO DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMERS.**

No funds made available under this division may be used by the Secretary of Energy to finalize the proposed rule of the Department of Energy entitled “Energy Conservation Standards for Distribution Transformers” (88 Fed. Reg. 1722 (January 11, 2023)).

**SA 1678.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

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

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . EXCLUSION OF PROPERTY AND FACILITIES LOCATED ON PRIME FARMLAND FROM CERTAIN CREDITS RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION AND INVESTMENT.**

(a) EXCLUSION OF PROPERTY PLACED IN SERVICE ON PRIME FARMLAND FROM RESIDENTIAL CLEAN ENERGY CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 25D(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(9) EXCLUSION OF PRIME FARMLAND.—“(A) IN GENERAL.—Expenditures which are properly allocable to property placed in service on prime farmland shall not be taken into account for purposes of this section.

“(B) PRIME FARMLAND DEFINED.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘prime farmland’ means land determined by the Secretary of Agriculture to be prime farm-

land within the meaning of part 657.5 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations.”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to property placed in service after the date of the enactment of this section.

(b) EXCLUSION OF FACILITIES LOCATED ON PRIME FARMLAND FROM RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 45(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph: “(14) PRIME FARMLAND EXCLUDED.—The term ‘qualified facility’ shall not include any facility located on prime farmland (as defined in section 25D(e)(9)).”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to facilities placed in service after the date of the enactment of this section.

(c) EXCLUSION OF PROPERTY PLACED IN SERVICE ON PRIME FARMLAND FROM ENERGY CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 48(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting “or any property located on prime farmland (as defined in section 25D(e)(9))” after “any prior taxable year”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to property placed in service after the date of the enactment of this section.

(d) EXCLUSION OF PROPERTY PLACED IN SERVICE ON PRIME FARMLAND FROM CLEAN ELECTRICITY INVESTMENT CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 48E(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) EXCLUSION OF PRIME FARMLAND.—Expenditures which are properly allocable to property placed in service on prime farmland (as defined in section 25D(e)(9)) shall not be taken into account for purposes of this section.”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to qualified investments with respect to any qualified facility or energy storage technology the construction of which begins after the date of the enactment of this section.

(e) EXCLUSION OF FACILITIES LOCATED ON PRIME FARMLAND FROM CLEAN ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 45Y(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(E) PRIME FARMLAND EXCLUDED.—The term ‘qualified facility’ shall not include any facility located on prime farmland (as defined in section 25D(e)(9)).”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to facilities placed in service after the date of the enactment of this section.

**SA 1679.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

**PROHIBITION OF ISSUANCE OF OBLIGATIONS BY THE PRESIDIO TRUST**

SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_ . Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Presidio Trust may not issue obligations to the Secretary of the Treasury under this Act.

**SA 1680.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in any division of this Act may be used to list on the New York Stock Exchange any Natural Asset Companies.

**SA 1681.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to carry out the proposed rule of the Bureau of Land Management entitled "Conservation and Landscape Health" (88 Fed. Reg. 19583 (April 3, 2023)).

**SA 1682.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to carry out the Grand Staircase-Escalante Draft National Monument Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the Bureau of Land Management and dated August 2023.

**SA 1683.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in any division of this Act may be used to carry out the management plan prepared by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service entitled "Bears Ears National Monument Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement" and dated September 2022.

**SA 1684.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year

ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title V of division D, insert the following:

LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS

SEC. 5 \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to carry out the final rule of the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency entitled "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'" (88 Fed. Reg. 3004 (January 18, 2023)).

**SA 1685.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division E, insert the following:

PROHIBITION ON USE OF USE OF FUNDS TO FINALIZE AND IMPLEMENT CERTAIN TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANS IN THE STATE OF UTAH

SEC. 4 \_\_\_\_\_. (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—The term "applicable period" means the period that begins on the date of enactment of this Act and ends on the date on which the Secretary certifies to Congress that each of the R.S. 2477 cases has been adjudicated.

(2) COVERED TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AREA.—The term "covered travel management area" means any of the following travel management areas in the State of Utah:

(A) The Henry Mountains and Fremont Gorge Travel Management Area.

(B) The Dinosaur (North) Travel Management Area.

(C) The Book Cliffs Travel Management Area (Vernal Field Office).

(D) The Nine Mile Canyon Travel Management Area (Vernal Field Office).

(E) The San Rafael Swell Travel Management Area.

(F) The Nine Mile Canyon Travel Management Area (Price Field Office).

(G) The Book Cliffs Travel Management Area (Moab Field Office).

(H) The Dolores River Travel Management Area.

(I) The Trail Canyon Travel Management Area.

(J) The Paunsaugunt Travel Management Area.

(3) R.S. 2477 CASE.—The term "R.S. 2477 case" means each of—

(A) Beaver County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-423-CW);

(B) Box Elder County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 1:12-cv-105-DB);

(C) Carbon County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-427-DB);

(D) Daggett County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-447-RJS);

(E) Duchesne County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-425-CW);

(F) Emery County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-429-CW);

(G) Garfield County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-478-TC);

(H) Grand County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-466-DN);

(I) Iron County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-472-BSJ);

(J) Juab County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-462-DB);

(K) Kane County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-1073-CW) (consolidated with Case No. 2:11-cv-1031-CW; Case No. 2:12-cv-476-CW).

(L) Millard County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-451-DB);

(M) Piute County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-428-CW);

(N) Rich County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-424-DN);

(O) San Juan County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-467-DAK);

(P) Sanpete County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-430-DB);

(Q) Sevier County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-452-DN);

(R) Tooele County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-477-CW);

(S) Uintah County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-461-DAK);

(T) Utah County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-426-CW);

(U) Washington County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-471-RJS);

and

(V) Wayne County and State of Utah v. United States (Case No. 2:12-cv-434-DN).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(b) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS BY THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO FINALIZE AND IMPLEMENT CERTAIN TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANS.—During the applicable period, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may not obligate or expend Federal funds—

(1) to finalize or implement, with respect to land within the boundary of the State of Utah, a new travel management plan for a covered travel management area; or

(2) to implement, with respect to land within the boundary of the State of Utah—

(A) the Indian Creek (Canyon Rims) Travel Management Plan;

(B) the San Rafael Desert Travel Management Plan; or

(C) the Labyrinth/Gemini Bridges Travel Management Plan.

**SA 1686.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of section 101 of division G, add the following:

(f) LIMITATION ON USE OF CHC FUNDS.—None of the funds made available pursuant to the amendment made by subsection (a) may be used by community health centers to promote or provide referrals for abortion services or to promote or provide hormonal treatments or surgical care to affirm an individual's chosen identity of his or her sex, if that chosen identity is incongruent with such individual's biological sex.

**SA 1687.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be made available to support, directly or indirectly, the Wuhan Institute of Virology, or any laboratory owned or controlled by the governments of

the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, or the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**SA 1688.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds appropriated by division A, B, C, D, E, F, or G shall be obligated to any entity that financially supports, promotes, or hosts any obscene activities, including drag shows for children, BDSM, kink, or pedophilic practices.

**SA 1689.** Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish, implement, or enforce—

(1) the modifications made by the Food and Drug Administration on January 3, 2023, to the risk evaluation and mitigation strategy under section 505-1 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355-1), or any provision of a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy under such section 505-1 for mifepristone that is substantially similar to any such modifications; or

(2) any non-enforcement or enforcement discretion policy for any provision of a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy under such section 505-1 for mifepristone.

**SA 1690.** Mr. CORNYN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. The payment rate for livestock indemnity payments described in section 1501(b)(2) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081(b)(2)) shall be 90 percent in the case of losses due to wildfires occurring in the States of Texas and Oklahoma in calendar year 2024.

**AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET**

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I have seven 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 Sen-

ate, 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, March 7, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

**COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 9:40 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS**

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 11 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, March 7, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a joint hearing.

**PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR**

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Devon Gorbey, Wasem Gawish, Max Katz, Cynthia Bailey, Cliff Ho, Will Murray, Jon Yap, who are all fellows in my office, be granted privileges to the floor until January 2, 2025.

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

**ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024**

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 8:20 p.m. today and proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the joint session of Congress provided under the provisions of H. Con. Res. 93; that upon dissolution of the joint session, the Senate adjourn until 10 a.m. on Friday, March 8; 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 resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 4366; further, that the cloture motion with respect to the House Message ripen at 12 noon.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. So we will gather in the Senate Chamber at 8:20 p.m. this evening to proceed as a body to the House for the State of the Union.

Senators should expect a live quorum tomorrow morning at approximately 10 a.m. Let me repeat that: Senators should expect a live quorum tomorrow morning at approximately 10 a.m.

**RECESS**

Mr. SCHUMER. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:35 p.m., recessed until 8:20 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. OSSOFF).

**JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives to receive a message from the President of the United States.

Thereupon, the Senate, preceded by the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Kelly Fado; the Secretary of the Senate, Sonceria Ann Berry; and the Vice President of the United States, KAMALA HARRIS, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by the President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden.

(The address delivered by the President of the United States to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

**ADJOURNMENT UNTIL FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024, AT 10 A.M.**

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 10:59 p.m., the Senate adjourned until Friday, March 8, 2024, at 10 a.m.

**CONFIRMATIONS**

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 7, 2024:

**NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD**

LINDA A. PUCHALA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2024.

LINDA A. PUCHALA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2027.

DEIRDRE HAMILTON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2025.

LOREN E. SWEATT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2023.

LOREN E. SWEATT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2026.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

FARA DAMELIN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

REBECCA KELLY SLAUGHTER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR THE TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2022.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

DOUGLAS DZIAK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 26, 2024.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

ANDREW N. FERGUSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2016.

ANDREW N. FERGUSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR THE TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2023.

MELISSA HOLYOAK, OF UTAH, TO BE A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2018.

THE JUDICIARY

ADRIENNE JENNINGS NOTI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

KELLY HARRISON RANKIN, OF WYOMING, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING.