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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the Heavens proclaim Your glory, and the skies display Your craftsmanship. Shine Your light on our path as we work today.

Lord, You have led America through troubled times in the past. Be now for us a source of life, light, and liberty.

Give wisdom to our Senators. May they follow Your light, trust in Your might, and find strength for life's fights. Teach them what they should think, say, and do, so they will not stumble along the way. Replace doubt with faith, fear with courage, and despair with hope.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 19, 2024.

To the Senate:

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

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

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Nicole G. Berner, of Maryland, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ISRAEL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would like to begin today by addressing the reprehensible and dangerous comments made yesterday by former President Trump. The former President's comments were utterly disgusting and a textbook example of the kind of anti-Semitism facing Jews, pushing the dangerous anti-Semitism trope of dual loyalty. To say you hate Israel or your religion because you have one political view over the other

is sick. It is hateful. It is unadulterated anti-Semitism, and it serves to use Israel as a political wedge, further damaging the bonds between the United States and Israel.

We have always tried—I have always tried through the years—to keep everything we do on Israel bipartisan. And to use it for partisan purposes hurts Israel, hurts America, and displays how low Donald Trump would go.

And nobody who breaks bread with anti-Semites like Nick Fuentes and who called White supremacists in Charlottesville "very good people" or who, as was recently reported, said, disgustingly, that Hitler did some good things has any right—any right—to lecture Jewish Americans about their personal political beliefs.

I condemn the former President's irresponsible comments and urge others from both sides—both sides—to do the same.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, now on approps, Congress has less than a week to finish the job of fully funding the government for the remainder of the fiscal year. We all know it has been a difficult, drawn-out appropriations process for everyone in Congress. Appropriators in both Chambers, their staff, my staff, and I have kept at this for months.

But today we have good news. Earlier this morning, I announced that negotiators from both parties reached an agreement last night on the final six appropriations bills. We now have a bipartisan agreement for Defense, Financial Services, Homeland Security, Labor-HHS-Education, the legislative branch, and State and Foreign Operations.

The Senate and House appropriators are now working swiftly to turn this agreement into legislative text as soon as possible so Members can review, finalize, and ultimately take a vote in the coming days. Once the House sends us a funding package, I will put it on the floor of the Senate without delay.

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



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Now, it is a very good sign that we begin the week by announcing this agreement, but I want to be clear, there is a lot of work to do in the coming days. If both parties proceed in the same manner we did 2 weeks ago—quickly, constructively, and without unnecessary partisan dithering—then I am hopeful we can finish the appropriations process without causing a lapse in government services.

We haven't had a government shutdown since 2019. There is no good reason for us to have one this week now that we are getting very close to finishing the job.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on Ukraine, it is not an exaggeration to say that right now—right now—the survival of the Ukrainian people, the fate of American leadership in the world, and the odds of victory for Vladimir Putin depend a lot on what Speaker MIKE JOHNSON does in the near future. Any moment he wants, Speaker JOHNSON has the power to put on the floor of the House a bipartisan national security package that passed the Senate over a month ago with 70 votes.

This supplemental package will provide Ukraine precisely with what they are sorely lacking: military equipment, ammunitions, intelligence support, advanced weaponry, and more. Every day that the supplemental sits idly in the House is another day more Ukrainian troops are killed on the battlefield because they lack the basic tools to defend their country. And sadly, because the House has not acted, the situation is now very dire in Ukraine.

Speaking in Germany earlier today, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin warned that Ukraine's survival is now in grave danger. Russia is now making three times as much artillery and munitions as the United States and Europe. Making matters worse, Ukraine is now also beginning to run out of soldiers. Without more U.S. support, one European official predicted last week that "this is not a question of years, this is a question of weeks and months."

Leader McCONNELL and I—in broad, bipartisan support—got the supplemental passed here. Leader JOHNSON should do the same. The clock is ticking for Congress to act. The eyes of the whole world are on the House. Our allies and adversaries alike are waiting to see what Speaker JOHNSON is going to do about the supplemental. And the answer is very simple: Speaker JOHNSON, put the supplemental on the floor of the House for a vote. I guarantee that if Members have a chance to vote on this bill, it will pass with the same kind of bipartisan support we saw in the Senate.

I have urged the Speaker repeatedly that he must do the right thing and stand up to Putin. This is a legacy-defining choice for the Speaker and potentially a history-altering decision. The Speaker can either stand up to defend democracy or he can cast his lot

with Donald Trump and MAGA extremism who are practically rooting for Putin to win.

JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

Mr. President, on forum shopping, last year I came to the floor a number of times to speak about a grave problem in our Federal judiciary known as judge shopping, where hard-right litigants bring cases before sympathetic judges in order to push their radical agenda.

Last summer, I led a number of my Senate colleagues in writing to the Judicial Conference, asking that they recommend policy reforms to better ensure impartiality and basic fairness. I am very pleased that last week, the Judicial Conference responded to our concerns by announcing a new policy to assign civil cases that have statewide or national implications to judges at random across a district instead of going to a predictable single judge in a single division.

These reforms would prevent absurd situations like the one we saw last year in the Northern District of Texas, where one extremist judge was handpicked by the hard right to revoke FDA approval of mifepristone nationwide.

If you care at all about impartial courts, last week's announcement was good news and probably came across as just common sense. So it was quite striking and, frankly, deeply troubling to see the Republican leader come down to the floor last week and excoriate the Judicial Conference's announcement. The Republican leader accused the Conference of "taking the bait" of partisan Democrats, as if randomly assigning judges to cases is inherently partisan. The Republican leader seems to want to see judges be handpicked, when we know their views already, to make decisions. That flies in the face of justice.

He claimed that it is not the place of Senators to weigh in on how the courts administer themselves. Well, Congress created the Judicial Conference a century ago precisely to recommend policy updates like this.

We all know, of course, what the deal is here: The Republican leader is fuming because these recommendations would make it harder for hard-right partisans to hijack our courts for their purposes. Leader McCONNELL is not even pretending to hide his partisan motivations in this case, and that is deeply damaging to the trust of our courts. I would encourage the Republican leader to focus more on finding ways to restore trust in the judiciary than defending an obviously abusive practice that most Americans would oppose.

I believe that Congress—Congress—has a duty to conduct oversight of the Federal judiciary. We will keep investigating abuses within our court system going forward.

NOMINATION OF NICOLE G. BERNER

Mr. President, on nominations, finally, today, the Senate will confirm

another exceptional judge to the Federal bench—Nicole Berner to serve as a circuit court judge for the Fourth Circuit.

Ms. Berner is an accomplished labor lawyer with over 17 years of experience fighting for working people as general counsel at the SEIU—one of the largest unions in the country. Once confirmed, Ms. Berner will also make history as the first openly LGBTQ person to serve on the Fourth Circuit. Ms. Berner will bring much needed professional diversity to the courts and personal diversity to assure every American that they have representation in our judiciary.

After Ms. Berner's confirmation, the Senate Democratic majority will have confirmed over 180—over 180—highly qualified, diverse judges to the Federal bench. These are judges outside the status quo—people of color, women, judges with diverse professional backgrounds who are making the courts better reflect the people they serve. In fact, last week, I am proud that the Senate confirmed the 100th Black woman to serve a lifetime Federal judgeship in the history of the United States.

Senate Democrats will continue working with President Biden to confirm more judges and bring more balance to the courts in the weeks and months ahead.

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 executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this week, the Senate faces one more test to complete its annual appropriations process, and the stakes really couldn't be higher for Americans' security at home and abroad.

The work we have outstanding amounts to nearly 70 percent—70 percent—of the discretionary budget. Once again, I am grateful to our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for their commitment to regular order. I am especially grateful to Senator COLLINS for fighting to advance Republican priorities throughout the process, particularly in the Defense appropriations bill.

Predictable annual allocations are essential to meeting national defense responsibilities. They allow for effective investments in modernizing our forces, developing new, cutting-edge capabilities, and expanding the industrial capacity that will drive long-term strategic competition. Needless to say, investments like these are especially critical right now as the gulf between

the threats we face and the Biden administration's willingness to address them seems to be growing wider. President Biden has just turned in his fourth straight budget request that would cut defense funding after inflation. So the work before us is gravely necessary, and I am encouraged that we are beginning this week with an agreement in hand to actually complete the process.

Congress has secured a path forward to fund the Department of Homeland Security, which will allow us to complete the fiscal year 2024 appropriations process in the coming days. As always, making headway depends on serious cooperation, and I am grateful to our appropriators and negotiators for their commitment to working in good faith. Providing for the common defense is among our most basic constitutional responsibilities, and we need to be honest with ourselves: Growing threats and increasing military requirements make fulfilling this responsibility even more critical.

The legislation in front of us will not be Congress's last word, but it represents an important down payment, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to complete the annual appropriations process very, very soon.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Now, Mr. President, on another matter, over the weekend, Putin claimed electoral victory in a display of his regime's disdain for the Russian people. With a fresh 6-year term in office, he is on track to pass Joseph Stalin as the longest ruling despot in modern Russian history.

For the past 2 years, Putin has sacrificed tens of thousands of its countrymen on the altar of an obscene neo-Soviet fantasy of Stalinist empire building. The human cost of Russia's war of aggression—to Russians and Ukrainians alike—is truly tragic, but this weekend's sham election came at a particularly critical moment in this conflict, and the Kremlin is showing its cards.

Former Russian President Medvedev laid out exactly how Putin intends for his lawless conquest to end. Here is what he said:

[The] entire territory [of Ukraine] is the territory of the Russian Federation.

As he sees it, Ukraine's "complete and unconditional surrender," full "de-militarization," and reparations to Russia would help forge a "benevolent consensus" on peace.

This is from a close ally of Vladimir Putin—the autocrat who said that "negotiating with Ukraine just because it's running out of ammunition" was "ridiculous."

Russia has been showing us its intentions for over 2 years now, but for anyone who still struggles to see what is going on here, the words of Russia's leaders leave no room for doubt.

As I said before, Putin and his allies are emboldened precisely because the West is hesitating—because America is hesitating. They are spelling out their true intentions because they sense that

we might not have the resolve to actually resist them.

Here is the truth: Russia is playing for keeps. It is set on subjugating a sovereign democracy—whole hog.

There is every reason to believe this war ends with a negotiated outcome—most wars do—but it is absurd and self-defeating to insist on negotiations without preparing Ukraine to operate from a position of strength. Whether or when Putin ever decides to turn from his bid for total conquest to the negotiating table, it will be lethal Western assistance that determines what comes next.

That is why what Congress does next will influence the eventual outcome of this conflict. What we do will determine whether an administration that wants to facilitate negotiations has the leverage to produce terms favorable to America and our allies. Our next move will either reaffirm America's global influence or kneecap—kneecap—both Washington and Kyiv.

Anyone who thinks starving partners of support is good diplomacy or politics needs only to look at the Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan. If Congress does its job, it will be American weapons in Ukrainian hands—and stronger forces and defense industrial capacity here at home—that determine what conclusions the world draws from the first major land war in Europe since 1945—whether or not authoritarians conclude they can continue to redraw maps by force; whether or not America's top strategic competitor concludes that we are not prepared to defend our interests or equip our friends to defend ourselves; and whether or not the next Commander in Chief inherits an unfixable quagmire.

Every day that the national security supplemental spends as a Senate-passed bill and not a law is a day that America's adversaries smile. The decisions before Congress, both in annual appropriations as well as in the supplemental, are about more than Ukraine or Israel; they are about whether America has the will to defend our interests and uphold our influence.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise again today to discuss an issue that I have been working on for more than 20 years: the ongoing uncertainty and plight facing America's Dreamers.

It was a little over 20 years ago when my office in Chicago got a telephone call. There was a girl graduating from high school in Chicago, and she had a problem. The good news was she was a musical prodigy; she played the piano, and she was extraordinary. The bad news was she was undocumented.

She had been brought to the United States at the age of 2. Her parents had brought her originally from Korea through Brazil to Chicago. Her father's goal in life was to become a minister of a church and preach the gospel, and she used to travel with him to these

churches and pound away at the piano while he was practicing his sermons. Over the years, she enlisted in a program called the Merit music program and developed her piano skills to an extraordinary level.

All of her teachers said to her—Tereza Lee was her name—you have got to go to music school. Juilliard, Manhattan Conservatory—you qualify for all of them.

So she sat down to fill out the application and came to the space that said her nationality and citizenship. She didn't know what to put there, so one of her friends called our office, figuring Senator DURBIN would know the answer. Well, we found the answer, and it was terrible. Because she was an undocumented person in the United States and had been here since the age of 2, her recourse under the law was and still is to leave the United States for 10 years and petition to come back in. She was 18 years old. Her prospect was ridiculous.

As a result of that casework, I decided to introduce a bill called the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act basically said, if you came to the United States under the age of 18, grew up in this country, and had no problems with the law, you should have a path to citizenship. It was that basic. Well, as one can guess, we tried to pass that bill many times. It has passed on the floor of the Senate a couple of times, but never have we been able to get both the Senate and the House together on this issue.

I continue to come to the floor to talk about it because there is a new wrinkle. It seems that one of my former Senate colleagues became President of the United States, Barack Obama. He had cosponsored the DREAM Act, and I appealed to him, along with Senator Richard Lugar, a Republican of Indiana, to create by Executive order some program that could protect these young people. He created DACA. DACA, at one point, had almost 800,000 young people in America protected from deportation as they renewed every 2 years their status with DACA so they could go to school; they could have a life; and maybe, someday, at some future time, actually become citizens of the United States.

I thought the best way to describe this issue to people—because it is still in controversy and still tied up in the courts as to whether DACA will have a future—was to share stories of the DACA recipients and who they are. I do that again today. This is the 141st DACA recipient Dreamer about whom I have told the story here on the floor of the Senate.

This young man's name is Edon Molla. He came to the United States with his family when he was 2 years old, fleeing the war in Kosovo. He excelled in the United States. He was the salutatorian of his high school class; and he helped to lead his high school basketball team to three undefeated seasons, three State titles, and two national championships.

His story goes on from there. He was selected for the all-State team and played Division I basketball at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, NY. In addition to his basketball career, Edon excelled in the classroom and graduated from college with honors.

After college, multiple teams approached him about playing professional basketball in Europe. Unfortunately, he was forced to decline all of these offers because of his immigration status, but he didn't let it discourage him. He switched paths and started to pursue a new career in the music industry. With DACA, Edon has become a renowned professional musician. He has worked with successful artists like Roberta Flack, released an album, and performed at a music festival headlined by major international stars.

In addition to his successful music and basketball careers, Edon has made time to give back to his community. He has led a basketball clinic for children with cancer, taught music lessons to kids with special needs, and performed at multiple charity concerts. Edon is now starting a master's in business administration at Cornell University. He plans to pursue his master's degree as he continues his musical career.

DACA has allowed Edon to pursue his dreams for the time being, but DACA was also intended to be a temporary solution. Since President Obama established the program, Republicans have waged a relentless campaign—many of them—to overturn DACA and deport these Dreamers back to the countries they may not even remember. Now this program is hanging by a thread in the courts, and DACA recipients like Edon are being forced to live in fear and uncertainty every single day.

Last September, a Federal judge in Texas declared the DACA Program illegal. Though the decision left in place protections for current DACA recipients—and there are almost 600,000 of them—while an appeal is pending, they live in constant fear that the next court decision will upend their lives.

Court decisions have also prevented any new Dreamers from registering for the program. This means that, without congressional action—if we do nothing, if we continue to do nothing—hundreds of thousands of Dreamers who are ready to serve in their communities across the country may never have that opportunity.

Studies have estimated that, if DACA were to end, we would lose 1,000 U.S. jobs every day for the next 2 years. Business owners in my State often tell me that they need more workers. So the question I ask my colleagues today and ask America: Can we afford to lose 1,000 jobs a day from young people who grow up here, went to school here, stood up in the classroom every morning and pledged allegiance to that flag, believing it was their flag and their future? I think not.

When he was President, Donald Trump tried to end the DACA Pro-

gram. The first time I ever met Donald Trump was the day he was inaugurated as President. There was a luncheon, and I was invited to it. I went up to him, face-to-face in conversation personally, and I said: I want to tell you something. My priority is to cover these Dreamers, these DACA recipients, and give them a chance in America.

He leaned over and said: Don't worry. We are going to take care of those kids.

Well, he took care of them for sure. He tried to end the program altogether, with no protection for these young people. And, as a candidate, he has threatened to round up and deport undocumented immigrants, like this young man whom I just described.

We can no longer stand idly by while extremist judges and politicians toy with the future of these young people who have never known life in this country formally as legal citizens. We in Congress should protect Dreamers like Edon right now. I urge my colleagues to reach out to Dreamers in their States to learn more about these talented young people.

I have given these speeches on the floor. As I said, this is the 141st young person I have described. I have yet to have a disappointment where they came back and said: Oh, Senator, that young man, that young woman you just described got on the other side of the law and did something terrible.

It has never happened. These young people are good people. They deserve as much chance as our children to become part of this Nation's future.

They are business owners, teachers, parents, athletes, scientists, nurses, healthcare workers, musicians, and so much more. Would America be better if they were gone? I think not. It is clear that they are an important part of our future and an important part of our American life.

It is time to get to work and pass the Dream Act once and for all. It is the right thing to do, and it is long overdue.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDING

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Congress is failing disaster survivors across the country right now. Whether in Lahaina or in Burlington, survivors are not getting the full support of the Federal Government because Congress has yet to provide funding for long-term disaster recovery needs. That is in spite of the fact that, every passing month, more and more communities are being struck by extreme weather and need help in the rebuilding process.

It was more than 4 months ago that President Biden requested \$2.8 billion for the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, or CDBG-DR.

CDBG-DR funding is a lifeline for families and businesses that are trying to recover from disasters, helping them

to get back on their feet faster and more fully. Yet the spending package that Congress passed 2 weeks ago did not include a dime in new funding for CDBG-DR, despite the efforts of myself and my colleagues—including the Presiding Officer—on both sides of the aisle from disaster-affected States.

Supporting disaster survivors has never been and should never be a partisan issue, nor can it be buried at the bottom of a long list of Federal priorities. It is one of our most core responsibilities, as the Federal Government, to show up for Americans in their hour of need, when the State and local governments are overwhelmed. We have a chance to do that by including CDBG-DR funding in the appropriations package that we will be voting on later this week.

People on Maui and in every other disaster-struck community are counting on us for support, and it can't be that the Federal Government leaves them high and dry, midway through the process of putting their lives back together, because we couldn't get some numbers to add up. That is unacceptable, and we need to pass this funding now.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, in a place where bipartisanship is harder to find than it is to talk about, there is a glimmer of hope this week. In the appropriations package that passed 2 weeks ago, there was a rare product of quiet, good-faith, bipartisan efforts: a record amount of funding for housing for Native communities across the country.

Working together, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and the House included \$1.3 billion for Native housing as part of the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations bill. That is an increase of a little more than \$300 million.

Tribal communities, as a direct consequence of perennial underfunding and neglect by the Federal Government, experience some of the highest poverty rates and worst living conditions in the Nation. They are 5 times as likely to live in homes without plumbing, 4 times more likely to not have basic appliances, such as sink or stove or a refrigerator, and 1,200 times likelier to experience issues with heating—1,200 times likelier to experience issues with heating.

So for them, the historic funding is a very, very big deal. It means that they can build more affordable housing, provide rental assistance, and get electricity and plumbing into their homes.

The bill also includes a significant increase for funding for Tribal transportation, which will help to repair roads on Tribal lands that are in dire shape and improve transit across reservation land for people trying to get to work or to school or to the grocery store. This funding builds on the historic investments we have made in Tribal transportation infrastructure

over the past few years with the infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act. It is about 175 million new dollars for Tribal transportations.

All of this funding came to be because colleagues on both sides of the aisle, in both Chambers, said: Whatever other differences we may have, we agree that this is important and urgent and worth fighting for.

We got to work, and we actually did it.

Bipartisan victories do not grab the headlines in this town. They don't lead cable news or get tons of engagement on Twitter because there isn't a villain to ridicule or a controversy to editorialize about.

But the Federal Government has a trust responsibility to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, which we have long fallen short of. For generations, Native communities were considered an afterthought, especially in the spending process.

Today, through steps like these, bit by bit, we are saying: No more.

So I want to thank everyone who worked for months quietly behind the scenes to get this done. That includes Members and staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Housing, as well as the Committee on Indian Affairs, both of which I chair.

I especially want to thank my ranking member, CINDY HYDE-SMITH, and my vice chair, LISA MURKOWSKI, for their continued partnership on this and other Native issues. I want to thank the many committee members who advocated for this funding on behalf of Native communities in their home States.

I am also grateful to our counterparts in the House: Representative COLE, the chairman of the Rules Committee and the chairman of the T-HUD Subcommittee; and Representative QUIGLEY, who fought to include this funding, despite difficult fiscal constraints.

As always, none of that is ever possible without the incredible staff on these committees who patiently and painstakingly turned commitments and deals made at the member level into real dollars and cents enshrined in Federal law.

Over the past few years, as a nation, we have begun to reckon with and address historic injustices against marginalized communities. It is important, it is necessary, and it is long overdue. But, somehow, a lot of that work has glossed over America's first injustice—the injustice toward Native people.

It is a brutal history spanning centuries and generations—forcibly removing Native people from their homelands, pushing children into boarding schools, robbing ancestral remains and cultural items. The impacts of the colonization and forced assimilation are being felt to this day.

We are not going to reverse hundreds of years of injustice in one legislative session, but it can't be that remedying

these injuries and those injustices—and finally doing right by Native people—takes another few centuries. It needs to start happening now. That requires all of us learning and really understanding the long and painful history. It means addressing the many ways that Native culture has been repeatedly robbed and harmed, which is something that the Committee on Indian Affairs, Federal Agencies, and others are working on with things like the repatriation of cultural remains and language revitalization.

Above all, it means supporting the everyday material needs of Native people. They need electricity. They need running water. They need reliable heating in their homes. They need safe roads and accessible transit. All of this work has to happen together.

The good news is this: Here in Congress, people in both parties recognize the urgency of issues affecting Native communities and are committed to prioritizing them. Even if that doesn't make for a splashy headline, it is no small thing for the millions of Native people across the country who are depending on us.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, tomorrow, the Biden administration's Environmental Protection Agency will release new tailpipe emission standards formulated to push electric vehicles on the American people. The administration says that because of EVs "the future of American transportation is on track to be cleaner, safer, more affordable, and more reliable than ever before." And Vice President HARRIS has said that our Nation's embrace of electric vehicles will determine "the health of our communities, the strength of our economy, and the sustainability of our planet."

The way the administration and their activist friends paint EVs, you would think these cars are a time-tested environmental blessing with transportation, economic, and community benefits to boot. But behind the curtain of this climate crusade there is little supportive evidence and plenty of problems—problems the administration has tried to hide.

So what is the truth of the matter? The truth is that electric vehicles are not a magic bullet for the environment. They are underdeveloped and they pose safety risks and they create more problems than they solve, both at home and abroad.

So let's talk science. Climate activists say electric vehicles are bringing on a Green Revolution, but the facts—the facts—do not support that claim. The President said in a recent speech that "when I got elected President . . . we vowed to enact the most ambitious climate and environmental justice campaign in American history."

That campaign, according to President Biden, includes "moving to all-

electric vehicles in the future." And Vice President HARRIS has styled the push for electric vehicles as "an approach that is about clean energy and being smart around a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions."

When the administration makes these inflated claims about electric vehicles, they are only looking at what comes out of the exhaust pipe, but there is much more to the life of an electric vehicle. We will start at the beginning. The production of electric vehicle batteries requires a massive amount of electricity, usually produced by generators that burn fossil fuels. The manufacturing of EVs produces at least 60 percent more carbon emissions than that of gas-powered cars.

EVs, they start their lives with carbon debt. But even after they are on the road, EVs have their problems. They weigh significantly more than gas-powered cars because of those heavy batteries. This extra weight, it wears down an EV's tires as it drives. One study compared an electric car to a hybrid car and found that the electric one emitted about a quarter more particulate matter because of tire wear. Driving the electric car heightened overall emissions compared to a hybrid.

The climate activists pushing EVs aren't just ignoring this science; they are actually trying to hide it. When the California Air Resources Board analyzed the facts of the State's proposed ban on gas-powered cars over the next decade, it assumed both EVs and gas-powered cars have the same tire wear. The agency said it would be "speculative" to assume that electric cars will continue being heavier than gas cars. If that sentence was confusing, well, it is because it doesn't make sense.

Public policy should reflect reality, not the baseless future dream of featherweight electric cars. What is speculative, obviously, is assuming that the weight of EVs will change over the next decade, but there is no evidence to support that claim.

Here is another instance of sham science: Under an Energy Department rule, automakers were encouraged to greatly overestimate the fuel efficiency of electric vehicles. By fudging the numbers, carmakers claimed that EVs had absurdly high fuel efficiencies, up to 430 miles per gallon. Well, then—the government granted subsidies to those automakers for supposedly meeting those high efficiency standards. It was a fake science racket designed to juice the EV industry.

Well, how did they fudge the numbers? The Energy Department included what they called a fuel content factor in their fuel efficiency equations, which multiplied the efficiency rates for EVs by 6.67. According to the rule, they chose that specific multiplier, "for simplicity and ease of use." In part, the rule reads that "it is included to reward electric vehicles' benefits to the Nation relative to petroleum-fueled vehicles."

Well, people found out about that multiplier and how arbitrary that it was, and they pushed back. So now, in response, the Energy Department itself admitted that this multiplier “lacks legal support” and has “no basis”—“no basis.” They finally buckled, and they eliminated that step.

So why did it take so long? Activism is getting in the way of truth when it comes to electric vehicles. Suppressing the facts won’t help us make the most environmentally sensible choices. Administration activists aren’t just wrong about the environmental benefits of electric vehicles; they are also wrong about their performance. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg claimed that “we see the superiority of [EVs] in terms of performance, not just in terms of climate.”

And the Department of Transportation says “EVs provide lower operating costs, reduced maintenance needs, and improved performance.” But the truth is that electric vehicles are often undeveloped, inefficient, and they are unsafe.

We all heard about EVs malfunctioning this winter. Freezing temperatures and hot temperatures drain batteries and reduce driving range, and they leave stranded drivers helpless. Even in normal weather, EVs have been plagued with glitches. Ford recalled some F-150 Lightning trucks with defects. General Motors told dealers to stop selling the Blazer SUV because of design flaws. A Consumer Reports survey found that new EVs have 79 percent more problems than internal combustion cars.

Why is this administration trying to speed up EV production when they are clearly not ready for prime time?

Electric vehicle charging stations malfunction just as badly as the vehicles. Last year, researchers visited every public fast charger in the San Francisco Bay area—every single one. They found that almost 23 percent of them had “unresponsive or unavailable screens, payment system failures, charge initiation failures, network failures, or broken connectors.”

Auto analytics company J.D. Power found that one in five charging sessions at public stations failed to deliver any charge at all. This problem is more serious than just a glitch. Performance issues create safety issues.

As I mentioned before, EV batteries can weigh thousands of pounds. They make electric vehicles 30 percent heavier, on average, than gas-powered cars. That extra weight makes a lot of difference when one crashes into you going 60 miles per hour.

The University of Nebraska actually tested how EVs performed in a crash against safety guardrails and roadside barriers earlier this year. And what they found was disturbing. Because they are so heavy, electric vehicles crash with up to 50 percent more impact, smashing through and destroying roadside barriers. Our current safety infrastructure can’t stop an EV, and

that is a major problem—especially for other drivers.

The Center for Auto Safety Executive Director Michael Brooks says that “we are likely to see many additional deaths and injuries attributable solely to the added weight of EV batteries.”

These deaths and these injuries also disproportionately affect women and children. A report released last month by the Government Accountability Office found that crash tests across the country—well, they don’t use the accurate female crash test dummies. Some only use male dummies. They don’t even attempt to test car safety on the female body.

This is part of why crashes injure and kill women at higher rates than men. Women are 80 percent more likely to sustain lower leg injuries. And these current crash test dummies don’t even provide data on that type of injury.

Before mandating a rush of electric vehicles on the roads, the Biden administration needs to find a solution to the risks that these cars can pose, especially the risks that they pose to women.

So what happens if you are driving your new EV, crash, and it catches on fire? Would you call the fire department or the highway patrol? Well, if so, you may be out of luck. EVs pose special risks to first responders as well.

Their batteries contain so much energy that any contact with fire can cause them to explode. High-voltage lithium-ion batteries also pose a risk of electric shock to first responders. Firefighters have been caught off guard by electric vehicles that erupt in fire. If cells in an EV battery are damaged, they can experience an uncontrolled increase in temperature and pressure. That volatility can reignite a fire in a battery even after it has been put out.

One fire chief described an EV fire as a “trick candle.” You never know when it will reflare.

We have debunked the claim that EVs are better for our environment. We have debunked the claim that they are technologically superior. But what about the claim that electrifying our vehicle fleet will boost America’s energy independence?

President Biden said this year that “investing aggressively in electric vehicles and battery production now . . . is . . . important for strengthening our long-term economic security.”

The reason he gave is that 75 percent of EV battery manufacturing is done in China. In his words, “For some battery components, critical materials, China controls nearly half the global production.”

President Biden’s logic is severely flawed. If we invest aggressively in electric vehicles now—like he wants to—we will just boost China’s dominance in sourcing and in manufacturing.

China is the world’s largest manufacturer of electric vehicles. A senior research scientist at MIT admitted that when it comes to EVs, “we still are

going to be dependent on China for many, many years.”

The EV industry is effectively run by the Chinese Communist Party. The Biden administration is not only encouraging Americans to support an industry monopolized by the CCP, they are supporting it themselves through Federal rulings.

In December, the Treasury Department released guidance to make it easier for Foreign Entities of Concern to use the clean vehicle tax credit when they route our EV supply chains through China.

One Washington Post article released last year tracked China’s EV operations to another interesting location: Afghanistan. Shortly after his inauguration, President Biden ordered our troops out of Afghanistan, paving the way for a Taliban takeover of the nation’s government.

Well, that got China’s attention. Afghanistan is home to large lithium reserves, one of the minerals essential for EV batteries. With the United States out of the picture, Chinese mining companies have flooded Afghanistan. These companies have developed a symbiotic relationship with the anti-American Taliban leadership, and that relationship continues to grow.

The electric vehicle supply chain fuels our adversaries. At the same time, it fuels human rights violations across the world. These so-called “clean” cars use dirty manufacturing methods.

The Biden administration is sending millions of dollars to the Congo to support cobalt mining for electric vehicle batteries. A few years ago, human rights groups investigated Congo’s mining sector, and they found it full of young children working in hand-dug tunnels that often collapse, burying these kids alive. The massive demand for cobalt only encourages that industry to keep using inhumane and environmentally irresponsible mining methods.

One Congolese mining expert said it best. He asked:

How can you base a green revolution on trashing Congolese environment and exploiting Congolese workers?

This phenomenon stretches across Africa into Asia. In Indonesia, miners use an intense acid-leaching process that sickens the local environment.

One man told reporters that the rivers he used to drink from have turned dark red since the nickel mine added its acid-leaching refinery. Pollution in those rivers has killed rows of coconut trees and schools of fish. Not only are locals deprived of clean water, but many local fishermen have to travel farther to support their livelihoods.

The Biden administration does not acknowledge or address the dark side of their self-proclaimed Green Revolution. They keep it tucked away in Congo and Indonesia, hidden away from their climate soapbox. But it is time for the administration to stop hiding this truth. They have spearheaded a

reckless push toward a future run by electric vehicles.

If they have integrity, they will stop burying evidence and come clean about the electric vehicle record on environment, on safety, and on human rights. And if they have good judgment—well, they will tap the brakes on this climate charade.

Electric vehicles are ridden with problems, as any developing technology is. The problem is not so much electric vehicles as it is this administration's blind insistence on electric vehicle mandates that harm Americans and that harm the environment.

The White House is forcing electric vehicles on our country in a hasty, overzealous political play. And they are spurning the science, the facts, and the reality: Americans don't want the electric vehicle revolution and for good reason.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

ISRAEL

MR. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the situation in the Middle East and the war between Israel and Hamas.

Five months ago, Hamas brutally attacked Israel, killing more than 1,200 people and taking 240 hostages. Hamas militants terrorized the Israeli people, committed unspeakable acts of torture and mutilation against innocent men, women, and children. This tragedy was the single deadliest day in Israel's 75-year history and the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

In the wake of these horrific attacks, the United States has stood by its democratic friend and ally Israel, as it has since the very beginning when Harry Truman stood up as the first world leader to recognize the State of Israel.

I personally traveled with a bipartisan group of my colleagues 2 weeks after the attacks to mourn with the people of Israel and support the defense of Israel, to ensure that they knew the United States was with them.

In my meetings in Israel and with Jewish leaders from Rhode Island, it is clear to me that this attack has had a profound impact on Israelis and Jewish people everywhere. This attack has touched the deepest nerve, reopened the wounds of the past, and left many wondering not how but if Jews will ever be safe from persecution because of who they are.

As I have continued to make clear, Israel can and must defend itself against the military threat from Hamas. Any nation that is attacked in this manner has the inherent right to self-defense.

The United States will continue to support Israel as it works to degrade and defeat Hamas, but I must also say I have deep reservations about how this war is being conducted. I believe good allies, good friends stand together; and we stand with Israel. But great allies, great friends are willing to speak hard

truths and hold each other to the highest standards, especially around the conduct of war and issues of national security.

I want to echo the majority leader, the senior Senator from New York—a truly devoted pro-Israel champion who is spiritually and emotionally connected to Israel unlike very few of us, if any, in this Chamber, who has been a friend to Israeli leaders across the political spectrum, and who is unafraid to speak truth to power.

It is clear to me, now 5 months into this war, that Israel's strategy to defeat Hamas is in peril. While the IDF has made important progress in rooting out Hamas in Gaza, I do not see a clear endgame or metrics for success coming from this Israeli Government. There is no plan for the day after the fighting stops.

We know that more than 30,000 Gazans are dead. The millions of Gazans who have survived have largely been forced to flee south toward Rafah and the crossing there with Egypt. They have little access to food, water, shelter, or medical care. Those remaining in the north are facing dire humanitarian conditions. More than 2 million Gazans are at risk of starvation or famine. Enormous portions of the Gaza Strip have been completely destroyed and left uninhabitable, and the West Bank is teetering on the brink of chaos.

There are regular exchanges of fire in the north with Hezbollah, who are ensconced in Lebanon. This has forced nearly 100,000 Israelis to move from their homes to escape these attacks emanating from Lebanon. Lebanese noncombatants are caught in the cross-fire between IDF forces and Hezbollah. The region stands at the precipice of being engulfed in an all-out war.

Today, as chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the U.S. Senate, as a friend and longtime supporter of the Israeli people, it is my duty to say clearly that this war has veered off course. There must be a fundamental course correction for the national security interests of Israel, America, and our allies and partners throughout the world.

I do not come to this conclusion lightly. There are two factors that we must understand and come to terms with. First, Israel should learn from the United States' hard-earned strategic and tactical lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan. And, second, as Leader SCHUMER courageously argued here on the Senate floor last week, Israel and its allies must acknowledge that Prime Minister Netanyahu's failed policies and desperate pursuit of power created much of the tragic situation we are witnessing today.

There are actual steps Israel can take to address these issues. We should start by recognizing lessons from America's war in Iraq. We, too, suffered a national tragedy on September 11, 2001, and immediately sought to defend ourselves. We launched our campaign

to degrade and defeat al-Qaeda and Afghanistan, and the result of that war showed early military success. But the anguish of 9/11 affected our ability to make clear strategic decisions; and we, despite my opposition, mistakenly invaded another country, Iraq, which had no role in the attacks on that horrific day of September 11. National grief and political fury can cloud the thinking of even the shrewdest military tacticians.

I worry that the mistakes of America's war in Iraq are being made again by Israel in Gaza.

Similar to the power vacuum that the United States created when it dismantled Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 contributed to the extremist violence we see today. The rise of Hamas, a terrorist group whose stated goal is the destruction of Israel and the Israeli people, assumed control of the Gaza Strip. But instead of using that opportunity to build lifelines for the people of Gaza, Hamas built a 500-mile tunnel network to terrorize Israel. Instead of providing education, healthcare, and basic services for Palestinians, Hamas stockpiled and unleashed thousands of rockets against Israel through the course of the years.

Now, in the wake of October 7, Israel's stated goal is to destroy a terror group capable of guerrilla-style warfare in a large urban territory with the aid of a massive underground tunnel system. This mission would be daunting for even the most highly trained and advanced militaries.

As it pursues this goal, Israel should consider lessons from the United States' tactical experiences in Iraq. In particular, the battle of Fallujah in 2004 provides a painful case study in counterinsurgency warfare in an urban environment. After a violent, grinding fight through that city, the United States significantly failed to achieve the objectives of clearing the territory from insurgents. As the Modern War Institute at West Point assessed:

Senior political leaders should not react emotionally in war and direct immediate action against a densely populated urban area when conditions for success are not present.

In contrast, operations in Gaza may be more successful by following the model of the battle of Mosul in 2016 and 2017, where the United States worked with coalition forces in Iraq to wrest Iraq's third largest city back from ISIS militants. And I had the opportunity to visit, on the ground, our forces leading a coalition of Iraq forces against ISIS.

The operation was conducted with patience and precision, and ISIS was successfully eliminated in Mosul. Even then, success was arduous and costly. As the Financial Times characterized it:

The mission to clear the city of jihadi militants was ultimately successful. But the fighting was intense, took three times longer than planned, left 10,000 civilians dead, and killed more coalition soldiers than expected.

In prosecuting its current war, Israel must do a better job of following the

lessons of successful counterterrorism campaigns. At times, Israeli forces have conducted heavy bombing campaigns using weapons with large payloads, rather than more targeted operations that yield more successful, albeit slower, results.

The IDF's willingness to bomb heavily populated areas to pursue Hamas leaders has changed both the perceptions and realities of this war. Protecting the civilian population is a strategic imperative in counterterrorism operations and the law of war. You want to separate the insurgents from the population and gain the trust of the population to continue to successfully conduct your operation against an increasingly isolated terrorist group. But, simply put, Israel's current strategy risks creating more terrorists than it is eliminating. Can you think of a 15-year-old who has lost his youngest sibling, his mother, his father, his grandparents? Where will his rage and fury and profound sadness be directed? That is a question I think we should all contemplate.

The second issue we have to understand is the broken, polarized political environment that badly weakened Israel's national security before October 7. Prime Minister Netanyahu returned to power in 2022, facing charges of corruption and a criminal trial. His narrow political coalition is the most far right, conservative government in Israeli history. He has continued to make clear that he will never support a two-state solution.

In a desperate attempt to stay in power, Netanyahu has emboldened the most far right members of his coalition. He has not only allowed extreme positions to be the stated goal of his administration, he has provided far right members of his coalition with ministries by which they can enact their agendas. His Minister of Finance, Smotrich, has fought his entire career to expand settler control in the West Bank and now has control over restarting payments to the Palestinian Authority. His Minister of National Security, Ben-Gvir, has been convicted on at least eight charges, including supporting a terrorist organization and incitement to racism.

In facing his own criminal charges, Netanyahu worked to significantly weaken the Israeli judicial system for his own benefit. He did this despite hundreds of thousands of Israelis protesting in the streets. And we were there when those protests were going on last February. And he did this over the objection of his Israeli military reservists, who, at that point, said they would refuse to report to duty in protest. And he did this despite warnings from Defense Minister Gallant that the IDF would be weakened as a result.

Adding to this toxic and destabilizing mix was Netanyahu's strategy for dealing with Hamas. For years, he purposely propped up Hamas as a means to ensure that his two-state solution would never come to fruition. As far

back as 2012, Netanyahu told Israeli press that "it was important to keep Hamas strong, as a counterweight to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank." It was not just a counterweight. He knew that having Hamas in power in Gaza meant that a two-state solution would never be possible. This strategy to prop up Hamas also included allowing Hamas to receive suitcases full of cash coming from Qatar and other places. A former Defense Minister for Netanyahu, Avigdor Lieberman, blamed this tactic as one that directly paved the way for the October 7 attacks.

Netanyahu's long, relentless pursuit of political survival and power are now fueling his strategy for war in Gaza—and it strikes me that it is his strategy, not Israel's direction; his future, not Israel's future that is the foremost factor at play.

These factors add up to several hard truths that must be spoken from one ally to another, just as Leader SCHUMER did last week, with courage and principle.

Most importantly, Israel can't use military force alone to reclaim peace and security for its people. Military force is used as a means to a political end. Military force itself will never provide the final answer.

A political solution will take hard bargaining and diplomatic negotiations. Working with the United States, Qatar, Egypt, and other allies and partners, the Israelis must reach a temporary cease-fire that allows for the safe return of hostages, expansion of humanitarian assistance, and capacity to safely deliver assistance to the people of Gaza. The ongoing airdrop campaign and seaport efforts are a step in the right direction, but Israel must do more to ensure that the increase supply of food and other desperately needed supplies can reach the people of Gaza.

There must be a realistic plan for day-after operations in Gaza. There needs to be a return to a framework for a two-state solution, where the State of Israel and a demilitarized Palestinian State exists side by side in peace and security. This plan will require buy-in from all—Israel, the Palestinian people, the world community, Arab neighbors. Israel should not and will not find the long-term security and peace it wants by indefinitely reoccupying the Gaza Strip.

Finally, while it is a decision that will ultimately be made by the Israeli and Palestinian people, like Leader SCHUMER, I believe it is time for new leadership for both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Palestinian President Abbas is almost 20 years into what was supposed to be a 4-year Presidential term, and finding a successor for the Palestinian Authority is long overdue. A new Palestinian leader must recognize that the only path to peace, security, and prosperity is to renounce terror, to work with Israel, to work with regional part-

ners for a path to statehood which is stable and peaceful.

New leadership, as I indicated, also includes Prime Minister Netanyahu. Polling indicates that more than 75 percent of Israelis believe he should step down, and I agree with Leader SCHUMER that Netanyahu represents an obstacle to long-term peace in Israel.

I have long been a friend and supporter of Israel's. I traveled there in the early nineties and have traveled there periodically since. More importantly, the United States has been Israel's closest ally for 75 years.

In 1948, when the Israelis declared their independence, the world was not particularly accepting except here in the United States, where, to his immense credit, President Harry Truman stood up and said that we will recognize and support the State of Israel. That profound bond exists today and, in my view and in my hope, will always exist. We can't have anyone break that bond.

Great allies must hold each other to high standards, share hard truths when needed, and the U.S.-Israeli alliance is no different. So I urge Israel to change course in Gaza immediately, to work with all of us to establish ultimately and enduringly, we hope, a secure and peaceful Israel and the protection of its people, as well as a just, secure, and safe place where all people of that region can live safely.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Kansas.

FARM BILL

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, first day of spring, National Ag Day, a perfect time—a fitting time—to address the Senate on something that I think is really important and something that is frustrating to me and to the people I represent. American agriculture is at a crossroads, a pressure point. Things are really challenging for those who provide our food, fuel, and fiber. There is record-level volatility in the farm economy, and farm income is falling by the most significant amount of all time.

We ought to be providing certainty to those who provide our food. I was troubled to read a report that the Senate Committee on Agriculture—its chair—indicated that there is a level of comfort with scrapping negotiations for a new farm bill and continuing with the outdated, now at least 5-years-old, policies from the past. In that same article, surprisingly, disappointingly, Secretary Vilsack expressed his support for that decision.

Our farmers deserve and, even more importantly, they need better. Agriculture is an incredibly difficult industry, as farmers and ranchers face challenges from weather events, economic shocks, and supply chain shortages. Added to these challenges are the inflationary policies that have raised the prices on farmland and, ultimately, at the grocery store. This includes soaring input costs, which are up nearly

\$100 billion since the last farm bill, which covers interest on loans, live-stock feed, fertilizer, labor, fuel—to name just a few of the things that farmers need to produce that food.

Looking back at 2023, USDA, or the Department of Agriculture, forecasted that America's farmers and ranchers would see farm profitability fall by \$42 billion nationwide, nearly a 25-percent drop compared to 2022.

So during the life of the farm bill, USDA is estimating that profitability will decline by \$42 billion. This is just unsustainable. Farmers can't manage these circumstances. These challenges don't just impact farmers, but, ultimately, they impact American consumers trying to feed their families.

For Kansas, agriculture is our State's largest economic driver, with a total output contribution of \$81 billion into the State's economy and supporting more than 250,000 jobs, which is about 13 percent of our entire State's workforce.

Beyond crops and animal husbandry, Kansas agriculture is at the forefront—forefront—of producing renewable energy, critical research and education, and furthering sustainability and conservation practices throughout Kansas and worldwide.

Kansas is also a leader in animal health science. As part of the animal health corridor, Kansas has the largest concentration of animal health interests in the world. Last year, Manhattan, KS, welcomed the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, or NBAF. This is a state-of-the-art facility that protects and will defend our Nation's farmers and citizens from potentially severe zoonotic and biological diseases.

In addition, Kansas and many places of the country continue to experience weather challenges. In Kansas, there is a wide array of those challenges, but most oppressing is the drought. We need to address drought through mitigation and resiliency.

On Monday of this week, yesterday, I was in Liberal, KS, for the 2024 Ogallala Summit. Ogallala is an aquifer that, in about the western third or western fourth of our State—along with five other States, six other States—is a huge component of the agricultural economy. This event, this conference I attended in Kansas, brought stakeholders from across the High Plains region and beyond to discuss and learn about water management practices. How do we do better in preserving our assets? And how do we conserve and utilize more efficiently that great asset?

Key conservation research and education programs are authorized in the farm bill, including USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, which provides technical assistance and conservation programs, like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

In previous farm bill years, I have led the effort to maximize that program, called CREP, on the Upper Arkansas River Basin to reduce the amount of

groundwater used for irrigation, improve groundwater levels, increase stream flows in the Arkansas River, and protect water quality in our region. The program is working, but we need additional tweaks, changes in the law, which is why I introduced the CREP Improvement Act, which would provide additional flexibility for family farms to better utilize the program.

In Kansas, landowners view access to the Ogallala as their lifeblood and the core of their rural communities and are committed to conserving and replenishing the Ogallala.

These are just a few sections. In fact, throughout the last year or more, we have been working with both Republican and Democrat Members of the Senate, particularly Senator BENNET of Colorado, to figure out what more we do. And we have introduced several pieces of legislation, all with the anticipation that that legislation would be considered at the same time the farm bill was considered and potentially be included in the farm bill.

But the recent announcement by the chair of the committee indicates that we are going to abide by the status quo—no conversations, no additional efforts.

I have been an aggie since I came to Congress, including my days in the House, where I chaired the subcommittee on farm commodity programs, and I have been through numerous farm bills. And they are always hard, and they are always late, and we never get them done easily. But this seems different to me, for the first time saying: What we have is what we get.

There are many provisions that affect agriculture that need to be addressed in a new farm bill, and it is important. I underscore how valuable, how important it is to pass a farm bill in the House and Senate and send it to the President.

We must deliver a farm bill that provides certainty of risk management programs to help farmers and ranchers weather the storm, and we must rework revenue protection programs to provide a critical safety net that works with market challenges and allows farmers, particularly young farmers, to borrow the money to stay in business.

If we fail to pass a farm bill, we are passing up opportunities to grow alternative fuel production through policies that encourage investments in biofuels for aviation, for example. Our global competitors are outspending the United States year after year by billions in agriculture research.

The Senator from Illinois and I have legislation designed to increase the support for agricultural research, which we hope—at least I hoped—would be a part of the farm bill. And we will be left behind in your investments for research if we don't meet the needs of the day.

A farm bill would include investments in education for our land grants and our Agricultural Research Service,

which provides cutting-edge science and tools to allow farmers and ranchers to do more with less and contribute to our national and food security.

A good point, the farm bill is a component of our national security. The farm bill maintains critical authorizations, as well, for reauthorization of global food aid programs. Through these programs, America's farmers and ranchers proudly provide U.S. grown commodities throughout the world as a lifeline to many who are in war-torn regions or recovering from economic or natural disasters. Global hunger, unfortunately, is real and threatens the future of millions of people every day.

I join three others of my Senate colleagues, another Republican and two Democrats, in cochairing the Senate Hunger Caucus. And you just look around the world at Russia's invasion of Ukraine, around the Middle East, Africa, and Haiti, and we see starving people. From a young age, most of us—each of us—were taught that it is our duty to help those in need. So many in Kansas have answered that call time and time again.

A Kansan, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, created Food for Peace. Senator Bob Dole worked to expand our Nation's efforts to provide food for the most vulnerable populations through the Dole-McGovern—or McGovern-Dole—Food for Education Program, and Senator Pat Roberts prioritized these programs in previous farm bills.

Kansans have taken this moral responsibility to heart, and we must do our part by reauthorizing these programs in a farm bill considered this year. The time is now to show leadership—to show leadership for America's farmers and ranchers. Tough decisions are ahead of us. The farm bill is always difficult, but we have always been able to come together and accomplish our goals. We should not walk away from the process. It is a dereliction of duty to the farmers and ranchers of America. I hope that we, as leaders, can get back to the table and produce a farm bill that provides meaningful and real relief for Kansas producers and protects our country from the challenges that we face around the globe.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF NICOLE G. BERNER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Nicole Berner to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

After receiving her B.A., M.P.P., and J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, Ms. Berner clerked for the Hon. Betty Binns Fletcher on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the Hon. Thelton E. Henderson on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

After several years in private practice, Ms. Berner served as a staff attorney at Planned Parenthood Federation of America, litigating cases to protect and expand access to reproductive healthcare.

Since 2006, she has worked at the Service Employees International

Union—SEIU—currently serving as general counsel. At the SEIU, she has worked on a range of matters, including cases arising under labor and employment laws and regulations, as well as advising on legal claims involving criminal law, voting rights, Federal preemption, antitrust, bankruptcy, immigration, and the list goes on.

Ms. Berner has the strong support from her home State Senators, Mr. CARDIN and Mr. VAN HOLLEN. In addition, she received a “well qualified” rating from the American Bar Association.

Ms. Berner will be the first openly LGBTQ+ person to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and will bring professional diversity as a lawyer with expertise in representing employees and labor organizations. Ms. Berner’s breadth and depth of experience demonstrates that she is eminently qualified to serve on the bench.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Berner’s nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, following my remarks, Senator CARDIN be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to express my strong support for the confirmation of Nicole Berner of Maryland to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

She is an outstanding nominee to represent Maryland on that court. That is why Senator CARDIN and I were proud to recommend her nomination to the Senate Judiciary Committee. We are pleased the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced her nomination to the floor of the Senate, and today we are proud to recommend her nomination to the full U.S. Senate.

Ms. Berner’s impressive legal career is a testament to her exceptional skill and unwavering dedication to justice, to fairness, and to service.

Ms. Berner is a highly experienced litigator. She knows the courtroom. She is currently a partner at the law firm of James & Hoffman, where she is on full-time retainer as the general counsel of the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU. In over 15 years as the general counsel to SEIU, she has represented the union’s 2 million members in a diverse range of professional sectors, making her deeply knowledgeable about the challenges facing working people throughout the United States of America.

There are few judges on the Federal bench—and none on the Fourth Circuit—who have this practice background.

As part of her substantial litigation responsibilities, Ms. Berner has worked on a range of matters, including cases arising under labor and employment laws and regulations, as well as advis-

ing on legal claims involving criminal law, voting rights, Federal preemption, antitrust, bankruptcy, immigration, and the list goes on.

She has served as counsel in more than three dozen cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and dozens more in Federal courts of appeals.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Berner was a staff attorney with Planned Parenthood Federation of America, litigating cases to protect and expand access to reproductive care and healthcare. She also spent several years in private practice. She has also worked to train future lawyers as an adjunct professor at Vanderbilt Law School.

She earned her J.D. from the University of California Berkeley Law School and went on to clerk for two Federal judges—one in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and one in the District Court for the Northern District of Columbia.

Based on all her legal experience, the American Bar Association gave Ms. Berner its highest rating of “well qualified” for the position she has been nominated for.

Her confirmation would mark a significant milestone for the Fourth Circuit. If confirmed, she would be the first openly gay, LGBTQ judge to serve on that court.

Ms. Berner’s qualifications, her values, and her life experience, coupled with her notably steady, thoughtful, and calm demeanor, which was exhibited during the hearing and questioning on the Senate Judiciary Committee, will make her an exceptional addition to the Fourth Circuit.

Her nomination has inspired letters and statements of support from a host of organizations, including 27 interfaith organizations, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights under Law, the National Women’s Law Center, a number of union presidents—23 of them—the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, among many others.

I know that Ms. Berner would say and she has told us that she has traveled this important journey of her life alongside other members of her family: her wife Debra and their sons Mattan, Naveh, Segev, and Ari.

I join my good friend and colleague, the senior Senator from the State of Maryland, BEN CARDIN, in strongly recommending that the U.S. Senate confirm Nicole Berner to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, first, let me thank Senator VAN HOLLEN for his friendship and the way that we have been recommending potential members to the bench, working together, in regards to the Maryland judiciary.

Nicole Berner is an outstanding candidate for the Fourth Circuit, to fill

the position vacated by Diana Gribbon Motz.

I just really want to underscore some of the points that Senator VAN HOLLEN said.

Nicole Berner is an extraordinarily qualified candidate to serve on the Fourth Circuit—her experience, which Senator VAN HOLLEN went over in great detail, her understanding of the importance of the independent judicial branch of government and protecting our rights, and her commitment to the values which are the strength of our Nation. Senator VAN HOLLEN went over her qualifications. I am just going to underscore a few of those points.

Ms. Berner serves as general counsel to the Service Employees International Union, SEIU, and she has been in-house counsel since 2006. She served as staff attorney for Planned Parenthood and worked as a litigation associate at a private law firm. She served as a law clerk for a district court judge in California and an appellate court judge in the Ninth Circuit.

She has a record of fighting for working families. She has filed numerous—numerous—amicus briefs before the Supreme Court of the United States as well as circuit and district courts that she has been involved with. She has been a lawyer in hundreds of cases in Federal and State courts, protecting the rights of working families.

So let me just share with you a couple things that really, I think, are outstanding in her background.

First, she is motivated by a desire to ensure full and fair access to the courts for all Americans, regardless of their social status or financial resources. She has consistently advocated for the interests of historically underrepresented communities.

Second, as a skilled appellate lawyer, she has organized legal strategies to bring her clients’ voices to the court and tell their story. She seeks to show how their lives will be affected by the outcome of a case.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she represented frontline workers who literally put their lives and health at risk to do their jobs and keep our economy running when many Americans were told to stay home until the vaccine was developed. Her SEIU clients included workers in the fast-growing occupations of public services, healthcare, home care, childcare, janitorial, and building security. She represented them at that time.

We talk a lot about our frontline workers as being our heroes. Nicole Berner is one of those heroes.

Third, she would bring a unique and diverse perspective to the appellate court. We know that the Fourth Circuit is a particularly diverse circuit and includes the States of Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. A more diverse bench will better reflect the population that the judges serve as well as better inform judicial decision making.

Fourth, Ms. Berner brings to the bench both her vast experience as an

appellate lawyer and her own personal advocacy as a Jewish woman on so many civil rights issues. Ms. Berner successfully won a long-running case involving her own family at the Israeli Supreme Court—a landmark ruling that required the government to recognize two mothers as the parents of one child.

Fifth, she has received strong endorsements, and Senator VAN HOLLEN pointed out the list of endorsements from very diverse groups, from civil rights to law enforcement.

Let me highlight one of those letters—we received numerous letters—one of those letters that came from former assistants to the Solicitors General of two different administrations—the Reagan administration and the Clinton administration. The letter is authored by David Frederick and Andrew Pincus.

We have worked with, litigated against, and collaborated on cases with Ms. Berner in the Supreme Court of the United States and federal courts of appeal over more than a decade. Based on that professional experience, we are united in the firm conviction that Ms. Berner is highly qualified to serve on the Fourth Circuit and will be an excellent appellate judge.

Ms. Berner has demonstrated superb skills as a writer, legal analyst, and advocate in the appellate cases in which we have seen her work up close. . . . Her legal training is extensive, including as a law clerk to a distinguished court of appeals judge, an associate in a well-respected law firm, a lawyer in a public interest organization, and general counsel of one of the largest labor unions in the country. Ms. Berner's experience with a wide range of the legal issues that arise in the federal courts, her diverse roles as a lawyer, and her professional expertise, which we have observed firsthand, demonstrate that she will be a first-rate appellate judge.

Just as impressive as Ms. Berner's legal skills are her personal qualities. She is unfailingly polite and measured in her interactions with others, even on highly contentious issues. She listens carefully and thoughtfully with an open mind to new ideas—even those that may not comport with her personal experience—so that she can offer the soundest position in a case. These qualities make us certain that she will transition seamlessly from the role of advocate to the work of a circuit judge. She will understand that serving as a judge requires her to act as a neutral arbiter based on faithful application of the relevant constitutional or statutory text, precedent, and record facts.

I would note that Ms. Berner is a longtime resident of Montgomery County, MD. She has been an active member of her synagogue and community and lives with her wife in Takoma Park, MD. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Ms. Berner and talk to her about her priorities and her commitment to fully integrate into the vibrant Maryland legal community, including Baltimore.

I also want to join Senator VAN HOLLEN in thanking her family because this truly is a joint sacrifice in public service.

I urge my colleagues to ratify her nomination and vote in favor of her nomination.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON BERNER NOMINATION

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH).

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 94 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Mullin	Risch
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The nomination was confirmed.

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

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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

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

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

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-26, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Poland for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$219.1 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-26

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

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Poland.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$181.3 million.
Other \$37.8 million.
Total \$219.1 million.

Funding Source: Foreign Military Financing and National Funds

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

Two hundred thirty-two (232) AIM-9X Sidewinder Block II Tactical Missiles.

Sixteen (16) AIM-9X Sidewinder Block II Tactical Missile Guidance Units.

Non-MDE: Also included are missile containers; training aids; active optical target detectors; spares; support equipment; missile support; U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (PL-P-ABH).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: PL-P-AAV.

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

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

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: March 12, 2024.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Poland—AIM-9X Block II Sidewinder Missiles

The Government of Poland has requested to buy two hundred thirty-two (232) AIM-9X Sidewinder Block II Tactical Missiles and sixteen (16) AIM-9X Sidewinder Block II Tactical Missile Guidance Units. Also included are missile containers; training aids; active optical target detectors; spares; support equipment; missile support; U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$219.1 million.

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

The proposed sale will improve Poland's capability to meet current and future operational needs. The additional missiles will allow Poland to bolster its defenses while increasing NATO interoperability. Poland already has these missiles in its inventory and will have no difficulty absorbing the additional weapons into its armed forces.

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

The principal contractor will be RTX Corporation, Tucson, AZ. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Poland. However, periodic travel on a temporary basis will be required in conjunction with program, technical, and management oversight and support requirements.

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-26

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

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AIM-9X Block II Sidewinder Missile represents a substantial increase in performance over the AIM-9M and replaces the AIM-9X Block I Missile configuration. The missile includes a high off-boresight seeker, enhanced countermeasure rejection capability, low drag and high angle of attack airframe, and the ability to integrate the Helmet Mounted Cueing System. The most current AIM-9X Block II Operational Flight Software developed for all International Partner countries, which is authorized by U.S. Government export policy, provides fifth-generation infrared missile capabilities such as Lock-On-After-Launch, Weapons Data Link, Surface Attack, and Surface Launch. No software source code or algorithms will be released.

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

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

4. A determination has been made that Poland can provide substantially the same de-

gree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Poland.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Poland—AIM-120C-8 Advanced Medium Range-Air-to-Air Missiles

The Government of Poland has requested to buy up to seven hundred forty-five (745) AIM-120C-8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM), up to sixteen (16) AIM-120C-8 AMRAAM guidance sections, and fifty (50) LAU-129 Guided Missile Launchers. Also included are AIM-120 Captive Air Training Missiles, missile containers, and control section spares; Common Munitions Built-in-Test Reprogramming Equipment; ADU-891 Adapter Group Test Sets; munitions support and support equipment; spare and repair parts, consumables, accessories, and repair and return support; contract logistics support; classified software delivery and support; classified and unclassified publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training support; transportation support; studies and surveys; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$1.69 billion.

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

The proposed sale will improve Poland's capability to meet current and future threats by ensuring it has modern, capable air-to-air munitions. This sale will further advance the already high level of Polish Air Force interoperability with U.S. Joint Forces and other regional and NATO forces. The Government of Poland already has AMRAAMs in its inventory and will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces.

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

The principal contractor will be RTX Corporation, Tucson, AZ. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

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

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-29

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

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AIM-120C-8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) is a supersonic, air-launched, aerial intercept guided missile featuring digital technology and micro-miniature, solid-state electronics. AMRAAM capabilities include look-down and shoot-down, multiple launches against multiple targets, resistance to electronic countermeasures, and interception of high and low-flying and maneuvering targets. This potential sale will include Captive Air Training Missiles, AMRAAM guidance section spares and control section spares, and LAU-129 guided missile launchers.

2. The Common Munitions Built-In-Test (BIT)/Reprogramming Equipment (CMBRE) is support equipment used to interface with weapon systems to initiate and report BIT results and to upload and download flight software. CMBRE supports multiple munitions platforms with a range of applications that perform preflight checks, periodic maintenance checks, loading of Operational Flight Program data, loading of munitions mission planning data, loading of Global Positioning System (GPS) cryptographic keys, and declassification of munitions memory.

3. The ADU-891 Adapter Group Test Set provides the physical and electrical interface between the CMBRE and the missile.

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

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

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

7. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Poland.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

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

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

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-29, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Poland for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$1.69 billion. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-29

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

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Poland.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$1.52 billion.

Other \$17 billion.

Total \$1.69 billion.

Funding Source: National Funds.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Up to seven hundred forty-five (745) AIM-120C-8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM).

Up to sixteen (16) AIM-120C-8 AMRAAM Guidance Sections.

Fifty (50) LAU-129 Guided Missile Launchers.

Non-MDE: Also included are AIM-120 Capitive Air Training Missiles, missile containers, and control section spares; Common Munitions Built-in-Test Reprogramming Equipment; ADU-891 Adapter Group Test Sets; munitions support and support equipment; spare and repair parts, consumables, accessories, and repair and return support; contract logistics support; classified software delivery and support; classified and unclassified publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training support; transportation support; studies and surveys; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (PL-D-YAF).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: PL-D-YAE, PL-D-QAV.

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

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

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: March 12, 2024.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-33, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Poland for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$1.77 billion. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-33

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

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Poland.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$1.67 billion.

Other \$10 billion.

Total \$1.77 billion.

Funding Source: National Funds.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Up to eight hundred twenty-one (821) AGM-158B-2 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles with Extended Range (JASSM-ER) All-Up-Rounds.

Non-MDE: Also included are AGM-158 JASSM classified test equipment; weapon system support; integration and test support and equipment; classified software delivery and support; unclassified publications and technical documentation; transportation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (PL-D-YAG).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: PL-D-YAB, PL-D-YAD.

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

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

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: March 12, 2024.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Poland—AGM-158B-2 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile with Extended Range All-Up-Rounds

The Government of Poland has requested to buy up to eight hundred twenty-one (821) AGM-158B-2 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles with Extended Range (JASSM-ER) All-Up-Rounds. Also included are AGM-158 JASSM classified test equipment; weapon system support; integration and test support and equipment; classified software delivery and support; unclassified publications and technical documentation; transportation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$1.77 billion.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the secu-

rity of a NATO Ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in Europe.

The proposed sale will improve Poland's capability to meet current and future threats by providing advanced, long-range strike systems for employment from Polish Air Force air platforms. This sale will further advance the already high level of Polish Air Force interoperability with U.S. joint forces and other regional and NATO forces. Poland already has JASSM-ERs in its inventory and will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces.

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

The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin, Orlando, FL. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

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

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-33

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

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AGM-158B-2 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile with Extended Range (JASSM-ER) All-Up-Rounds is a low-observable, highly-survivable, subsonic cruise missile designed to penetrate next-generation air defense systems enroute to target. The JASSM-ER is designed to kill hard, medium-hardened, soft, and area-type targets. The extended range was obtained by going from a turbo jet to a turbo-fan engine and by reconfiguring the fuel tanks for added capacity. This potential sale will include inert missiles with test instrumentation kits.

2. The AGM-158B-2 system capabilities include all the capabilities of the AGM-158B. The AGM-158B-2 configuration will have different internal components to address multiple obsolescence issues as well as sub-component updates to position for M-Code and other potential upgrades.

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

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

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

6. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Poland.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon

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

There being no objection, the mate-

rial was ordered to be printed in the

RECORD, as follows:

such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

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

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 24-0B. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 18-40 of October 19, 2018.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosure.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-0B

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (SEC. 36(b)(5)(c), AECA)

(i) Purchaser: Government of the United Kingdom
(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 18-40

Date: October 19, 2018

Implementing Agency: Army

(iii) Description: On October 19, 2018, Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 18-40 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of sixteen (16) H-47 Chinook (Extended Range) helicopters; thirty-six (36) T-55-GA-714A engines (32 installed, 4 spares); forty-eight (48) embedded GPS inertial navigation units (32 installed, 16 spares); twenty (20) common missile warning systems (16 installed, 4 spares); twenty-two (22) radio-frequency countermeasures (16 installed, 6 spares); nineteen (19) multi-mode radars (16 installed, 3 spares); nineteen (19) electrooptical sensor systems (16 installed, 3 spares); forty (40) M-134D-T miniguns, plus mounts and tools (32 installed, 8 spares); and forty (40) M240H machine guns, plus mounts and tools (32 installed, 8 spares). Also included was communications equipment; navigation equipment; aircraft survivability equipment; initial training equipment and services; synthetic training equipment; support package including spares and repair parts; special tools and test equipment; aviation ground support equipment; safety and air worthiness certification; technical support; maintenance support; technical and aircrew publications; mission planning system equipment and support; project management and governance; U.S. Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The total estimated program cost was \$3.5 billion. Major

Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted \$1.655 billion of this total.

This transmittal notifies the addition of the following MDE items:

—Seventeen (17) Common Infrared Countermeasure (CIRCM) Systems.

—Seventeen (17) Limited Missile Warning Receiver Systems (LIMWS).

—Seventeen (17) Degraded Visual Environment Pilotage Systems (DVEPS).

Also included are Man-Portable Night Vision Devices. The estimated total value of these new items is \$162 million, but their addition will not cause an increase in the total case value. The estimated total case value will remain at \$3.5 billion. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) will remain at \$1.655 billion of this total.

(iv) Significance: The proposed sale will enhance the United Kingdom's capabilities to provide national defense and contribute to NATO and coalition operations.

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

(vi) Sensitivity of Technology: CIRCM is the next-generation lightweight, laser-based, infrared countermeasure system for rotary-wing, tiltrotor, and small fixed-wing aircraft across the Department of Defense (DoD). CIRCM provides near-spherical coverage of the host platform to defeat infrared (IR)-seeking threat missiles. CIRCM receives an angular bearing hand-off from the Missile Warning System (Common Missile Warning System (CMWS) or LIMWS) and employs a pointing and tracking system that acquires and tracks the incoming missile. CIRCM jams the missile by using modulated laser energy, thus degrading the tracking capability of the missile and causing it to miss the aircraft.

LIMWS will protect aircraft from missiles by deploying flares and by cueing laser-based countermeasure systems such as the CIRCM. The LIMWS A-kit is backwards compatible with CMWS. LIMWS maintains overmatch of quickly emerging threat technology and tactics by providing increased detection range, improved detection in clutter, and more agile algorithms to rapidly respond to emerging Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) threats. LIMWS utilizes IR-based sensors to detect incoming missiles and unguided hostile fire, fiber optic cables for high-speed data transmission from the sensors to the system processor and implements machine learning algorithms.

DVEPS provides overmatch by providing increased situational awareness to the aircrew in Degraded Visual Environment (DVE) conditions such as brownout, allowing Special Operations Aviation assets to execute missions in almost any environmental condition. DVEPS utilizes using three-dimensional (3D) imaging technology. DVEPS produces imagery, 3D conformal symbology, and system alerts to aid pilots in maintaining spatial awareness during and after transition from visual meteorological conditions (VMC) to DVE conditions. DVEPS includes a synthetic vision avionics backbone (SVAB), light detection and ranging (LiDAR), removable storage device, infrared camera, power distribution unit, and inertial measurement unit.

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

(vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: March 12, 2024.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONNECTICUT HUMANITIES

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of Connecticut Humanities, CTH. CTH is a trusted leader and public/private partner with the State of Connecticut, having supported vital, widely accessible humanities programming throughout its 50-year history.

Founded in 1974 as the Connecticut Humanities Council at the request of the National Endowment for the Humanities, CTH has dedicated itself to connecting residents of Connecticut to the humanities through grants, partnerships, and collaborative programs. Over the past 50 years, CTH has inspired storytelling, lifelong learning, informed public dialogue, and civic engagement throughout the State of Connecticut and, in doing so, has strengthened communities and enhanced the quality of life for all residents.

Connecticut Humanities has created and promoted a number of incredibly worthwhile projects in Connecticut. CTH created the Connecticut Center for the Book, a State affiliate of the Library of Congress that promotes the written and spoken word. Along with its partners, CTH created Why It Matters: Connecticut's Civic Reconstruction, a program that provides frameworks for meaningful discussion regarding often difficult and divisive topics, instruction on civic processes and participation, and avenues that safeguard participation in our democracy for all citizens. CTH has also participated in the Democracy and the Informed Citizen initiative, supporting connections between the humanities and journalism and fostering an informed citizenry and a democratic society.

Connecticut Humanities has long been a champion of the enduring value of public humanities in our lives and civil society. By implementing and supporting strong, viable, and sustainable cultural organizations that play a pivotal role in promoting the educational, cultural, and economic vitality of Connecticut, and ensuring that their programming is widely accessible to diverse and new audiences across the State, CTH continues to play a central role in the preservation of the humanities and the promotion of civic engagement.

It is my hope that Connecticut Humanities will continue to grow and expand their vital work in the years to come. I applaud Connecticut Humanities for their exemplary work and hope my colleagues will join me in expressing our gratitude and admiration. •

RECOGNIZING LEADAR

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary

of LeadAR, a hands-on program that brings together dedicated individuals from across Arkansas to empower their communities and initiate positive change.

LeadAR has helped educate and build a network of Natural State leaders who share the common goal of bettering their communities.

As a champion of leadership development in the Natural State, the program gives participants an opportunity to connect with peers from different backgrounds who call a variety of rural, agriculture, and larger communities home in order to facilitate an understanding of the unique needs across our State.

Participants take part in a number of seminars and team-building exercises throughout the year in multiple settings. I have had the opportunity to visit with LeadAR classes during the trip each takes to Washington, DC, and share how we work together with local communities and the State to support the needs of citizens, including encouraging economic growth and development.

Alumni of this organization include individuals from all walks of life. Professionals including educators, farmers, to local elected leaders and more have benefited from the excellent leadership principles LeadAR teaches. Over the course of 18 months, these Arkansans acquire even more tools and skills to enrich their own careers and enhance the civic contributions their families, friends, and neighbors value.

As we celebrate this milestone, we recognize the impact it has made in the lives of participants and the progress it has helped inspire in communities across the State.

I appreciate the guidance of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service for successfully coordinating this program so it continues to be a distinguished activity citizens strive to be part of. I look forward to supporting LeadAR for many years to come and celebrating the next generation of participants who are developing their vision for a stronger Arkansas.●

RECOGNIZING BROWNS CENTURY THEATER

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Browns Century Theater of Le Mars, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 2000, siblings Adam, Michaela, and Andrew partnered with their mother Shelly to start a music group called The Browns. The Brown family is originally from Le Mars but took their music talents around the United States, Canada, and Europe. In 2015, after touring for 15 years, the Browns returned home to Iowa and purchased

the historic German-American Savings Bank building in downtown Le Mars. The theater seats 150 people and now includes the Central Event Center for dining, the Inn on Central for visiting guests, and the Gift Shoppe. The Browns Century Theater seasonally employs between 9 to 12 employees and has hosted 100 shows every year since its opening, featuring the family's music and other artists from across the country.

In addition to owning a small business, The Browns host a reality TV show called "Hometown with The Browns" on their YouTube channel. The first episode of their show details the renovations they did to the German-American Savings Bank to convert it into the Browns Century Theater. Their daughter Michaela creates cooking videos for the family channel and is also the author of three cookbooks. The Browns have recorded 2 dozen albums and often perform special shows in addition to their hits, including songs like "Oh, My Iowa!"

The Brown family has deep roots in Le Mars and proudly owns a more than a century-old farm. Michaela Brown served as the Le Mars Chamber of Commerce president in 2022, and Adam Brown served on the Plymouth County Fair board in 2023. The Browns have performed at the Christmas in Hometown event since its inception in 2020, the Plymouth County Fair, and Ice Cream Days. In addition to performing for and supporting their community, Adam Brown played as a linebacker and defensive end for the Sioux Empire Crusaders of the Southern Plains Football League.

The Browns are well recognized for their hard work. Shelly Brown was awarded the Le Mars Area Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year Award in 2019. The Browns Century Theater was awarded the Community Impact Award in 2023 and the Business of the Year Award in 2017 by the Le Mars Chamber of Commerce. Their music has earned them Dove Award nominations and a place in the Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame. Due to their incredible efforts, The Browns celebrated their 24th anniversary of performing together and their ninth anniversary of owning the Browns Century Theater in 2024.

The Brown family's commitment to Le Mars, the gospel music industry, and their family business is clear. I want to congratulate the Brown family and the entire team at Browns Century Theater for their continued dedication to the Le Mars community. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025—PM 44

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on Appropriations; and the Budget:

To the Congress of the United States:

When I was elected President, a pandemic was raging and our economy was reeling. We were in the midst of the most devastating downturn in nearly a century. I came into office determined to fundamentally change things, by rebuilding our economy from the middle out and bottom up, not the top down—because when the middle class does well, the poor have a ladder up and the wealthy still do well. We all do. We can give everyone a fair shot and leave no one behind.

Our work started with the American Rescue Plan, which vaccinated the Nation, delivered immediate economic relief to people who badly needed it, and sent funding to States and cities to keep key services going. It continued with the biggest investment in our Nation's infrastructure since the 1950s. More than 46,000 new projects have been announced to date, rebuilding our roads, bridges, railroads, ports, airports, public transit, water systems, high-speed internet, and more. At the same time, we are making the most significant investment in fighting climate change in the history of the world. I have seen Americans' courage and resilience in the wake of devastating natural disasters, and I will always have their backs as we rebuild and boost resilience to extreme weather. We are building a cleaner, more resilient and sustainable power grid, and making America's biggest investment in rural electricity since the New Deal. We are revitalizing fence-line communities that have shouldered the burden of harmful pollution for generations. We are lowering energy costs for hard-working families and strengthening our energy security with clean energy breakthroughs. Across the board, we are supporting advanced manufacturing, ensuring the industries of the future are made in America by American workers.

Our plan is working. Already, my Investing in America agenda has attracted \$650 billion in private investment from companies that are building factories and moving production back to America. We are making things here in America again, with American union workers. We have ignited a manufacturing boom, a semiconductor boom, an electric-vehicle boom, and more. My agenda is creating hundreds of thousands of union jobs, so folks never have to leave their hometowns to find good-paying work they can raise a family on. Today, America once again has the strongest economy in the world. We have created a record 15 million jobs, with unemployment under four percent for the longest stretch in over 50 years. Growth is strong. Wages are rising and inflation is down by two-thirds, with costs having fallen for key household items from a gallon of gas to a gallon of milk. We have more to do, but folks are starting to feel the benefits. Consumer sentiment has surged more in recent months than any time in 30 years. Americans have filed a record 16 million new business applications since I took office; each one of them is an act of hope.

Importantly, we made these historic investments in a fiscally responsible way, while making our tax system fairer. In 2022, I signed a law that imposed a new minimum tax of 15 percent on the Nation's largest corporations, saved \$160 billion by giving Medicare the authority to negotiate prescription drug prices and limit price increases, and boosted funding to the Internal Revenue Service to crack down on wealthy and corporate tax cheats. This is just the beginning. My Budget would do more to close loopholes. It would save another \$200 billion by enabling Medicare to negotiate prices on even more drugs and by limiting other drug price increases. It would cut wasteful subsidies to Big Oil and other special interests; and it would introduce a minimum tax on billionaires, which alone would raise \$500 billion for the American people.

So far, we have already cut the deficit by \$1 trillion since I took office, one of the biggest reductions in history, and I have signed legislation to cut it by \$1 trillion more. My Budget would reduce it by another \$3 trillion over the next 10 years as well, while continuing to pay for our investments in America.

And we are just getting started.

My Administration will keep fighting to lower costs for working families, on everything from housing to childcare to student loans. After decades of talk in Washington, we beat Big Pharma and capped the cost of insulin for seniors at \$35 a month, down from as much as \$400. Starting next year, no senior on Medicare will pay more than \$2,000 a year in total out-of-pocket prescription drug costs, even for expensive cancer medications that now cost many times more. We are cracking down on price gouging by requiring drugmakers that

raise prices of certain drugs faster than inflation to pay a rebate back to Medicare. At the same time, we have protected and expanded the Affordable Care Act, with a record 21 million Americans enrolled in marketplace plans this past year, while saving millions of Americans \$800 per year on their premiums. Today, more Americans have health insurance than ever before. My Budget builds on those gains.

I also know that for too many hard-working families, it costs too much to find a good home, so we are working to lower costs and boost supply of housing nationwide. My Budget will make monthly mortgage payments more affordable for middle-class first-time homebuyers by providing a \$5,000 annual mortgage relief credit for two years. My Budget will expand rental assistance to hundreds of thousands of additional families, continuing the largest expansion in 20 years. It will also help to ease America's long-standing shortage of affordable housing, including by cutting red tape, so that more builders can get Federal financing to build more affordable housing. Important progress is underway: more families own homes today than before the pandemic; rents are easing; and a record 1.7 million housing units are under construction nationwide.

My Budget also makes key investments in childcare and education, so every child in America can have the strong start they need to thrive. It restores the Child Tax Credit expansion I signed into law, which cut child poverty nearly in half in 2021; and it guarantees the vast majority of families high-quality childcare for no more than \$10 a day, while boosting pay for childcare workers. It offers universal free preschool for all four million of America's four-year-olds. Building on the American Rescue Plan's investment in public education, the biggest in history, it also helps States expand tutoring, afterschool, and summer programs; and boosts recruiting to ease teacher shortages.

At the same time, I am keeping my promise to ease the crushing burden of student debt. Despite legal challenges, we have canceled some \$138 billion in student debt for nearly four million Americans, including more than 750,000 teachers, nurses, firefighters, social workers, and other public servants. That is freeing people to finally consider buying a home, having a child, or starting that small business they always dreamed of.

We are also working to secure our border. In October, I sent an emergency request for more funding; my Budget renews that request for additional resources, including for 1,300 more Border Patrol agents, 375 immigration judges, and 1,600 asylum officers, and for cutting-edge technology to help detect fentanyl. We need to pass the Senate bipartisan border deal as well, which would make urgent additional investments to secure the border and help to fix our broken immigration system.

Today, the world is facing an inflection point in history, at home and abroad. My Administration has restored America's leadership on the world stage, rallying more than 50 nations to support Ukraine in the face of brutal Russian aggression, strengthening and expanding NATO, revitalizing our alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific—including with Japan, South Korea, and Australia—and strengthening democracy across the globe. But we need to do more to prove that America can once again be relied on to stand up for freedom. In October, I submitted a national security supplemental request to cover urgent needs, including support for Ukraine and Israel, and humanitarian aid and relief for Palestinians. My Budget reiterates that request and continues other critical support for NATO allies and partners around the world. It strengthens our deterrence capacity in the Indo-Pacific, expanding our capabilities in the region. It also works to keep our military the best-trained, best-equipped fighting force in the world, integrating advanced innovation technologies, and improving overall readiness. My Budget also takes important steps to honor our Nation's most sacred obligation—to protect and equip our troops when they are in harm's way, and to care for them and their families throughout and after their service. Since I took office, I have signed over 30 significant bipartisan bills to support veterans, including the PACT Act, the biggest-ever expansion of benefits for servicemembers exposed to toxic burn pits during their service; and I have issued the most comprehensive executive actions to date to boost economic security for military families. My Budget builds on that work.

The story of America is one of progress and resilience, of always moving forward and never giving up. It is a story unique among nations. We are the only nation that has emerged from every crisis we have entered stronger than we went in. While my Administration has seen great progress since day one, there is still work to do. My Budget will help make that promise real.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 2024.

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. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 3966. A bill to streamline the application of regulations relating to commercial space launch and reentry requirements and licensing of private remote sensing space systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. KING):

S. 3967. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent certain telehealth flexibilities under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 3968. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide community-based training opportunities for medical students in rural areas and medically under-served communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 3969. A bill to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to expand the definition of aiding the enemy to include the provision of military education, military training, and tactical advice; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. HAS-SAN, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 3970. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 3971. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to require reporting on additional information with respect to small business concerns owned and controlled by women, qualified HUBZone small business concerns, and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 3972. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to require the Congressional Budget Office to provide to Congress information on payments from the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Disability Insurance Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 3973. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons that knowingly engage in political warfare on behalf of a foreign government or political party and to require a determination regarding the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WELCH, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 3974. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to require the Commissioner of Social Security to use the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers for purposes of determining cost-of-living adjustments under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3975. A bill to require companies to receive consent from consumers to having their data used to train an artificial intelligence system; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. WELCH):

S. 3976. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reinstate the deduction for personal casualty losses as in effect prior to the enactment of Public Law 115-97 (commonly referred to as the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act"); to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 3977. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect beneficiaries with limb loss and other orthopedic conditions by providing access to appropriate, safe, effective, patient-centered orthotic and prosthetic care; to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse with respect to orthotics and prosthetics, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VANCE (for himself, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. COTTON, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. BUDD):

S. 3978. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit an institution of higher education that employs unauthorized aliens from receiving funds from Federal student assistance or Federal institutional aid and to require institutions of higher education to participate in the E-Verify Program in order to be eligible to participate in any program authorized under title IV of such Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 3979. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent and codify the pilot program for use of contract physicians for disability examinations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 3980. A bill to award grants to local educational agencies to operate after school programs in certain areas with a high rate of juvenile crime; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 3981. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a program of research, training, and investigation related to Down syndrome, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CRAMER (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. Res. 591. A resolution reaffirming the deep and steadfast partnership between, and the ties that bind, the United States and Canada in support of economic and national security; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Ms. SINEMA):

S. Res. 592. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Social Work Month and World Social Work Day on March 19, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. Res. 593. A resolution expressing support for the continued value of arms control agreements and condemning the Russian Federation's purported suspension of its participation in the New START Treaty; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. Res. 594. A resolution designating April 17, 2024, as "National Assistive Technology Awareness Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CASIDY, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. Res. 595. A resolution recognizing the contributions of AmeriCorps members and alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the lives of the people and communities of the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. ERNST):

S. Res. 596. A resolution recognizing Girl Scouts of the United States of America on its 112th birthday and celebrating its legacy of providing girls with a secure, inclusive space where they can explore their world, build meaningful relationships, and have access to experiences that prepare them for a life of leadership; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. RISCH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 597. A resolution recognizing the heritage, culture, and contributions of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women in the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 160

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) were added as cosponsors of S. 160, a bill to require U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to take into custody certain aliens who have been charged in the United States with a crime that resulted in the death or serious bodily injury of another person, and for other purposes.

S. 217

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 217, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special rule for certain casualty losses of uncut timber.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to make daylight saving time permanent, and for other purposes.

S. 652

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 652, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health plan or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan to

provide an exceptions process for any medication step therapy protocol, and for other purposes.

S. 1252

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1252, a bill to support the human rights of Uyghurs and members of other ethnic groups residing primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and safeguard their distinct civilization and identity, and for other purposes.

S. 1273

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) 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. 1300

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1300, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the late Prime Minister Golda Meir and the 75th anniversary of the United States-Israel relationship.

S. 1442

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1442, a bill to amend the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to adjust for inflation the maximum amount of assistance provided by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1557

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1557, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the low-income housing credit, and for other purposes.

S. 1601

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1601, a bill to protect moms and babies against climate change, and for other purposes.

S. 1733

At the request of Mr. BUDD, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1733, a bill to make the assault of a law enforcement officer a deportable offense, and for other purposes.

S. 1845

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1845, a bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to provide

for the testing of a community-based palliative care model.

S. 1999

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1999, a bill to protect an individual's ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception.

S. 2048

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2048, a bill to repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, and provide for the discoverability and admissibility of gun trace information in civil proceedings.

S. 2415

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2415, a bill to amend title III of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize Federal support of States in their work to save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes for pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, to identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers, and for other purposes.

S. 2626

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2626, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the Supreme Leader of Iran and the President of Iran and their respective offices for human rights abuses and support for terrorism.

S. 2662

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSBOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2662, a bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out certain activities relating to research for wood products, and for other purposes.

S. 2665

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2665, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to provide to firefighters of the Department of Defense medical testing and related services to detect and prevent certain cancers.

S. 2757

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2757, a bill to limit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from modifying the rate of payment or reimbursement for transportation of veterans or other in-

dividuals via special modes of transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

S. 2825

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2825, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the United States Army Dustoff crews of the Vietnam War, collectively, in recognition of their extraordinary heroism and life-saving actions in Vietnam.

S. 2888

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

S. 2963

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2963, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit for investment in Community Development Financial Institutions.

S. 3047

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3047, a bill to award payments to employees of Air America who provided support to the United States from 1950 to 1976, and for other purposes.

S. 3125

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

S. 3197

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) were added as cosponsors of S. 3197, a bill to establish and authorize funding for an Iranian Sanctions Enforcement Fund to enforce United States sanctions with respect to Iran and its proxies and pay off the United States public debt and to codify the Export Enforcement Coordination Center.

S. 3369

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3369, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to restrict the possession of certain firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 3444

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr.

KING) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 3444, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9-8-8, and for other purposes.

S. 3502

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors 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. 3556

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 3556, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue reports after activation of the Disaster Information Reporting System and to make improvements to network outage reporting, to categorize public safety telecommunicators as a protective service occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification system, and for other purposes.

S. 3627

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3627, a bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to require a certain efficiency level for certain distribution transformers, and for other purposes.

S. 3629

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 3629, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to revise recidivist penalty provisions for child sexual exploitation offenses to uniformly account for prior military convictions, thereby ensuring parity among Federal, State, and military convictions, and for other purposes.

S. 3697

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3697, a bill to establish the Space National Guard.

S. 3757

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3757, a bill to reauthorize the congenital heart disease research, surveillance, and awareness program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 3801

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3801, a bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit the Federal Reserve banks from offering certain products or services directly to an individual, to prohibit the use of central bank digital currency for monetary policy, and for other purposes.

S. 3916

At the request of Mr. OSSOFF, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3916, a bill protecting the right to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

S. 3929

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3929, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Agriculture from taking certain proposed actions relating to a land management plan direction for old-growth forest conditions across the National Forest System.

S. 3930

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3930, a bill to provide downpayment assistance to first-generation homebuyers to address multigenerational inequities in access to homeownership and to narrow and ultimately close the racial homeownership gap in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 3933

At the request of Mrs. BRITT, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3933, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

S. 3940

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3940, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a first-time homebuyer credit, and for other purposes.

S. 3956

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3956, a bill to include phosphate and potash on the final list of critical minerals of the Department of the Interior.

S.J. RES. 64

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 64, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to “The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Prevention and Elimination of Digital Discrimination”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 591—RE-AFFIRMING THE DEEP AND STEADFAST PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN, AND THE TIES THAT BIND, THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA IN SUPPORT OF ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. CRAMER (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mr. RICKETTS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 591

Whereas Members of the Senate understand the critical importance of further strengthening and deepening the alliances of the United States, and are called upon not only to protect, but to advance the partnerships of the United States;

Whereas the United States enjoys the great fortune of sharing a border with Canada, the closest ally of the United States, while countries around the world are facing existential threats from their neighbors;

Whereas, in June 2023, the bipartisan and bicameral American Canadian Economy and Security Caucus was established in the Senate and the House of Representatives, presenting an opportunity to fortify and advance the indispensable economic and security partnership between the United States and Canada;

Whereas the governments of the United States and Canada can reinforce shared interests in the 4 critical areas of economic security, sustainability, energy, and critical mineral security, national security, and global security;

Whereas the prosperity of citizens of the United States and Canada depends on the mutually beneficial economic relationship and resilient and integrated supply chains of the United States and Canada;

Whereas the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada, done at Buenos Aires November 30, 2018 (commonly known as the “United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement”), forms the foundation of the economic competitiveness of the United States and Canada;

Whereas the governments of the United States and Canada—

(1) share one of the largest trading relationships in the world, with approximately \$1,300,000,000,000 in bilateral trade in goods and services in 2022, supporting more than 7,500,000 jobs in the United States; and

(2) understand the importance of secure and resilient supply chains, and have established formal mechanisms to further strengthen the economic integration between the United States and Canada so that the United States and Canada can withstand major crises;

Whereas Canada is the largest single export market for the United States and was the primary customer for 33 of 50 States in 2022;

Whereas, in 2022, more than 300 congressional districts in the United States each exported more than \$250,000,000 in goods to Canada, and more than 100 districts each exported more than \$1,000,000,000 in goods to Canada;

Whereas trade between the United States and Canada is built on long-standing binational supply chains, whereby roughly 80 percent of Canadian goods exports to the United States are incorporated into United States

supply chains and Canadian goods sold to the United States contain on average 25 percent content produced in the United States;

Whereas Canada buys more than \$22,000,000,000 worth of automotive parts from the United States each year, and each assembled vehicle exported to the United States from Canada contains approximately 50 percent of content originating from the United States;

Whereas the United States and Canada—

(1) are global leaders in science, technology, and innovation, and can secure the future of North America as the most competitive region in the world;

(2) are working together to deepen cooperation in developing and protecting emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and quantum science; and

(3) are founding members of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, with Canada hosting the inaugural plenary in December 2020;

Whereas Canada—

(1) is the fourth largest petroleum producer in the world and is the largest foreign supplier of energy to the United States, including oil, uranium, natural gas, and electricity; and

(2) is a reliable source of energy and resources for the United States, producing more than 60 minerals and metals, and is a leading global producer of 19 critical minerals on the List of Critical Minerals published by the United States Geological Survey;

Whereas the United States and Canada—

(1) have a deeply interconnected electricity sector, with more than 35 active electricity transmission connections between the two countries, many of which enable bidirectional flows of electricity, helping to ensure the security and reliability of the North American grid;

(2) are committed to closely collaborating to achieve shared sustainability objectives, including advancements in energy efficiency and the reduction of emissions to support a sustainable future;

(3) have committed to work together to protect biodiverse areas that span the shared border between the United States and Canada, including in collaboration with Indigenous and Tribal partners, benefitting shared species like migratory birds;

(4) have an appreciation for environmental stewardship and abide by some of the highest production standards in the world, reducing global emissions through the production of goods in the United States and Canada; and

(5) have jointly collaborated for more than 100 years under the Treaty Relating to the Boundary Waters and Questions Arising Along the Boundary Between the United States and Canada, done at Washington January 11, 1909 (36 Stat. 2448; TS 548) (commonly known as the 'Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909') to manage and conserve shared waters for the benefit of both countries, including more than 50 years under the Agreement between Canada and the United States of America on Great Lakes Water Quality, done at Ottawa November 22, 1978;

Whereas the United States and Canada—

(1) share 3 oceans and the longest border in the world;

(2) are committed to jointly protecting the security of the citizens of the United States and Canada, because the governments of the United States and Canada understand that a threat to the security of one country is a threat to the security of both countries;

(3) recognize that collective security is a shared responsibility, and are committed to expanding cooperation on continental defense and in the Arctic, including by increasing investments in continental defense and modernizing the North American Aerospace

Defense Command, the only binational military command in the world;

(4) share the desire for a peaceful, stable, and predictable Arctic region, including for the benefit of Arctic and Northern peoples and communities;

(5) cooperate to keep the border open to legitimate trade and travel but closed to terrorists, criminals, and threats to the health and safety of citizens;

(6) work together to secure the border shared by the United States and Canada through the Cross-Border Crime Forum, Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, the Beyond the Border Initiative, NEXUS, the Border Enforcement Security Task Force, shiprider agreements, the Integrated Cross Border Maritime Law Enforcement Operations, and United States preclearance operations conducted at Canadian airports, all of which enhance joint security efforts;

(7) have an Integrated Border Enforcement Charter that allows the border enforcement agencies of the United States and Canada to jointly identify national security threats, disrupt organized criminal activities, seize drugs and weapons, and intercept criminal networks trying to smuggle people across the border; and

(8) safely oversee the movement of more than 400,000 people every day and more than \$2,600,000,000 worth of goods and services crossed the border each day;

Whereas the United States and Canada—

(1) are the only 2 countries in the world that have borders along the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic oceans;

(2) are unequivocally committed to playing a leadership role in protecting global security and promoting democracy around the world;

(3) work together to advance democratic principles, human rights, and free trade policies through the G7, the G20, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Trade Organization, and the Organization of American States;

(4) cooperate extensively through a "Tri-Command Framework" comprised of the United States Northern Command, the Canadian Joint Operations Command, and the North American Aerospace Defense Command;

(5) work together as the only North American members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to ensure peace and security in the transatlantic region;

(6) support deterrence and defense efforts by NATO and other European Allies through roles as the Framework Nations for the NATO brigades in Latvia and Poland; and

(7) remain steadfast in support for Ukraine, working together to provide critical military assistance and training to strengthen the capacity of Ukraine to withstand aggression by the Russian Federation;

Whereas Canada has been a committed ally in upholding the rules-based international order by promoting peace, resilience, and security in the Indo-Pacific region through an augmented and diversified military presence;

Whereas Canada has been a reliable and engaged partner of the United States in the Indo-Pacific by collaborating extensively with United States Indo-Pacific Command, including through bilateral and multilateral exercises, regional security cooperation and defense engagements, involvement in regional defense forums, and ultimately, through unwavering support of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region; and

Whereas history, geography, commerce, security, and shared democratic values underpin a close relationship between the United States and Canada: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that the relationship between the United States and Canada is an essential strategic asset to the United States and United States citizens, and is critical to promoting peace, expanding global economic opportunity, and being prepared to respond to unforeseen events;

(2) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to maintain and grow the critical partnership between the United States and Canada;

(3) recognizes that the security of one country is dependent on the security of the other, and welcomes greater collaboration in the areas of defense, cyber and technology security, and Arctic security;

(4) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the bilateral and international alliance between the United States and Canada, which allows the United States and Canada to face common threats together and uphold common values, including democracy, human rights, and the rule of law;

(5) recognizes the strategic importance of one of the most secure borders in the world, the comanagement of which facilitates trade and serves as a trusted corridor for the supply chains of the United States and Canada;

(6) recognizes that bolstering the supply chains of the United States and Canada will make each such country more competitive and more resilient in the face of economic aggression from hostile countries;

(7) supports an increased focus on energy security through greater cross-border energy infrastructure, including infrastructure for oil, natural gas, nuclear and renewable energy, and resilient electricity transmission, and through diversifying critical minerals supply chains;

(8) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to strengthen cooperation on shared climate and environmental and sustainability priorities; and

(9) is fully committed to the creation of more well-paying jobs in the United States through continued and increased trade and investment with Canada.

SENATE RESOLUTION 592—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF SOCIAL WORK MONTH AND WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY ON MARCH 19, 2024

Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Ms. SINEMA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 592

Whereas the 700,000 social workers of the United States are an essential workforce that promotes the health and well-being of the people of the United States in communities across the country every day;

Whereas social workers are leaders in addressing the influence of social determinants of health, such as housing, employment, education, and transportation, on individual and communal health and well-being;

Whereas social workers—

(1) pursue social justice as part of their code of ethics and have been a leading voice in social change movements for over a century;

(2) combat racism and discrimination in all its forms, including xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, gender discrimination, religious intolerance, and discrimination against individuals with mental illness; and

(3) promote voting rights, a livable wage, workplace safety, social safety net programs that help alleviate poverty, hunger, and

homelessness, and the rights of individuals with disabilities;

Whereas social workers support individuals and communities in a wide range of settings, including hospitals, health and behavioral health care facilities, nursing homes, community centers, Veterans Affairs clinics, schools, child welfare agencies, law enforcement agencies, disaster relief agencies, correctional institutions, and private practice settings;

Whereas social workers work in all levels of government to advance the promise of the United States and the health and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas social workers are one of the largest providers of mental health, behavioral health, and social care services in the United States, working daily to help thousands of people in the United States overcome mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety, and meet basic needs;

Whereas social workers are on the frontlines of the addiction crisis in the United States, helping individuals get the treatment they need and prevail over substance use disorders;

Whereas social workers play a vital role in helping United States veterans and their families access benefits, secure housing, and cope with stress and post-traumatic stress disorder;

Whereas social workers play a vital role in promoting the health, well-being, and dignity of older adults and their ability to live safely and securely in their own homes and communities;

Whereas social workers play a vital role in supporting the millions of family caregivers across the country who are caring for loved ones in need of assistance;

Whereas social workers are a vital source of assistance, comfort, and support for individuals and families coping with illness, death, and grief;

Whereas social workers play a vital role in helping individuals, families, and communities rebuild their lives and neighborhoods after climate-related natural disasters such as fires, floods, and hurricanes;

Whereas social workers play a vital role in promoting infant and maternal health and keeping children and families safe from interpersonal violence;

Whereas social workers support students and collaborate with parents, teachers, school boards, and community agencies to promote student success in schools across the country;

Whereas social workers are a critical source of information, services, and support in the rural communities of the United States;

Whereas social workers served on the frontlines of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, delivering behavioral health services and helping individuals, families, and communities cope with the devastating loss of life, jobs, and safety during the pandemic;

Whereas the 2024 Social Work Month theme, “Empowering Social Workers: Inspiring Action, Leading Change” embodies how social workers are invaluable to the ever-changing dynamics of our country;

Whereas social workers enter the profession because they have a strong desire to help empower individuals, families, communities, and the United States to overcome issues that prevent them from reaching their full potential;

Whereas social workers are essential to community well-being, and, as practitioners, social workers are trained to help individuals address personal and systemic barriers to optimal living;

Whereas social workers are employed to effect positive change in individuals, families, groups, and entire communities;

Whereas social workers advocate for equal rights for all;

Whereas the social work profession is one of the fastest growing professions in the United States, but the profession is still not large enough to meet the demand in the face of the mental health crisis;

Whereas there is a need to make a meaningful investment in recruitment and retention of the social work profession; and

Whereas social workers are ethically bound to work throughout our society to meet individuals where they are and help empower individuals and our society to reach the goals they wish to attain: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Social Work Month and World Social Work Day on March 19, 2024;

(2) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of social workers who have, since the dawning of the social work profession, advanced the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and the United States;

(3) acknowledges the diligent efforts of individuals and groups who promote the importance of social work and observe Social Work Month and World Social Work Day; and

(4) encourages individuals to engage in appropriate ceremonies and activities to promote further awareness of the integral role that social workers play in making a more perfect Union.

SENATE RESOLUTION 593—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE CONTINUED VALUE OF ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS AND CONDEMNING THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION’S PURPORTED SUSPENSION OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE NEW START TREATY

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SANDERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 593

Whereas the United States maintains bipartisan support to ensure national security and the defense of United States allies and partners;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan stated “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” in his 1984 State of the Union address, and affirmed the conviction with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985;

Whereas, in January 2022, President Joseph R. Biden joined the leaders of the People’s Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to reaffirm that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”;

Whereas the United States, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland signed the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, committing “to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine” and “to refrain from the threat or use of force” against the country;

Whereas the United States has a history of leadership in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, including its work with Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation to ensure Ukraine did not retain any nuclear weapons left on its territory when it became independent;

Whereas the Russian Federation further illegally invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and has used veiled and blatant nuclear saber-rattling in service of its war of aggression against a sovereign state;

Whereas the war has led to thousands of casualties, including over 10,000 civilians and more than 560 children killed, along with the displacement of over 6,400,000 Ukrainians and an enduring global food crisis;

Whereas the Russian Federation’s illegal war against Ukraine represents the greatest threat to European security and freedom in a generation;

Whereas, on February 27, 2022, President of Russia Vladimir Putin ordered his military to put Russia’s nuclear forces on “special combat readiness” in an escalatory response to the United States’ and its Western allies’ unequivocal condemnation of the Russian Federation’s illegal invasion of Ukraine;

Whereas, on September 21, 2022, President Putin warned he was “not bluffing” when he said Russia has “various weapons of mass destruction” and “will use all the means available to us” to defend its territory shortly before annexing additional Ukrainian lands through “referendums”;

Whereas, in February 2021, the United States and Russian Federation extended the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, signed on April 8, 2010, and entered into force on February 5, 2011 (commonly referred to as the “New START Treaty”), for 5 years until February 5, 2026;

Whereas, on February 21, 2023, President Putin announced the Russian Federation’s purported suspension of the New START Treaty, the last major remaining bilateral nuclear arms control agreement, in a move deemed legally invalid by the United States;

Whereas New START has had bipartisan support and limits the Russian nuclear arsenal to 1,550 warheads on no more than 700 deployed delivery vehicles, and to 800 deployed and non-deployed strategic launchers;

Whereas New START has permitted robust and strict transparency and verification measures and on-site inspections, which have provided valuable insight into Russia’s nuclear arsenal;

Whereas the United States has decades of bipartisan leadership in nuclear arms control, including cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation even when relations were strained;

Whereas, in June 2023, the United States Government announced it is now ready to engage in a dialogue with the Russian Federation on a post-2026 nuclear arms control framework and is “prepared to stick to the central limits as long as Russia does” while also stating a “willingness to engage in bilateral arms control discussions” with the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China “without preconditions”;

Whereas the nuclear weapon states recognized by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, done at Washington, London, and Moscow July 1, 1968 (commonly referred to as the “Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty” or “NPT”), including the Russian Federation, the United States, and the People’s Republic of China, have an obligation to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”;

Whereas, in November 2023, senior United States and Chinese officials held “a candid and in-depth discussion on issues related to arms control and nonproliferation as part of ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication and responsibly manage the U.S.-PRC relationship”; and

Whereas the absence of a new framework for nuclear arms control after the expiration of New START would affect strategic stability and increase the risk of an unrestrained nuclear arms race with the Russian Federation; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns in the strongest terms the Russian Federation's nuclear escalatory rhetoric and veiled threats on the potential use of nuclear weapons to further its invasion and aggression against a free and independent Ukraine;

(2) condemns the Russian Federation's purported suspension of its participation in the New START Treaty;

(3) calls for immediate cessation of nuclear saber-rattling and nuclear escalatory rhetoric from the Russian Federation;

(4) emphasizes the continued value of arms control agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation;

(5) calls for the Russian Federation to promptly return to full implementation of the New START Treaty, including on-site inspections, provision of treaty-mandated notifications and data, and resumption of Bilateral Consultative Commission meetings;

(6) calls on the President to continue to engage the People's Republic of China in further bilateral talks on nuclear risk reduction and arms control, and to pursue new multilateral arms control efforts involving the 5 permanent members of the United Nations Security Council; and

(7) calls on the President to continue to pursue nuclear arms control and risk reduction dialogue with the Russian Federation to maintain strategic stability, ensure the conflict in Ukraine does not escalate to nuclear use, and avoid an unrestrained nuclear arms race.

SENATE RESOLUTION 594—DESIGNATING APRIL 17, 2024, AS “NATIONAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS DAY”

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. CRAMER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 594

Whereas assistive technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability or an older adult;

Whereas an assistive technology service is any service that directly assists a person with a disability or an older adult in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device;

Whereas, in 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 1 in 4 people in the United States, or almost 61,000,000 individuals, has a disability;

Whereas, during the 2021–2022 school year, the Department of Education reported that there were more than 7,300,000 children with disabilities;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that, among adults 65 years of age and older, 2 in 5 have a disability;

Whereas assistive technology enables people with disabilities and older adults to be included in their communities and in inclusive classrooms and workplaces;

Whereas assistive technology devices and services are necessities, not luxury items, for millions of people with disabilities and older adults, without which they would be unable to live in their communities, access education, or obtain, retain, and advance gain-

ful, competitive, and integrated employment;

Whereas the availability of assistive technology in the workplace promotes economic self-sufficiency, enhances work participation, and is critical to the employment of people with disabilities and older adults; and

Whereas State assistive technology programs support a continuum of services that include—

(1) the exchange, repair, recycling, and other reutilization of assistive technology devices;

(2) device loan programs that provide short-term loans of assistive technology devices to individuals, employers, public agencies, and others;

(3) the demonstration of devices to inform decision making; and

(4) State financing to help individuals purchase or obtain assistive technology through a variety of initiatives, such as financial loan programs, leasing programs, and other financing alternatives that give individuals affordable, flexible options to purchase or obtain assistive technology. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 17, 2024, as “National Assistive Technology Awareness Day”; and

(2) commends—

(A) assistive technology specialists and program coordinators for their hard work and dedication in serving people with disabilities who are in need of finding the proper assistive technology to meet their individual needs; and

(B) professional organizations and researchers dedicated to facilitating the access and acquisition of assistive technology for people with disabilities and older adults in need of assistive technology devices.

SENATE RESOLUTION 595—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND ALUMNI AND AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS IN THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 595

Whereas 30 years ago Congress established the Corporation for National and Community Service—now known as AmeriCorps—to unite national service programs under 1 agency, to create service opportunities that strengthen communities, and to expand pathways to education, careers, and civic participation for those who serve;

Whereas, since their inceptions, AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors national and community service programs have proven to be highly effective ways to—

(1) unite and engage the people of the United States in meeting a wide range of local and national needs;

(2) promote greater civic engagement; and

(3) provide pathways to education and careers;

Whereas each year 200,000 individuals serve in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors at nearly 40,000 locations across the United States to give back in an intensive way to communities, States, territories, Tribal nations, and the United States;

Whereas AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors funds have been invested in nonprofit, community, educational, and faith-based organizations, as well as local governments and Tribal nations, and those funds have—

(1) leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in outside funding and in-kind donations each year; and

(2) expanded the capacity of local and national programs to deliver on missions that strengthen the communities of the United States;

Whereas AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have provided millions of hours of service across the United States, helping to—

(1) improve the lives of the most vulnerable people of the United States;

(2) protect the environment;

(3) contribute to public safety;

(4) respond to disasters and public health emergencies;

(5) strengthen the educational system of the United States; and

(6) expand economic opportunity for all;

Whereas service in AmeriCorps promotes bridge-building, collaboration, and leadership skills, and AmeriCorps programs bring the people of the United States together from different backgrounds, generations, and geographic locations;

Whereas AmeriCorps funds, conducts, and disseminates research on the civic health of the United States and the return on taxpayer investment in national service programs;

Whereas AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers recruit and supervise millions of community volunteers, demonstrating the value of AmeriCorps as a powerful force for encouraging people to become involved in community service;

Whereas, for more than 5 decades, millions of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companion programs have played an important role in strengthening communities by sharing their experience, knowledge, and accomplishments with the individuals they serve;

Whereas, over the past 30 years, nearly 1,300,000 individuals have taken the AmeriCorps pledge to “get things done for America” by becoming AmeriCorps members through the AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC programs;

Whereas AmeriCorps members throughout the United States, in return for completing their service terms, have earned more than \$4,500,000,000 to use to further their own educational advancement and career readiness at colleges and universities across the United States;

Whereas AmeriCorps is a proven pathway to employment, providing members with valuable career skills, experience, and contacts to prepare them for the 21st century workforce;

Whereas leaders across political parties and ideologies recognize the value that national service provides to their communities and country, leveraging the power of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to meet the most urgent and pressing needs;

Whereas national service programs have engaged millions of people in the United States in results-driven service in the most vulnerable communities of the United States including in rural, urban, and suburban communities, providing hope and help to individuals with economic and social needs; and

Whereas AmeriCorps Week, observed in 2024 from March 10 through March 16, is an appropriate time for the people of the United States to—

(1) salute current and former AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers for their positive impact on the lives of people in the United States;

(2) thank the community partners of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors for making the programs possible;

(3) encourage more people in the United States to become involved in service and volunteering; and

(4) celebrate the lasting impact of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors programs over the last 30 years; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages the people of the United States to join in a national effort—

(A) to salute AmeriCorps members and alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers; and

(B) to raise awareness about the importance of national and community service;

(2) acknowledges the significant accomplishments across a 30-year history of the volunteers, members, alumni, and community partners of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors;

(3) recognizes the important contributions made by AmeriCorps members and alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to the lives of the people of the United States; and

(4) encourages individuals of all ages to consider opportunities to serve in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors.

SENATE RESOLUTION 596—RECOGNIZING GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON ITS 112TH BIRTHDAY AND CELEBRATING ITS LEGACY OF PROVIDING GIRLS WITH A SECURE, INCLUSIVE SPACE WHERE THEY CAN EXPLORE THEIR WORLD, BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS, AND HAVE ACCESS TO EXPERIENCES THAT PREPARE THEM FOR A LIFE OF LEADERSHIP

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. ERNST) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 596

Whereas March 12, 2024, marks the 112th anniversary of Girl Scouts of the United States of America (referred to in this preamble as “Girl Scouts”), the largest and most impactful leadership program for girls in the world;

Whereas the Girl Scout movement began on March 12, 1912, when Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low, a native of Savannah, Georgia, organized a group of 18 girls and provided them with the opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually;

Whereas, for over a century, Girl Scouts has advanced its mission to “build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place”;

Whereas today more than 50,000,000 women—trailblazers, visionaries, and leaders—are Girl Scouts alumnae who have made the world a better place;

Whereas, since its beginnings, Girl Scouts has emphasized public service and civic engagement and has fostered a sense of community in girls;

Whereas girls say that Girl Scouts supports their mental health and is an accepting, secure space where they feel free to be themselves and where leaders and other girls are sources of support during difficult times;

Whereas Girl Scouts is a powerful force for social connection and creates a positive and uplifting national and global network among girls;

Whereas Girl Scouts plays an indispensable role in engaging girls in afterschool and out-of-school programming and experiences that expand their world and allow them to tap into their inner community builder, innovator, change maker, and leader;

Whereas, at a time when civics education is missing from many schools, Girl Scouts engages girls of all grade levels in civics programming that deepens their understanding of democracy and government, prepares them for a lifetime of civic engagement, and motivates them to take action on issues that are important to them;

Whereas Girl Scouts offers girls 21st century programming in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), the outdoors, entrepreneurship, and beyond, helping girls develop invaluable life skills;

Whereas, to earn the Gold Award, individual Girl Scouts take on projects that have a measurable and sustainable impact on a community by assessing a need, designing a solution, completing a project, and inspiring others to sustain it; and

Whereas, as a member organization of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Girl Scouts is part of an international sisterhood of 10,000,000 girls and young women in 152 countries and is committed to offering girls more opportunities to engage with communities worldwide, make meaningful global connections, and explore global citizenship; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes Girl Scouts of the United States of America for 112 years of providing girls with a safe and inclusive space where they can hone their skills and develop leadership abilities;

(2) congratulates all Girl Scouts who earned the Gold Award in 2023; and

(3) encourages Girl Scouts of the United States of America to continue to champion the ambitions, nurture the creativity, and support the talents of future women leaders.

SENATE RESOLUTION 597—RECOGNIZING THE HERITAGE, CULTURE, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICAN INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE, AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. RISCH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 597

Whereas the United States celebrates National Women’s History Month every March to recognize and honor the achievements of women throughout the history of the United States;

Whereas an estimated 4,718,255 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women live in the United States;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women—

(1) have helped shape the history of their communities, Tribes, and the United States;

(2) have fought to defend and protect the sovereign rights of Native Nations; and

(3) have demonstrated resilience and courage in the face of a history of threatened existence, constant removals, and relocations;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women contribute to their communities, Tribes, and the United States through military service, public service, and work in many industries, including business, education, science, medicine, literature, and fine arts, including Pablita “Tse Tsan” Velarde, a Santa Clara Pueblo artist and painter whose art work depicted traditional Pueblo life and preserved Pueblo stories and knowledge, and whose paintings were commissioned for display at Bandelier National Monument;

Whereas, as of 2023, more than 4,400 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women were bravely serving as members of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas, as of 2023, more than 20,800 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women were veterans who made lasting contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women broke down historical gender barriers to enlistment in the military, including—

(1) Laura Beltz Wright, an Inupiat Eskimo sharpshooter of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II;

(2) Minnie Spotted Wolf of the Blackfeet Tribe, the first Native American woman to enlist in the United States Marine Corps in 1943; and

(3) Marcella LeBeau of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, a decorated veteran who served as an Army combat nurse during World War II and received the French Legion of Honour for her bravery and service;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States, including Lori Ann Piestewa, a member of the Hopi Tribe who was the first Native American woman to be killed in action while serving on foreign soil and the first woman serving in the Armed Forces of the United States to be killed in the Iraq War in 2003;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have contributed to the economic development of Native Nations and the United States as a whole, including Elouise Cobell of the Blackfeet Tribe, a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, who—

(1) served as the treasurer of the Blackfeet Tribe;

(2) founded the first Tribal-owned national bank; and

(3) led the fight against Federal mismanagement of funds held in trust for more than 500,000 Native Americans;

Whereas, as of 2020, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women owned an estimated 161,500 businesses;

Whereas, as of 2020, Native women-owned businesses employed more than 61,000 workers and generated more than \$11,000,000,000 in revenue;

Whereas American Indian and Alaska Native women have opened an average of more than 17 new businesses each day since 2007;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have made significant contributions to the fields of medicine and health, including—

(1) Susan La Flesche Picotte of the Omaha Tribe, who is widely acknowledged as the first Native American to earn a medical degree; and

(2) Annie Dodge Wauneka of the Navajo Nation, who—

(A) advocated for better public health, education, and living conditions on the Navajo Nation leading to her becoming 1 of

the first female council members for the Navajo Nation in 1951; and

(B) was the first Native American to receive a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have contributed to important scientific advancements, including—

(1) Floy Agnes Lee of the Santa Clara Pueblo, who—

(A) worked on the Manhattan Project during World War II; and

(B) pioneered research on radiation biology and cancer;

(2) Native Hawaiian Isabella Kauakea Yau Yung Aiona Abbott, who—

(A) was the first woman on the biological sciences faculty at Stanford University; and

(B) in 1997, was awarded the Gilbert Morgan Smith medal, the highest award in marine botany from the National Academy of Sciences; and

(3) Mary Golda Ross of the Cherokee Nation, who—

(A) is considered the first Native American engineer of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(B) helped develop spacecrafts for the Gemini and Apollo space programs; and

(C) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2019 1 dollar coin honoring Native Americans and their contributions;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have achieved distinctive honors in the art of dance, including Maria Tallchief or Wa-Xthe-Thon-ba of the Osage Nation, who—

(1) was the first major prima ballerina of the United States and was a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Kennedy Center; and

(2) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2023 1 dollar coin with her sister Marjorie Tallchief of the Osage Nation, Yvonne Chouteau of the Shawnee Tribe, Rosella Hightower of the Choctaw Nation, and Moscelyne Larkin of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, collectively known as the “Five Moons”, for the legacy they left on ballet;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have accomplished notable literary achievements, including Northern Paiute author Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, who wrote and published 1 of the first Native American autobiographies in United States history in 1883;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have regularly led efforts to protect their traditional ways of life and to revitalize and maintain Native cultures and languages, including—

(1) Esther Martinez, a Tewa linguist and teacher who developed a Tewa dictionary and was credited with revitalizing the Tewa language;

(2) Mary Kawena Pukui, a Native Hawaiian scholar who published more than 50 academic works and was considered the most noted Hawaiian translator of the 20th century;

(3) Katie John, an Ahtna Athabascan of Mentasta Lake, who was the lead plaintiff in lawsuits that strengthened Native subsistence fishing rights in Alaska and who helped create the alphabet for the Ahtna language;

(4) Edith Kenao Kanaka'ole, a Native Hawaiian language and cultural practitioner who—

(A) founded her own hula school, Hālau o Kekuhi;

(B) helped develop some of the first courses in Hawaiian language and culture for public schools and colleges; and

(C) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2023 quarter honoring her

significant contributions and accomplishments perpetuating Native Hawaiian culture and arts; and

(5) Dr. Gladys Iola Tantaquidgeon, a Mohegan medicine woman and anthropologist, who worked for 50 years at the Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum in Connecticut, the oldest Native American owned and operated museum in the United States, which she founded with her father and brother to preserve the culture and history of their Tribe, and which contributed to the Tribe's Federal recognition in 1994;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have excelled in athletic competition and created opportunities for other female athletes within their sport, including Reil Kapoliokaehukai Sunn, who—

(1) was ranked as longboard surfing champion of the world; and

(2) co-founded the Women's Professional Surfing Association in 1975, the first professional surfing tour for women;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have played a vital role in advancing civil rights, protecting human rights, advocating for land rights, and safeguarding the environment, including—

(1) Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratovich, Tlingit, a member of the Lukaax.ádi clan in the Raven moiety with the Tlingit name of Kaaxgal.aat, who—

(A) helped secure the passage of House Bill 14, commonly known as the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 (H.B. 14, Laws of Alaska. 17th Regular Session, Territorial Legislature. Feb. 16, 1945), in the Alaska Territorial Legislature, the first anti-discrimination law in the United States; and

(B) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2020 1 dollar coin honoring Native Americans and their contributions;

(2) Zitkala-Sa, a Yankton Dakota writer and advocate, whose work during the early 20th century helped advance the citizenship, voting, and land rights of Native Americans; and

(3) Mary Jane Fate, of the Koyukon Athabascan village of Rampart, who—

(A) was the first woman to chair the Alaska Federation of Natives;

(B) was a founding member of the North American Indian Women's Association; and

(C) was an advocate for settlement of Indigenous land claims in Alaska;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have succeeded as judges, attorneys, and legal advocates, including—

(1) Eliza “Lyda” Conley, a Wyandot-American lawyer and the first Native woman admitted to argue a case before the Supreme Court of the United States in 1909; and

(2) Emma Kailikapiolono Metcalf Beckley Nakuina, a Native Hawaiian who served as the first female judge in Hawaii;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women are dedicated public servants, holding important positions in the Federal judicial branch, the Federal executive branch, State governments, and local governments;

Whereas American Indian and Alaska Native women have served as remarkable Tribal councilwomen, Tribal court judges, and Tribal leaders, including Wilma Mankiller, who—

(1) was the first woman elected to serve as Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation;

(2) fought for Tribal self-determination and the improvement of the community infrastructure of her Tribe; and

(3) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2022 quarter honoring her legacy of leadership for Native people and women;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have also led

Native peoples through notable acts of public service, including—

(1) Kaahumanu, who was the first Native Hawaiian woman to serve as regent of the Kingdom of Hawaii; and

(2) Polly Cooper, of the Oneida Indian Nation, who—

(A) walked from central New York to Valley Forge as part of a relief mission to provide food for the Army led by General George Washington during the American Revolutionary War; and

(B) was recognized for her courage and generosity by Martha Washington;

Whereas the United States should continue to invest in the future of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women to address the barriers those women face, including—

(1) access to justice;

(2) access to health care; and

(3) opportunities for educational and economic advancement; and

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women are the life givers, the culture bearers, and the caretakers of Native peoples who have made precious contributions, enriching the lives of all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates and honors the successes of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women and the contributions those women have made and continue to make to the United States; and

(2) recognizes the importance of providing for the safety and upholding the interests of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions: S. Res. 595, S. Res. 596, and S. Res. 597.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I know of no further debate on the resolutions en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolutions en bloc.

The resolutions were agreed to.

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

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

The preambles were agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 20; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning

business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Kiel nomination; further, that the cloture motions with respect to the Kiel and Lee nominations ripen at 12 noon and that following the cloture vote on the Kiel nomination, the Senate recess until 2:15 to allow for the weekly caucus meetings; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Kiel nomination, all time be considered expired at 2:15 p.m. and that if cloture is invoked on the Lee nomination, all time be considered expired at 5:15; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be notified of the Senate's actions.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:39 p.m., stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. BRIAN T. CASHMAN

BRIG. GEN. SUSIE S. KUILAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. DAVID M. CHURCH

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

TUCKER R. HAMILTON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

JASON D. WALKER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

ANDREW H. BLACK

RYAN M. KEHOE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant colonel

JEFFREY A. BANKS

To be major

JONATHAN D. HEAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

VANESSA A. GASSWINT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

BRETT J. COOPER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

JACOB J. DALRYMPLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR MILITARY ACQUISITION ADVISOR IN THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 1725(A):

To be colonel

MARK E. DELORY

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 7064:

To be major

REYMOND J. RAMOS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY DENTAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 7064:

To be major

REZA H. HESHMATI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED WARRANT OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

WILLIAM C. PERRY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

TODD P. BALOG

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

EDGAR A. GONZALEZ

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

BREYER M. HOUSTON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

HAROLD J. SAINTCLOUD

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate March 19, 2024:

THE JUDICIARY

NICOLE G. BERNER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT.