

been making runs up into South Sudan and getting these people. So this is a major thing that many of these countries have joined in to try to do something about Joseph Kony.

Well, anyway, last year, I got a little bit concerned that nothing was happening. One of the reasons—I have to say this, Mr. President—nothing much was happening is because if you take these countries—like President Museveni and President Kagame, these Presidents came out of the bush. I think when they feel they are not able to get one renegade group such as this, they feel it is kind of a blow to their ego. Finally, I was able to get the three of them together—that was Joe Kabila, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, and President Museveni of Uganda—and we were able to get them all to agree to do something to eradicate this monster. So they are now in a position to do that.

That is another reason why our forces serve in a non-combat role. For the U.S. to capture or kill Kony would be a slap in the face to our allies. I respect them too much to do so. In 2009, I led a bipartisan group of Senators to pass into law S. 1067. It was called the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009. We had 64 cosponsors. This is the largest number of cosponsors on any kind of bill affecting Africa in history. We had these Senators cosponsoring the bill, and they all were very excited about it.

Let me tell you what the law says. It directs the administration to develop a regional strategy to “apprehend or remove” Joseph Kony, his top LRA commanders, disarm and demobilize the LRA fighters through political, economic, military, and intelligence assistance, and protect civilians from further attacks.

The law is kind of interesting because it specifically precludes us from entering into any kind of battle. I think that is the most important thing to talk about today because almost everyone who is reporting on this, including my good friend Rush Limbaugh, is talking about that our guys and gals are going to go into combat. No, they are not going to. They are specifically precluded from doing that. So it is not as it is in Libya. It has nothing to do with the War Powers Act because these are troops that are precluded from attacking except in self defense.

The Senate Armed Services Committee reported out the FY12 Defense Authorization Act, and we specifically—I know this because this is my language that we put in—prohibit the U.S. military forces from participating in combat operations to “apprehend or remove” Kony and the LRA. This is my language I put in the bill. So not only are they not going to be in combat, but they are precluded from being in combat. That is what we have right now, and it is before us today.

By the way, some people have mistakenly said this guy Kony is a Chris-

tian, and I want to make sure everyone knows he officially was disavowed by the Catholic Church in Uganda. I will read what a Catholic sister of the Comboni Catholic group said, who spent 15 years in Gulu—that is a place where I was some 15 years ago—in northern Uganda. I quote. This is a Catholic sister. She said:

I was in Gulu, North Uganda, when Joseph Kony took the leadership of this group that became famous for its atrocities. I saw people whose lips, mouth, ears, nose, were mercilessly cut without provocation. I still remember the 6 men who came to our premises in Gulu crying, asking for help as 3 of them had their right hand cut off—

As we saw a minute ago, and the other three the right foot [cut off by machetes].

It was all done by the LRA. I am going on, still quoting this Catholic nun:

... people cut into pieces with the machete, burnt alive after smearing their bodies with palm oil, small children locked in the hut and set fire on it [burned alive], babies pounded in the container used to pound the maize. Let us not forget women and girls raped, killed or abducted as sex slaves. ... a Congolese lady on Christmas Day 2008 lost 17 members of her family who had gone to church for prayer, all killed with the machete.

This is brutality we have never seen anything like before.

I think the other thing that is important to understand is we have several programs that affect Africa and other places around the world. One is called train and equip authorized by sections 1206, 1207, or 1208. What we do with train and equip is send people in to teach them how to train people, in this case Africa. We have over a thousand U.S. forces right now doing essentially what these 100 who the President sent over are there to do. Our military-to-military programs include counterterrorism, border security, maritime surveillance, and all this, but not combat.

As I say, No. 1, the thing to remember is, we are already doing this. What we are doing with the 100 people who are sent over to Africa—we have a thousand there already doing this.

Then, secondly, it is something that is very significant in our fight against terrorism in that area. We are not going to have any of our troops in combat. But this type of thing you see in these pictures right here—to see this guy here with his nose cut off, his ears cut off, his hands cut off—all of this—this is going on today, right now, at this moment, as we are speaking.

I stand behind the President in his decision. I do not very often stand behind this President, but I do in this case because we passed it without a dissenting vote. Every Member in here—there is not one who voted against it. So let's keep that in mind, that is the truth about what is happening now with the LRA. Joseph Kony and the LRA are responsible for one of the longest, most violent, and costly conflicts ever on the continent of Africa.

With that, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Morning business is closed.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2012

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to consideration of H.R. 2112, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2112) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 750 TO AMENDMENT NO. 738
(Purpose: To establish the National Criminal Justice Commission)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senator KOHL will be here momentarily. But until the managers of the bill are ready to proceed, I would, on behalf of Senator WEBB, call up his amendment, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Mr. WEBB, proposes an amendment numbered 750 to amendment No. 738.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under “Text of Amendments.”)

AMENDMENT NO. 738

Mr. REID. Mr. President, notwithstanding the previous action just taken, I ask unanimous consent that the substitute be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Mr. INOUE, proposes an amendment numbered 738.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of October 13, 2011, under “Text of Amendments.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I am pleased today to support the 2012 Agriculture appropriations bill. This is a

very austere measure. Almost every category of funding is lower than last year and much lower than the year before. Setting aside disaster and security items that we dealt with in debt limit negotiations, discretionary spending in this bill is \$200 million below 2011. Compared to 2010, it is \$3.2 billion lower. That is equal to a 15-percent reduction compared to 2010.

In total, discretionary spending is \$20.046 billion. That figure includes nearly \$300 million in disaster for hurricanes, tornados, floods, droughts, and other natural disasters. All together, discretionary spending is nearly \$2 billion below the President's request and is consistent with our 302(b) allocation.

To achieve savings and develop a balanced bill, Senator BLUNT and I had to set priorities. Among them was a goal to protect public health and safety, including food safety. We made sure these activities are protected. We provided more than \$1 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service so they can maintain current levels of inspection for meat and poultry. The bill includes almost \$2.2 billion for the FDA, which is an increase of \$50 million. Most of this increase is for food safety, and FDA is the only agency or office funded by this bill at a higher level than last year.

An equally high priority is protecting the most vulnerable Americans from hunger. The WIC Program, which historically accounts for more than one-third of all discretionary spending in this bill, is funded at almost \$6.6 billion. According to USDA, this level will support current participation levels. We also protected other domestic feeding programs, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which is a lifeline for many elderly Americans. We believe it is especially important during these tough times to maintain nutrition program participation, and we have done so in this bill.

Another priority worthy of protection is agricultural research. Without continued investment, food production in this country and around the globe will not be able to keep up with challenges posed by growing populations, climate change, invasive pests, and other threats. According to the Economic Research Service, global demand for food will grow 70 to 100 percent by 2050. To meet that demand, our production capacity will have to increase, and these increases will not happen without sustained emphasis on agricultural research.

Senator BLUNT and I have worked hard to protect these investments often at the expense of other USDA programs. One of the most important discussions in Congress today revolves around job creation. This bill includes more than \$2 billion for rural development loans and grants. These programs help launch and grow small businesses. They help rural communities build water and sewer lines which, of course, are essential to economic development. They help improve small town fire sta-

tions and health care clinics. They support rural housing. These projects are important, and Senator BLUNT and I have provided funding to help protect and create jobs in rural America.

Two of our programs, PL-480 and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, fall within the security category of discretionary spending and play a very important role in fighting world hunger. Right now, the Horn of Africa is under a state of declared famine, and the lives of millions of men, women, and children are at grave risk. Food aid is all that stands between life and death for these people, and I am glad to report that we are able to provide a slight increase in PL-480 above last year. However, we must closely monitor events in Africa and elsewhere since the funding levels for these programs in this bill remain below the 2010 levels.

This bill funds the priorities I have described above as well as conservation, marketing, trade, and many others important to the American people. In spite of the challenges we face, I believe Senator BLUNT and I have provided the proper balance for the programs in this bill.

I thank him for his help and his guidance. This is his first year as the ranking member of this subcommittee, and he has been very helpful.

As I said at the outset, this bill is very austere. The choices we made were difficult, but I strongly believe they were the correct ones. I urge every Senator to support this bill. I hope we can conclude floor action in a timely manner so we can proceed to conference with the House and send the bill to the President. USDA and FDA are now operating on a continuing resolution. We need to provide them with final spending levels for this fiscal year as soon as we can.

Procedurally, we will be considering two appropriations bills in addition to Agriculture: the Commerce-Justice-Science and the Transportation-HUD bills. Any Senator who has amendments to these bills should work with us to assure that the appropriate chairman and ranking member can be on the floor to respond to amendments that fall under their jurisdiction.

The discretionary programs and activities of USDA and FDA that are supported by this bill include high priority responsibilities entrusted to the Federal Government and its partners to protect human health and safety, contribute to economic recovery, and achieve policy objectives strongly supported by the American people. The ability to provide for these measures is made difficult by growing pressure on available levels of discretionary spending as a consequence of the overall public debate on Federal spending, revenues, and size of the Federal debt. While clearly a part of this overall discussion, the committee notes that discretionary spending has not in recent years been a significant cause to the rising debt of the nation. In fact, since

2001, when the U.S. government had a budget surplus of \$128 billion, the increase in non security domestic spending, when adjusted for inflation and population growth, has been zero.

Too often, the USDA programs funded by this bill are confused with farm subsidies and other mandatory spending more properly associated with multi-year farm bills. In contrast, this bill provides annual funding for programs familiar to all Americans such as protecting food safety through the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration, which also plays a vital role in maintaining the safety of the Nation's blood supply and availability of safe and effective medical drugs, biologics, and other components of our health system. This bill also provides funding to fight against the introduction and spread of noxious or infectious and often invasive pests and disease that threaten our plant and animal health environments, as well as funding for many other missions of dire importance to the American people.

As our economy witnesses increasing shifts of manufacturing capacity, and associated jobs, to foreign shores, we must never lose sight that the one area of production which must be protected as inherently domestic is that of our food supply. That does not mean that certain foods need not appropriately rely on import and export markets, but it does mean that we must never surrender our ability to adequately and safely feed our own people. Without adequate levels of research, development, and regulatory resources, that threat of surrender will be ever present and our natural resource base will remain always at risk. Accordingly and in the context of overall pressures on spending and the competing priorities that the Committee faces, this bill as reported provides the proper amount of emphasis on agricultural, rural development, and other programs and activities funded by the bill. It is consistent with the subcommittee's allocation for fiscal year 2012.

The bill provides appropriations to support personnel levels for every agency of the Department of Agriculture except for the Forest Service. The jurisdiction of USDA programs touches on subjects as far ranging as molecular science relating to an exotic plant disease to providing housing and nutrition assistance to elderly citizens. The men and women who carry out these programs are dedicated and play an important role in providing many of the most vital of services to the American people. In general, the funding for the salaries and expenses of these agencies has been reduced by 5 percent below last fiscal year. These reductions will require the Department to seek greater efficiencies in operations and to manage resources in a manner that will result in the mildest impact on program delivery and the personnel of USDA.

In spite of an abundance of rhetoric denouncing the presence of government

in our lives, it goes without saying that government plays a vital role in assuring the American people a strong sense of security which comes in many forms. One of the most important areas of security is the inherent ability to provide sufficient supplies of food and fiber. These supplies rely on continuing advances in science and, quite frankly, the importance of research in the areas of agricultural science will become a growing priority for us, and the world, in the decades immediately before us.

As mentioned above, a recent report of USDA's Economic Research Service outlined the importance of sound investments in agricultural research and the grim prospects in the near future if we ignore the warning signs of combined population growth and declining production capacity. Highlights of that report state the following:

By 2050, global agricultural demand is projected to grow by 70–100 percent due to population growth, energy demands, and higher incomes in developing countries. Meeting this demand from existing agricultural resources will require raising global agricultural total factor productivity, TFP, by a similar level. Maintaining the U.S. contribution to global food supply would also require a similar rise in U.S. agricultural TFP.

Total factor productivity, TFP, the broadest measure of productivity. It compares the total output of a sector to the total land, labor, capital, and material inputs used to produce that output. Increases in TFP imply more output is forthcoming from a given level of inputs, or, equivalently, fewer inputs are required to produce the same output. Growth in TFP is considered to be an indicator of the rate of technical change in a sector.

TFP growth in U.S. agriculture is predicated on long-term investments in public agricultural research and development, R&D. Productivity growth also springs from agricultural extension, farmer education, rural infrastructure, private agricultural R&D, and technology transfers, but the force of these factors is compounded by public agricultural research.

The rate of TFP growth, and therefore output growth, of U.S. agriculture has averaged about 1.5 percent annually over the past 50 years. Stagnant, inflation-adjusted, funding for public agricultural research since the 1980s may be causing agricultural growth to slow down, although statistical analyses of productivity growth trends are inconclusive.

ERS simulations indicate that if U.S. public agricultural R&D spending remains constant, in nominal terms, until 2050, the annual rate of agricultural TFP growth will fall to under 0.75 percent and U.S. agricultural output will increase by only 40 percent by 2050. Under this scenario, raising output beyond this level would require bringing more land, labor, capital, materials, and other resources into production.

Additional public agricultural R&D spending would raise U.S. agricultural

productivity and output growth. Raising R&D spending by 3.73 percent annually, offsetting the historical rate of inflation in research costs, would increase U.S. agricultural output by 73 percent by 2050. Raising R&D spending by 4.73 percent per year, 1-percent annual growth in inflation-adjusted spending, would increase output by 83 percent by 2050.

For these reasons, Senator BLUNT and I determined that funding for agricultural research remains a priority and we simply cannot take the risk of jeopardizing our agricultural production capacity. Today, we see visions of famine in the Horn of Africa. As hard as it is for us today to imagine famine ever touching this country, the sudden emergence of exotic plant or animal diseases coupled with dramatic shifts in weather patterns could disrupt our food production capacity in ways we would otherwise not imagine with repercussions that would sound throughout our economy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator KOHL in supporting this bill, the fiscal year 2012 appropriations bill for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies. I am glad we are considering appropriations bills on the Senate floor in a manner that will allow us to fully debate amendments.

In addition to funding the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, the bill we bring to the floor today also includes the fiscal year 2012 bills introduced by other committees, as Senator KOHL has already specified; by the Subcommittees on Commerce, Justice, Science and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development. For now, I will limit my comments just to the agriculture provisions and, of course, defer to my colleagues, Senator HUTCHISON and Senator COLLINS, on the provisions that relate to the other two bills.

Activities funded by the Agriculture bill touch the lives of every American every day. These activities include agricultural research, conservation activities, housing and business loan programs for rural communities, domestic and international nutrition programs, and food and drug safety.

Funding for each of these deserves thorough and thoughtful consideration. Senator KOHL and I have made some difficult decisions in drafting this bill. Aside from disaster recovery efforts, the bill is \$138 million below last year and represents a responsible approach to funding agricultural priorities as we tighten our belts and live more within our means.

While most programs are reduced by 5 percent, we prioritized those programs that protect the public health and help maintain the strength of our Nation's agricultural economy. Agriculture is one of the few sectors of our economy that enjoys a trade surplus,

and the overall state of the farm economy is currently strong. With the Nation's unemployment rate continuing to hover around 9 percent, expanding agricultural exports is even more vital, as every billion dollars in exports supports an estimated 8,000 American jobs.

That is one reason I was pleased we were able to pass the free-trade agreements with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia last week. Expanding access to these markets will create an estimated 20,000 agricultural-related jobs alone. However, expanding access to new markets is only one piece of the puzzle that maintains our agricultural economy.

Our agricultural products are the best in the world. Our producers are the best in the world at producing products that are desirable in the global market. This is in part the result of smart investment in America's agricultural research infrastructure. That is why I am pleased this bill places significant emphasis on maintaining research programs and our land grant university system and funding competitive research programs such as the agriculture and food research initiative. These programs are critical to helping our farmers increase production and will expand our Nation's economic growth.

Not only does every dollar spent on agricultural research result in a \$20 return to the U.S. economy, research investments also result in a food supply that is safe, abundant, and affordable. I am also glad that the agriculture bill includes funding to help farmers in communities recover from natural disasters. Missouri has seen unprecedented devastation from both tornados and flooding this year. Funding included in this bill for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and the Emergency Conservation Program is necessary to help those areas recover and resume their way of life. It is important that we support our farmers as they clear debris, regrade, and rehabilitate their land for the next growing season.

I thank Senator KOHL for the bipartisan working relationship we have on the agriculture subcommittee. This is my first bill as the ranking member of the subcommittee, and the chairman has given me every opportunity to provide input into the bill. He has done a good job of balancing the priorities of the agriculture subcommittee this year. I hope my colleagues join me in supporting the bill that the chairman and I present together today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

AMENDMENT NO. 755 TO AMENDMENT NO. 738

Mr. KOHL. I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to setting aside the pending amendments? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. KOHL] proposes an amendment numbered 755 to amendment No. 738.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 755 TO AMENDMENT NO. 738

(Purpose: To require a report on plans to implement reductions to certain salaries and expenses accounts)

At the end of title VII of division A, add the following:

SEC. 7 _____. Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate a report describing plans to implement reductions to salaries and expenses accounts included in this Act.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first of all, I congratulate the chairman and ranking member of the Agriculture appropriations subcommittee for the excellent work they have done and for bringing a bipartisan bill before the Senate.

Shortly, Senator PATTY MURRAY and I will do our opening statements on the fiscal year 2012 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate is now considering the fiscal year 2012 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill.

This bill has been supported by broad bipartisan majorities. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations subcommittee has 19 members. That is almost a fifth of the Senate. It is one of the largest subcommittees in the Senate.

Despite the diversity of views on our very large subcommittee, back on September 20, we voted unanimously to report the bill to the full Appropriations Committee. The next day members of our committee voted 28 to 2 to report the bill to the Senate.

This bill has strong bipartisan support because it addresses pragmati-

cally the very real housing and transportation needs of families across all regions of our Nation.

We all realize that middle-class families face many challenges in these troubling economic times. Businesses across the country continue to struggle in the aftershocks of the financial and economic crisis that has rocked communities everywhere. Too many workers are struggling to get back on the job and far too many families are still fighting to stay in their homes. Yet, at the same time, our Federal Government's debt continues to grow.

Sensitive to these realities, we put together legislation that funds critical pieces of our Federal Government, while cutting spending in a responsible way. I believe this bill achieves these goals while continuing to ensure that we are investing in our future and protecting the most vulnerable among us.

It was not an easy task. The allocation for housing and transportation programs is 19 percent lower—almost \$13 billion less—than the level Congress appropriated in fiscal year 2010. Believe me, the demands for the activities that are funded in this bill have not diminished. If anything, the needs have increased.

With unemployment still painfully high, poverty rates are now at their highest level in almost 20 years. This bill funds a critical piece of the safety net—housing assistance and homeless shelters—for millions of families who are one step from the street.

This bill is also a principal underwriter of the Nation's transportation network. The investments we included make it possible for people to get to work and get products to market.

Investing in our aging transportation system—our highways, aviation, and mass transit—is a key factor in making sure America can compete and win in the 21st century economy.

There are undoubtedly elements in the bill that many will not like. That was unavoidable. But Senator COLLINS and I had some very clear priorities, however, that guided our decision-making.

We wanted to invest in our transportation system, ensure that it remains safe, and protect the poor and disabled who depend on the programs in this bill to keep a roof over their heads, so the bill before the Senate includes funding to preserve the highway program at the current level of \$43.7 billion. This funding will allow communities to continue improving our transportation network, while providing critical jobs.

It also includes \$550 million for the highly competitive TIGER Grants Program for surface transportation projects that make a significant difference in our communities across the country.

This program has already helped finance projects in many States across this country, including in Seattle and Spokane in my home State of Washington.

This bill also provides funding to support FAA's efforts to develop its next-

generation air transportation system to accommodate growth in air travel in future years. It continues Federal support for Amtrak, providing the same level of funding as in fiscal year 2011 to maintain this key element of the transportation grid.

We are also investing in transit, providing almost \$2 billion to meet our commitments to communities that are improving their transit systems. These systems, as we all know, help reduce congestion and provide a critical service to those who rely on them every day to get to their jobs and home to their families.

Importantly, we continue the Federal oversight that makes travel on our Nation's air, road, and rail transportation systems the safest in the world.

The bill also provides funding to preserve rental assistance and affordable housing for the Nation's low income, including \$18.9 billion for the section 8 program, which over 2 million elderly, disabled, and low-income families rely on to ensure they have a safe place to live.

For those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, we have provided \$1.9 billion for homeless assistance grants. As part of this, we have included \$285 million for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program, which is critical to helping the growing number of homeless or at-risk families avoid or quickly escape homelessness.

I am also very proud that we worked to include \$75 million to fund over 11,000 new HUD-VA supportive housing, or HUD-VASH, vouchers.

Providing permanent housing for homeless veterans and their families, including veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, will help us achieve the goal of ending homelessness among our Nation's veterans.

The bill includes efforts to preserve and revitalize public housing, including \$120 million for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, as well as the Rental Assistance Demonstration. These programs support innovation and collaboration, including leveraging private sector resources. In this difficult fiscal environment, these are tools we need to help protect irreplaceable public housing, which is so desperately needed throughout our country.

Finally, the bill includes \$1.8 billion to provide disaster relief to communities where highways, public facilities, and other infrastructure have been damaged by flooding and other disasters.

Achieving all these goals required very difficult choices. The bill provides significantly reduced funding for high speed and intercity passenger rail grants. It also makes deep cuts to the Community Development Block Grant HOME Investment Partnership, and other programs I have long supported and I continue to believe in. It wasn't easy to make these decisions, but the real sacrifices will be felt in communities across our country.

The programs funded in our bill support important investments back

home. Our constituents will be the ones to see firsthand the impact of these cuts. Unfortunately, these types of painful sacrifices were necessary within the allocation we were provided.

In summary, this bill provides assistance to those who need it most, and it directs resources in a responsible and fiscally prudent way. It is a good bill. It will help commuters, homeowners, the most vulnerable in our society, and it helps our economy.

This bill has broad bipartisan support because it takes a practical approach to addressing the real needs we find in the transportation and housing sectors. I urge all of my colleagues to support the bill and help us move it rapidly toward passage.

Before I yield, I will take a moment to specifically thank Senator SUSAN COLLINS for her hard work and partnership. This was a very difficult bill to put together. It benefited from her input and from the hard work of her and all of her staff. I thank her for that.

With that, I yield for my friend and partner, Senator COLLINS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first, I thank Chairman MURRAY for her exceptional leadership on this bill. It has been a real partnership, a bipartisan partnership, to deal with some very difficult issues. You see that with the chairman and ranking member of the Agriculture Committee, as well, and with the third bill that is before us today, where Senators MIKULSKI and HUTCHISON also worked together in a bipartisan manner. I think this is a template for how the Senate ought to operate, which we need to do more of.

I am also very pleased that we are bringing the appropriations bills before the Senate. I am hopeful we can avoid having some huge omnibus bill where no one is too sure of what's in it, who negotiated it, and how different provisions made their way into the bill. That is not a good way to legislate. Instead, bringing these bills before the Senate so the Senate can work its will on these important funding bills is the appropriate way to proceed.

I am very pleased to join my colleagues—particularly the subcommittee chairman, Senator MURRAY—as we begin floor consideration of these three bills. I am very pleased to serve as the ranking member of the Transportation, Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Investment in economic development and infrastructure not only creates jobs now, when they are needed most, but also establishes the foundations for future growth. Just as important to our economic future, however, is reining in Federal spending. Getting our national debt under control must be made a priority governmentwide.

In setting priorities for the coming year, this appropriations bill strikes the right balance between thoughtful

investment in critical projects in infrastructure and housing programs and fiscal restraint, thereby setting the stage for future economic growth.

Our bill makes critical infrastructure and development investments and meets our responsibility to vulnerable populations, such as our homeless veterans. At the same time, this bill delivers on the promise of a responsible budget and recognizes the fiscal reality of an unsustainable \$14.3 trillion debt.

I can assure everyone that in this bill we are doing our part to establish more sustainable spending levels as quickly as possible. The proposed non-emergency funding levels for fiscal year 2012 are nearly \$13 billion below fiscal year 2010. That is a reduction of nearly one-fifth in just 2 years. The significant savings represent an unmistakable movement in the direction of fiscal sustainability. Nevertheless, we have done our best to provide the necessary resources that are needed to support ongoing infrastructure investment and important safety oversight in the programs administered by the Department of Transportation.

For example, we provided funding for the TIGER Grant Program of \$550 million. This will help to build infrastructure projects across this country that otherwise would not be constructed, and those infrastructure projects translate into real jobs and needed assets for communities across the country. We all know the link between essential infrastructure and jobs in economic development. After all, if businesses can't ship their goods or get their needed raw materials in an efficient, effective manner, then they are not going to be able to create and preserve jobs. That is why I see this bill, in many ways, as being a jobs bill.

In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration is provided adequate funding to improve the management of the air traffic control operations. There have been troubling recent reports of numerous operational errors by controllers which call into question the safety of our skies over some of our Nation's busiest airports. In response, our bill directs the FAA to implement data-driven performance standards to make certain that air traffic towers nationwide are properly staffed. By setting and enforcing these standards, the FAA can be more confident that air traffic controllers have the skills and discipline necessary to fulfill their critical duties.

In addition to improved safety oversight, this bill targets funds to the Nation's most critical infrastructure projects. I mentioned the TIGER Grant Program. In addition, through the Competitive National Infrastructure Investments Program, funding is provided to support projects nationwide that otherwise would not be built. In hopes of making this funding go even further, we have also increased the percentage of funding available to support credit assistance through the TIFIA loan program. On average, a TIFIA

loan allows every \$1 provided in Federal appropriations to leverage approximately \$30 in additional transportation infrastructure investment. That is the kind of innovation in infrastructure finance we need to produce a greater return on our taxpayers' investment.

In addition to transportation oversight and infrastructure, our bill also provides critical economic development and housing investments through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As with the Department of Transportation title, balancing key investment priorities with fiscal responsibility required significant and sometimes very difficult reductions in programs that are worthwhile but which we simply cannot afford to fund at the level we would like.

Addressing the ongoing challenge of homelessness remains a core priority for our subcommittee. Chairman MURRAY and I share a commitment to combating homelessness, particularly for our Nation's veterans. I am very troubled by a statistic I want to share with my colleagues. In 1 year's time, there are more homeless veterans than there are individual military members who were killed during the Vietnam war. That is a disgrace. That is something we must change. This bill provides \$75 million for HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program—the so-called HUD-VASH Program—to provide housing assistance for an additional 11,000 homeless veterans.

I have seen the result of this program in the State of Maine in a wonderful apartment complex that has been built specifically to meet the needs of our homeless veterans. It is in Saco, ME, and it is making such a difference in the lives of those who have served our country and yet now find themselves homeless.

I also strongly believe in the importance of the Community Development Block Grant Program. This is such a popular program in communities throughout our country. It supports economic growth strategies of communities and enables key investments in their long-term economic growth. It is programs such as the CDBG Program that lay the foundation for future prosperity. We were not able to provide as much funding, frankly, for this program as I would have liked and as Senator MURRAY would have liked. I hope we can continue to work on it once we get to conference.

As we head into fiscal year 2012, our economy continues to struggle with high rates of unemployment, with stagnant incomes, and with prices that, in some areas, are starting to rise. Unfortunately, this makes it very difficult for us to fund these programs that are meeting an ever-growing need. For this reason, it has been all that much more challenging to achieve lowered budget targets. To address this challenge, therefore, our bill includes several measures that are designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs at HUD.

This year, we took very seriously the alarming reports on oversight deficiencies under the HOME program. For example, in an effort to ensure that funding for the HOME program efficiently achieves its goal of delivering affordable housing to those who most need it, we worked with the HUD Office of Inspector General to improve the program's regulations to better monitor and assess risks. The bill also directs HUD to work with the Office of Inspector General to identify strategies that the Department can implement to address problems at certain troubled public housing authorities and to hold them accountable for mismanagement of taxpayer funds. With so many important programs under pressure to absorb reductions, it is more important than ever to ensure that HUD's programs are free from mismanagement, waste, fraud, and abuse.

I appreciate the opportunity to join with Senator MURRAY in presenting this legislation to the Chamber. If there is one theme that runs throughout our bill, it is practicality. We have tried to take a nonpartisan practical approach that asks tough questions but makes sure we are setting priorities for those programs that are most essential to the most vulnerable individuals and families in our Nation. At the same time, we worked very hard to make sure we were funding those programs that were absolutely essential in meeting economic and job-creation priorities. It is my hope our colleagues will support our bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am pleased to present to the Senate the fiscal year 2012 bill to fund CJS appropriations; that is, the Department of Commerce, Justice, Science, and related agencies. I wish to thank Leader REID and Minority Leader MCCONNELL for bringing the CJS bill to the floor so we Senators have an opportunity to discuss and vote on this important legislation.

The CJS bill is the product of bipartisan cooperation. I stand here today with my ranking member, my colleague, my partner on this bill, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON. At the outset, I wish to thank her and her excellent staff for working hand in hand to advance the cause and the goals we believe in—creating jobs, making sure our streets and our neighborhoods are safe, and, at the same time, funding innovation and technology so America continues to be an exceptional Nation. We have worked together, and I thank her for her support and her cooperation.

This fiscal year CJS totals \$52.8 billion in discretionary spending. It is consistent with the subcommittee's allocation. That allocation is \$491 billion below 2011. So everybody should hear this. We are almost \$½ billion below where we were in 2011, and we are \$5 billion below what the President want-

ed in 2012. When the President said he wanted to outbuild, outeducate, and outinnovate, he had a different budget than what we have today because of the substantial cuts that were made in other legislative initiatives.

These agencies promote jobs. They also promote security and they promote, as I said, American innovation. Let's talk about some of the agencies that promote jobs. Let's start with the Department of Commerce.

I am very proud of the Department of Commerce and its funding for the International Trade Administration which enforces our trade laws and promotes small businesses overseas and also our Economic Development Administration, creating economic growth in our communities and in our small towns. The National Institutes of Standards works with the private sector to set the standards for those new products and those new technologies. In the Patent and Trademark Office, we have done a lot in innovation. We believe if one invents it, they should be able to keep it. Then, of course, we have our Census Bureau, which makes sure every American counts and every American should be counted—or every person who lives in the United States.

We have the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which predicts our weather and also protects our marine resources.

Then this committee funds the Department of Justice, keeping us safe from violent crime and terrorism, prosecuting criminals, and also funding State and local police departments, the National Science Foundation and NASA, which, again, promote our innovation. This agency also funds the Commission on Civil Rights, upholding citizens' rights, along with the Equal Opportunity Commission, ensuring fairness particularly in the workplace, and the Legal Services Corporation, which represents the poor. This agency has broad scope, but, again, it is America's job to promote jobs, security, and innovation.

Within our ever-shrinking funding levels, the CJS bill has priorities to save lives, promote jobs, and protect the safety of our citizens.

We face two very pressing funding challenges that are critical to life and safety. One is the next generation of weather satellites. It is our weather satellites that not only say whether we are going to have stormy weather, but our weather operations also give us early predictions for everything from tornadoes to hurricanes. Also, we have a growing and explosive prison population. Together, looking at just those two, the issue related to an exploding population in prisons, meaning more prisoners, more density in prisons—they require \$350 million more in our budget, and we needed almost \$400 million for our weather satellites. Meeting their obligations caused us to set other priorities, but we did meet our priorities. We provided \$2.3 billion to support our police officers, to keep them

safe with bulletproof vests, and to make sure they had funds for the latest crime analysis and forensic tools. We also funded the Byrne formula grants, which are the important tools for State and local police operations, at \$395 million. Regrettably, it is \$35 million below last year. We also funded our COPS hiring grants but, again, at a reduced level.

Then there is Federal law enforcement. Aren't we proud of our FBI? Look at what they have done in the last 2 weeks with the take-down of the plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador. But the FBI is on the job every day in every way, going after organized terrorists, organized crime, and even predatory lenders and mortgage fraud. They are on the job looking out for us. And look how they work hand in hand with DEA, our Drug Enforcement Agency.

We have the Marshals Service, which, in effect, guards our judges and so on at our courthouses, but they are also the guys who go after sexual predators. Under the law we have, they are enforced with any runaway or rogue sexual predators.

This means we did what we could, but unfortunately we had to cut these agencies by 2 percent. It was with enormous regret that I had to do that, but we are where we are. Cuts do have consequences. I say to my colleagues, cuts do have consequences.

Then there is the area of innovation. We have worked hand in glove with the authorizers on the America COMPETES Act. Senator HUTCHISON is a member of that committee and one of the promoters of that. The America COMPETES Act recommends that we increase funding for NSF and other science agencies by 7 percent every year. Well, we would settle for 3 percent every year. This is to come up with the new ideas for the new jobs, for the new products. But what did we have to do? We didn't raise it by 7 percent; we didn't raise it by the amount we want; in fact, we had to reduce it by 3 percent.

All those who would like to pound their chests and go "hoo-ha hoo-ha" on American exceptionalism have to realize that cuts have consequences. But we did work to ensure the fact that we have funded the national space agency at \$17.9 billion. It is \$1.5 billion below the authorized level, which, again, Senator HUTCHISON is one of the lead authorizers. We did preserve a balanced space program, human space flight, space science, also aeronautics, and the development of a reliable space transportation system. This means, though, that NASA will be asked once again to do more.

We did fund the James Webb Space Telescope, which is the successor to Hubble. By funding the James Webb Space Telescope, we will ensure America's lead in astronomy and in physics for the next 50 years.

I am very proud of the fact that a Marylander at Johns Hopkins and the

Space Telescope Institute, on the Hopkins campus, just won the 2011 Nobel Prize for physics—Dr. Adam Riess. When he accepted the Nobel Prize, do you know what he said. He said: I could not have done my Nobel Prize without the Hubble telescope. All my research is based on the Hubble. Then he said: I want to thank the American people for supporting the political leadership that funded the Hubble and kept Hubble in space during very dark times. We won that Nobel Prize. It is going to reveal secrets of the universe and secrets of physics that are going to help us again invent new kinds of things.

So our bill does focus on jobs, safety, and innovation. We would have liked to have done more, but regrettably we could not. So, Mr. President, we bring this bill before you.

I want to close by saying this. There are many who like to wring their hands about China, and China is surging ahead. We can't stop China, but we can stop ourselves. And the question is do we want to stop ourselves in what we need to do? We need to promote commerce, trade, patents to protect our intellectual property, make sure we have a standard-setting agency, so if you invent it, you create the standard, so you can sell it around the world. We need to be able to save lives so we can save them not only at NIH in finding cures but also throughout Maryland, the Plains of the United States or in my own community. You know when a hurricane is coming, you know when a tornado is coming. But right now the Chinese are taking what is our National Science Foundation and they are replicating it, and we are, unfortunately, forced to keep it at a very modest funding level.

So if you want America to continue to be great and you want America to continue to be exceptional and you want to create jobs, support the passage of the CJS bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise as the ranking member of the Commerce-Justice Subcommittee, and I am very pleased that the bill we are presenting is a bill Chairman MIKULSKI and I worked on together. We came together in compromise, but we didn't compromise on the top level of spending, and I commend Chairman MIKULSKI for her leadership in this very important effort. We have a top line that is \$491 million below the fiscal year 2011 continuing resolution and \$4.9 billion below the President's request. So we set a very strict top line, but within that I believe we worked a good compromise on the competing priorities of law enforcement, terrorism prevention, research, and competitiveness through investing in science.

I will just say that I relate so much to what the chairman said about the Webb telescope and the importance of that, and that the Nobel Prize winner whom we are so proud to have from

America—in astronomy—mentioned that was how he was able to do his research makes me so proud that we have made that kind of investment. You will see that in other areas where our finest scientists have been supported, and it is the kind of research that is not going to be done in the private sector. So this is how we will be able to create something that will provide jobs of the future. America is ahead in the world. Our economy is vibrant not because we manufacture better but because we have the ideas for the manufactured products that have kept our economy going for hundreds of years.

The chairman has gone over the major funding levels, so I won't go into that, but I do want to point out a few of those that I think are important.

First, in law enforcement, we have worked hard to ensure that law enforcement receives the priority funding needed to protect our Nation, our communities, our children, and victims of crime.

One thing I would like to add is that we have ensured that the FBI has the resources needed to continue the significant increase in their contribution to counterterrorism and working with the CIA and counterintelligence worldwide. This added responsibility commenced after 9/11, and Director Mueller has overseen this, really the largest transition in this agency probably in modern times from really traditional crime fighting to these added missions. I anticipate we will add even more in conference with the House, and I will support that. I think they have become a major contributor to our national security and the global security we are all seeking.

The language is included also to encourage the Department of Justice to maintain its fiscal year 2011 current level of funding focusing on the southwest border. It is \$1.9 billion. This is so important as violence continues to spread across our border and the drug cartels become increasingly emboldened and, unfortunately, sophisticated. So this was something the chairman and I agreed we must keep at the level funding, and we have done so.

The El Paso Intelligence Center is another important program that is one of our first safeguards along the border. This is a national tactical intelligence center that supports law enforcement in the United States, in Mexico, and the whole Western Hemisphere. It is the Drug Enforcement Administration's most important intelligence-sharing entity focusing on all that is related to the border.

Another important program I will point out is the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program. We call it SCAAP. SCAAP provides Federal assistance to States and localities that are incurring the costs of incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens who have been accused or convicted of State and local offenses. This is a Federal responsibility, and county jails and the State prisons should not be holding these

prisoners without help from the Federal Government because they are illegal aliens.

Lastly, this bill provides significant support for NASA. The diverse set of programs that are aimed at the exploration of space and understanding Earth are so important for our country's future. Senator MIKULSKI and I have crafted a bill that balances the needs of science while also encouraging the vehicles that will take our astronauts to the space station for research and making use of that very important scientific station.

Our part is part of a national lab, and it was designated as such, and then, in the future beyond, it will include the supporting of emerging commercial space companies to bring cargo and astronauts to the space station, supporting our investment, taking advantage of the opportunities for discovery on the space station, and ensuring that NASA will provide for human exploration beyond low Earth orbit.

So many of us watched the last shuttle return. Knowing we had no vehicle that would take Americans into space under American control for at least the foreseeable future was not well regarded in our country, and we need to make this commitment. We have made the commitment today with appropriations to ensure that we are going to continue our preeminence in space, that we are going to go through low Earth orbit and we are going to see what is beyond the Moon in an asteroid or Mars, see if there is life there and what we can learn from life that might be enhanced on Earth. So it is important that now we have the heavy lift launch vehicle design NASA released last month. It will carry our astronauts in the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle to the Moon, the asteroids, and beyond.

Now that this decision has finally been made, we can focus on the future, and I think Americans expect that from us. NASA has announced its commitment to the path Congress has authorized, and now we can provide the funds to accomplish the development of that rocket.

So in addition to what the chairman has already mentioned, I am certainly a supporter of America COMPETES. I would like to do much more in the science area, the hard science, because I think that is our future. It is how we create jobs and keep our economy vibrant, having the new products and the new ways to secure more jobs and more economic vitality in the technical sector in our country.

I am very pleased. I thank the Senator from Maryland and her staff so much for helping and working with us. They have been great partners. I could not ask for any better. I think we have done a job that was hard to do with the lower levels of spending that we all expect and accept, but I think we have been able to cover the priorities well.

I wish to end on a lighter note and say my friend, the Senator from Missouri, is sitting here. I want to point

out this will be the last time in the next 10 days that he and I are going to be on the same side because, of course, the mighty Texas Rangers are going to meet the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series very shortly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise to speak as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. TESTER are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate regarding judicial nominees from Pennsylvania.

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

THE EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise to offer my full support for the nomination of Judge Cathy Bissoon to serve as a U.S. district judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania. But before I begin, I would like to quickly express my appreciation to my colleague, Senator CASEY, whom I see across the Chamber at this moment, to thank him for his collaboration in our joint efforts to fill the vacancies on the Federal bench from Pennsylvania.

As I think many of our colleagues would agree, the confirmation of Federal judges is one of the most important constitutional functions of any Member of the Senate. Since I was sworn in, Senator CASEY and I have worked together on a bipartisan basis to identify and advance qualified candidates for the Federal bench. As part of this effort, I have supported President Obama's three district court nominees for Pennsylvania, even though they were first appointed before I was sworn in to the Senate. I am pleased this spirit of cooperation has led to today's confirmation vote for Judge Bissoon. I remain hopeful we will have a number of confirmation votes in the very near future as Senator CASEY and I continue to work together to recommend qualified individuals to serve on the Federal bench.

A quick couple words about Judge Bissoon. She was nominated last year following the recommendations of Senators CASEY and Specter and was renominated by the administration in January. Judge Cathy Bissoon has had a distinguished career in the law. She was born and raised in New York City, where she attended Alfred University and graduated summa cum laude with a degree in political science. She earned her law degree from Harvard University before moving to Pittsburgh to join Reed Smith, an international law firm, where she has practiced labor and employment law in particular. She went on to clerk for Chief U.S. District

Judge Gary Lancaster and later returned to Reed Smith to be a partner in 2001. Judge Bissoon left private practice in 2008 to assume her current position as magistrate judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Her strong work ethic, discipline and, in particular, her experience in labor and employment law make her well qualified to preside over cases in the Western District of Pennsylvania, a district with a heavy employment caseload.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to sit down with Judge Bissoon and learn more about her legal philosophy. She stressed to me in that conversation that she understands very well a judge's role is to enforce the law as written, regardless of the judge's personal beliefs about that law. Chief Justice Roberts came up with a metaphor for this which has become rather famous, in which he described the role of a judge as an official on the playing field but not one of the players. Judge Bissoon confirmed that is exactly her view of the role of a judge, that it is the role of a legislator, branched together with the executive, to pass the law and the role of the judge to enforce the law impartially. I am confident she understands that role, has internalized that and would bring that, as well as a great degree of experience and judicial acumen, to this very important role. That is why I am supporting her nomination.

Following a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Judge Bissoon was unanimously approved by the committee back in July. I have strong confidence in Judge Bissoon's ability, and I encourage my Senate colleagues to join me in confirming her as a Federal district judge for the Western District in a vote that will be occurring later this evening.

In addition to Judge Bissoon's nomination, I would like to briefly express my support for two other Pennsylvania nominees who were also unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee back in July. I hope they will each receive floor consideration very soon.

Mark Hornak, a nominee for the Western District of Pennsylvania, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, where he was recognized as a National Merit Scholar. He went on to graduate summa cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, where he served as editor-in-chief of the Law Review and was awarded the Order of the Coif.

Following graduation, he served as a law clerk to the Honorable James Sprouse, U.S. circuit judge for the Fourth Circuit. Since 1982, he has practiced labor and employment law at Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney. Throughout Mr. Hornak's career, he has been a careful student of the law and has demonstrated an intellectual curiosity and commitment to integrity, which I know will serve him well if he is confirmed to the bench.

Finally, Robert Mariani is a nominee for the Middle District of Pennsyl-

vania. He graduated cum laude from Villanova University, received his J.D. from Syracuse University College of Law. Following graduation, he established the law firm of Mariani & Greco, where he began a career as a civil litigator in the Scranton area and has done that for about three decades.

He is a respected member of the Scranton community. He was nominated for a State superior court seat in 1993 by then-Gov. Robert Casey, Sr. He served as a mediator or arbitrator for a variety of legal matters and currently is sole shareholder of Robert D. Mariani, P.C., with a focus on employment and labor law. Mr. Mariani's diligence, professionalism, and knowledge of the law would be an asset to the bench.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to meet separately with both Mr. Hornak and Mr. Mariani and I am very confident of their intellect, their experience, their integrity, temperament, commitment to public service, and to their understanding of the proper role of the judge. I believe these character traits and this range of experience will enable them to serve the people of Pennsylvania. I am, therefore, pleased to rise to speak on their behalf and to urge all my colleagues to support their confirmation.

Mr. LEAHY. If the Senator will yield on that point, he is absolutely right. They were reported unanimously from the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 21. They were cleared that day on the Democratic side. We were perfectly willing to bring them up and voice vote them that day or the next day or the day after. We were perfectly willing to have a vote in August before we went out. We were perfectly willing to have them voted on in September. We were perfectly willing to have them voted on early, in early October because of the Senator's support and Senator CASEY's support. For some reason, that was not cleared on the Senator's side of the aisle. I will be happy to work with my friend from Pennsylvania—after all, we each have the same first name—and we will try to clear them. What the Senator said about them is absolutely true. These are the kind of judges—whether we have a Republican or Democratic President, they would be proud to have them on the bench, and I pledge to work with both Senators from Pennsylvania to get them through.

Mr. TOOMEY. I thank the chairman.

It is my understanding we are going to vote this evening on Judge Bissoon, and I would certainly enjoy the opportunity to work closely with the chairman to ensure that we could have votes as soon as possible on the other nominees.

I yield the floor.