

We have asked the White House to assist with a debris cleanup task force to get all the agencies that are involved—State, tribal, Federal—to be participants in how we address these issues.

The Government of Japan last year stepped forward and provided \$5 million to the affected States, plus an additional \$1 million to Canada—they were not obligated to provide the money for an effort to help us address the cleanups. What we need to do in this country—again, we have asked the White House to establish this interagency task force to deal with the debris that continues to come to our shore is to determine how we engage, how we are working together to help make a difference. That is going to be critical. We also don't want to forget the private interests that are potentially engaged in the cleanup. We have so many different interests, so many different industries, and private citizens who are so dependent on our navigable waterways, our healthy ecosystems. What we need is good communication and good leadership. We need a plan to guide the interagency and the public-private partnership approach to solving the challenge. I commend the NOAA Marine Debris Program for their coordination and their response to the work. The fact is they are small. They are overtasked. They need the help of their Federal partners to address this as a national priority.

So as we continue to see increased levels of debris coming over after the tsunami, it is imperative we act to address it.

It has been interesting in the Alaska press because there have been ongoing stories about the connections. We think Japan is thousands of miles away and we don't have that connection. Beachcombers found a soccer ball with the name of a Japanese boy—a 16-year-old boy and his phone number—and were able to make that call back to the village of Rikuzentakata and tell that young man, whose family lost everything in the tsunami, that we have your soccer ball here. It made it to the shore of Middleton Island in Alaska. But for that young man to have been delivered that soccer ball, after everything else he and his family owned had been wiped out, was a reminder that we are all connected and how we can be working together to help one another.

I ask unanimous consent to have this news story from the Anchorage Daily News printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

In Alaska, we have a lot of experience with helping our neighbors out. We will continue to work to address the issues, work to address the debris that is reaching our shore, but we do need a little bit of help from our government. We need a little bit of help when it comes to advancing this interagency task force so we can address what we are seeing in Alaska, what we are seeing on our coastline in the Pacific Northwest and in Hawaii as well.

With that, I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

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

[From the Anchorage Daily News, Mar. 9, 2013]

2 YEARS AFTER JAPAN TSUNAMI, DEBRIS SPREADS IN US

(By Becky Bohrer—Associated Press)

JUNEAU, AK.—Two years ago, the yellow buoy was hanging as part of a restaurant sign in the coastal community of Minamisanriku in northern Japan when an earthquake triggered a tsunami and washed it—and so much more—out to sea.

About a year later, the buoy was found more than 3,000 miles away on a remote Alaska island, discovered by an avid beachcomber who, through sheer coincidence, was later able to find the owner, who had lost her home and business. Hundreds of similar buoys have been found on beaches along the West Coast, a combination of the everyday trash that has plagued coastal areas for years and debris washed away by the March 11, 2011 disaster.

Distinguishing between the two is difficult. Just 21 items from among the more than 1,500 reports of possible tsunami debris have been firmly traced back to the tsunami, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The confirmed items include several derelict vessels, including a small boat found in Hawaii waters, large docks that have washed ashore in Washington state and Oregon and a motorcycle that washed ashore off the coast of British Columbia.

These are items that tend to have unique markings—names of people and places, registration numbers or other identifying information. The agency lists scores of other items along the West Coast and across the Pacific Ocean as potentially linked to the catastrophe.

The Japanese government estimated 1.5 million tons of debris was floating in the ocean in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, which devastated a long stretch of Japan's northeastern coast and killed thousands of people. But it's not clear how much is still out there or what might reach U.S. shores. NOAA has said the debris is spread over an area roughly three times the size of the contiguous United States, and that beachgoers may notice an increase in debris "over many years," in addition to what normally washes up.

Beachcombing on Middleton Island, in the northern Gulf of Alaska, has long been a favorite pastime for radar technician David Baxter and some of his colleagues. In early 2012, there had been talk about finding tsunami debris—"a wall with a safe in it or a briefcase of money, we'd always joke about that"—but Baxter said he didn't think it was realistic he'd find anything related to the tsunami, given models he'd seen at the time that suggested the debris would move much further south.

Then, in February 2012, a co-worker found a soccer ball. Baxter subsequently found another soccer ball—a discovery that made international headlines as one of the first identifiable pieces of debris to wash up—a volleyball and the buoy.

The buoy stood out to Baxter as a bit different from other buoys that have washed up. For example, it was hard, not inflatable, and had writing on it. By chance, when a Japanese film crew was visiting him and his wife after the discovery of the soccer ball, they panned on other items he'd found, including the buoy, he said. A friend of the restaurant's owner, Sakiko Miura, happened to

recognize it, and the owner later confirmed it was hers through a photo sent by Baxter.

FedEx, which flies regularly between Anchorage and Tokyo, volunteered to return items including the balls found by Baxter and the buoy last June. The team traveled by plane to Tokyo and then by train to outlying communities, hand-delivering the items, spokeswoman Sharon Young said.

"It was a wonderful experience, to reunite people with things that meant a lot to them and that survived this incredibly devastating situation," she said Friday.

Baxter and his wife were recently able to talk to Miura, who said she plans to rebuild. He said he found the owner of the soccer ball his colleague found, an 8-year-old, and plans to return it this summer.

Baxter said he can't help but be affected by what he's found. He wife is Japanese and he said he has visited the nation several times. But it's more than that.

"I wonder all the time, when you see (things) if the person was in the house, if they survived," he said, adding later: "Of course, when I see the housing insulation and household items, shampoo bottles, shaving cream bottles with Japanese writing on them, yeah, it hurts a little."

STRAW PURCHASING OF FIREARMS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last week I introduced bipartisan legislation with Senator COLLINS to combat the straw purchasing and trafficking of firearms. We were joined by other Senators from both sides of the aisle. We have made good progress since then. Last Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted for our bill as an amendment to the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, S. 54. This is the first legislative vote on measures related to gun violence in either the Senate or the House since the Newtown tragedy. Every Democratic Senator on the Committee voted in favor of our bill and we were joined in that support by the Committee's ranking Republican, Senator GRASSLEY. I appreciate Senator GRASSLEY's cooperation in getting our bill reported after weeks of consultation and I look forward to working closely with him as we move forward.

The White House called the Judiciary Committee action "an important bipartisan step" that takes on "the very serious problem of gun trafficking." At the signing of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act last Thursday, the President called the Judiciary Committee's action on our bill a "big step" and "real progress." He noted that our bill "would crack down on folks who buy guns only to turn around and funnel them to dangerous criminals."

I want to continue to make progress on this legislation and other bills that can be effective in reducing illegal gun violence in our country. We have the strong support of several leading law enforcement organizations including the Fraternal Order of Police, the FBI Agents Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and

the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. Last week I received a letter from the NAACP lending their strong support to our efforts. I thank all of these organizations for their assistance and support.

Tomorrow, the Judiciary Committee will continue its work on three remaining gun violence measures that have been on our agenda for the past weeks: Senator SCHUMER's proposal to expand requirements for background checks, Senator BOXER's proposal to enhance the safety of our schools, and Senator FEINSTEIN's bill to reinstitute an assault weapons ban. I aim by the end of the week to have completed Judiciary Committee action on these legislative proposals.

At the bill signing last Thursday, the President observed that we were able finally to pass the Violence Against Women and Trafficking Victims Protection legislation on a bipartisan basis because the American people spoke up. That is what happened on VAWA when a group of House Republicans switched their position to support passing the VAWA bill that they had not supported last year.

That is what is also needed in the context of gun violence legislation. Seven of the eight Republican Senators on the Judiciary Committee voted against closing the loophole in the law to combat straw purchasing and gun trafficking. If we are going to be able to close loopholes in our background check system, improve school safety with more resources for resource officers that include counselors and officers, and if we are going to outlaw straw purchasing and gun trafficking, the American people need to speak up and be heard. If Congress is going to place limits on high capacity clips, it will be because the American people demand such action.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY pertaining to the introduction of S. 517 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

CONSOLIDATED AND FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I submit to my colleagues the following explanatory statement with regard to H.R. 933:

The divisions contained in the Act are as follows:

DIVISION A—AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

DIVISION B—COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

DIVISION C—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

DIVISION D—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

DIVISION E—MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

DIVISION F—FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

DIVISION G—OTHER MATTERS

Section 3 of the Act states that, unless expressly provided otherwise, any reference to "this Act" contained in any division shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

Section 4 of the Act specifies that this explanatory statement shall have the same effect with respect to the allocation of funds and implementation of this legislation as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference.

Section 5 of the Act states that each amount designated by Congress as being for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terror is contingent on the President so designating all such amounts and transmitting such designations to Congress. The provision is consistent with the requirements in the Budget Control Act of 2011 for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terror designations by the President.

References in this explanatory statement in division C, Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2013, to "conferees" are deemed to be references to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and references to the "conference agreement" are deemed to be references to the recommendation in division C of this Act.

DIVISION A—AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013 CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTIVES

Provisions that were in both the House Report (H.Rpt. 112-542) and Senate Report (S.Rpt. 112-163) remain unchanged except as noted herein.

Executive branch wishes cannot substitute for Congress' own statements as to the best evidence of congressional intentions, which are the official reports of the Congress. Funds in this Act must be used for the purposes for which appropriated, as required by section 1301 of title 31 of the United States Code, which provides: "Appropriations shall be applied only to the objects for which the appropriations were made except as otherwise provided by law."

The House and Senate report language that is not changed herein is approved. While repeating some report language for emphasis, these recommendations do not intend to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein.

In cases in which the House or the Senate have directed the submission of a report, such report is to be submitted to both the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations no later than sixty days after enactment, unless otherwise directed.

Hereafter, in Division A, the term 'the Committees' refers to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

TITLE I—AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND MARKETING

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

The recommendation includes \$46,388,000 for the Office of the Secretary. The following offices are included within the Office of the Secretary: the immediate Office of the Secretary; Office of Tribal Relations; Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination; Office of Advocacy and Outreach; Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration; Departmental Administration; Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations; and Office of Communications. The National Appeals Division, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of Ethics are funded in separate accounts.

The recommendation includes a general provision that requires the Secretary to submit spending plans to the Committees within 30 days of enactment.

Office of the Secretary

(DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS)

Office of the Secretary (immediate)	\$5,051
Office of Tribal Relations	498
Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination	1,496
Office of Advocacy and Outreach	1,422
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration	804
Departmental Administration	24,242
Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations	3,869
Office of Communications	9,006

Total, Office of the Secretary ... \$46,388

Reports requested by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are an important part of the Committees' oversight responsibilities. There is concern about the Department's delinquency in completing these reports. There is also concern that the delay is due to excessively long reviews, especially in the Office of the Secretary. The reports are due on the dates specified in the House or Senate reports or herein. Each agency of the Department is directed to comply with the deadlines and to cooperate fully with the Office of Budget and Program Analysis in providing these reports. It is noted that the Committees reserve the right to call before them any agency that does not submit its reports by the specified due date.

Any reallocation of resources related to the collocation of State offices scheduled for 2013 and subsequent years is subject to the reprogramming procedures in section 726 of this Act.

The Secretary of Agriculture is directed to advise the Committees, through the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, of the status of all reports requested of the Department at the time of submission of the fiscal year 2014 budget and monthly thereafter. All correspondence related to the directives must be addressed to the Committees.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been without a permanent Chief Financial Officer since November 2009. With its substantial loan portfolios, potential for improper payments in mandatory programs, and history of uneven financial audits, the necessity for a full complement of senior USDA financial leaders is evident. The Secretary is directed to submit a report to the Committees detailing how the Department plans to expeditiously recruit and fill this vacancy with a permanent Chief Financial Officer. The Secretary is reminded of the statutory requirements of 31 U.S.C. 901 and 902.

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

The recommendation includes \$16,008,000 for the Office of the Chief Economist.

NATIONAL APPEALS DIVISION

The recommendation includes \$14,225,000 for the National Appeals Division.

OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS

The recommendation includes \$9,049,000 for the Office of Budget and Program Analysis.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

The recommendation includes \$44,031,000 for the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The recommendation includes \$6,247,000 for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR

CIVIL RIGHTS

The recommendation includes \$893,000 for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.