

The Affordable Care Act is not affordable; it is unaffordable. For Americans it has a \$2 trillion cost over the next 10 years. It is a disaster in terms of how it has been implemented. It is going to be a disaster in terms of quality care and delayed care because of the increased deductibles that almost everybody is facing. We shouldn't let it be a disaster in terms of destroying businesses.

We ought to embrace this family and their business for what they have done. They have taken advantage of the American enterprise system in a way that has built tremendous success, that has benefited not just the Green family but hundreds of thousands of people through their generosity, and their capability to empower people to get ahead.

I am glad to see my colleague, and I yield the floor.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I would ask for an additional 5 minutes for the Senator from New Hampshire.

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

Ms. AYOTTE. Thank you, Madam President.

I come to the floor today to talk about a very important case that the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on this morning that goes to the very core of our Nation's foundation—the future of religious freedom in the United States.

As Americans we cherish our religious liberty. It lies at the heart of who we are as a people, and we know we must always guard against threats to our religious freedom enshrined in the First Amendment of the Constitution. That is why I am joining my colleagues Senator BLUNT and Senator COBURN on the floor today and speaking in support of the constitutional rights that all Americans have under the First Amendment, which guarantees the right of freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

Here is what is at stake. Americans should not be forced to give up their religious freedom or their rights of conscience simply because they want to open a family business. American families should not be forced into choosing between their family business and complying with unlawful government mandates that infringe on the First Amendment to the Constitution, and that is why this case, which is being heard today by our Supreme Court, is so important to the American people.

A provision of President Obama's health care law includes a mandate that threatens penalties on private organizations unless they involuntarily agree to violate their deeply held religious beliefs. This is anathema to the First Amendment to our Constitution. If religious institutions and faith-based organizations are forced to comply with government mandates that violate the core principles of their faith, that is a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution, and it is contrary to what we stand for as Americans.

I have heard from people in my State who are deeply concerned about this mandate and the issue that is being considered by the Supreme Court today. They are simply asking to have the same conscience rights they had before the President's health care law was passed—the same conscience rights that are enshrined in our Constitution that protect all Americans regardless of what our faith is and regardless of our background.

This is a fundamental matter of religious freedom and the proper role of our government. It is about who we are as Americans. If the government, through mandates, can take away our conscience rights, what does that say about other rights we have under our Constitution?

This debate comes down to the legacy left behind by our Founding Fathers and over 200 years of American history. We have a choice between being responsible stewards of this legacy or allowing the Federal Government to interfere with religious life in an unprecedented way.

Protecting religious freedom and conscience rights in the past has been a bipartisan issue. Congress has a long history of protecting religious liberty. I heard my colleague talk about the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that was signed into law by President Clinton to ensure that the government should be held to a very high level of proof before it interferes with someone's free exercise of religion. That is what is at stake in the Supreme Court decision and the mandates that are being rendered by the health care law against private companies such as Hobby Lobby and others.

This is what is at stake: Under the President's health care law, companies such as Hobby Lobby and Conestoga—and we are proud to have a Hobby Lobby in the State of New Hampshire—that want to help and provide health care coverage for their employees could be forced to pay over \$36,000 per employee unless they provide drugs and devices that violate their religious beliefs and conscience rights. Why should they be forced into this position? If the Federal Government is able to violate the First Amendment in this way, what is to stop other fundamental rights from being violated?

Protecting religious freedom was once an issue that bound Americans together. I believe this effort, which is so fundamental to our national character, must bring us together once more.

I look forward to seeing the Supreme Court's decision on this issue, but this is a case that never should have been filed. The Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, should have never violated the rights of conscience of these companies or of religious organizations, and it is time to turn this around. I look forward to the Supreme Court vindicating their rights under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which should have been respected by this administration, but that is why we

have a Supreme Court. I look forward to the Supreme Court decision, which I hope will uphold the First Amendment rights of the parties to this litigation and to all Americans.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

## RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

## COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION FLEXIBILITY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate has received H.R. 4275, the text of which is identical to S. 1302. The Senate will proceed to consideration of the measure, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4275) to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, H.R. 4275 is read a third time and passed.

## SUPPORT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY, INTEGRITY, DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC STABILITY OF UKRAINE—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask to speak as in morning business.

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

### WASHINGTON LANDSLIDE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I wish to take a moment to address an issue that has really been on the hearts and minds of those back home in my home State of Washington.

On Saturday, as I am sure many of my colleagues heard, the town of Oso, WA—a small, tightly knit town alongside the Stillaguamish River—was directly hit by a massive landslide. That landslide cut off the town of Darrington, which is just a few miles down State Road 530. Houses over a square mile were simply swept away. We already know we have lost several people, and yesterday we learned there could be well more than 100 who are still missing. So right now in Washington State there are dozens of families who simply don't know if their loved ones are even still alive.

Even though Oso and Darrington are 2,300 miles away from the Nation's Capital, our hearts and prayers are with them and their families. I want them to know that in the coming days and weeks and months—and even years, if that is what it takes—all of us will stand with the people of Oso and

Darrington and provide any resources they need to recover and rebuild and that they have the thoughts and prayers of everyone in this country, from their Washington to this one.

#### AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Let me change gears a bit and address one of the most significant pieces of legislation for women in my lifetime—the Affordable Care Act.

On Sunday this law celebrated its fourth anniversary, serving as a very stark reminder of where our Nation's health care system was just 4 years ago. Four years ago our health insurance companies could deny women care due to so-called preexisting conditions such as pregnancy or being a victim of domestic violence. Four years ago women were permitted to be legally discriminated against when it came to insurance premiums and often were paying more for coverage than men. Four years ago women did not have access to the full range of recommended preventive care, such as mammograms or prenatal screenings and much more. Four years ago insurance companies had all the leverage and all the power, and too often it was women who paid the price.

Now, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, for the first time women—not their insurance companies or their employers—are fully in charge of their own health care. In fact, women make up over half of the 5 million people who have already signed up for coverage in the new marketplace, and over 47 million women have already gained guaranteed access to preventive health services thanks to the Affordable Care Act.

That is why I feel so strongly that we cannot go back to the way things were. While we can never stop working to make improvements, we owe it to the women of America to make progress and to move forward and not allow the clock to be rolled back on their health care needs.

Unfortunately, there are efforts underway all across the country—including here today in our Nation's Capitol—to severely undermine a woman's access to some of those most critical and lifesaving services that are provided under the Affordable Care Act. No provision of this law has faced quite as many attacks as the idea of providing affordable, quality reproductive health services to the women of America.

For this reason I was very proud to lead Members of my caucus in filing an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in the two cases being considered there today. Those cases were brought by CEOs who want to take away their employees' right to insurance coverage for birth control, which is guaranteed under the Affordable Care Act.

As was the case in the many attempts before this case, there are those out there who would like the American public to believe this conversation is anything but an attack on women's health care. To them, it is a debate

about freedom—except, of course, freedom for women's access to care. It is no different than when we are told that attacks on abortion rights somehow are not an infringement on a woman's right to choose but it is somehow about religion or States rights; or when we are told that restricting emergency contraception isn't about limiting women's ability to make their own family planning decisions, it is somehow about protecting pharmacists; or just like last week when an Alaska State senator proposed placing State-funded pregnancy tests in bars but ruled out providing contraception because "birth control is for people who don't necessarily want to act responsibly."

The truth is that this is about contraception. This is an attempt to limit a woman's ability to access care. This is about women. Allowing a woman's boss to call the shots about her access to birth control should be inconceivable to all Americans in this day and age. It takes us back to a place in history when women had no voice and no choice.

In fact, contraception was included as a required preventive service in the Affordable Care Act on the recommendation of the independent, non-profit Institute of Medicine and other medical experts because it is essential to the health of women and families. After many years of research, we know that ensuring access to effective birth control has a direct impact on improving the lives of women and families in America. We have been able to directly link it to declines in maternal and infant mortality, reduced risk of ovarian cancer, better overall health care outcomes for women, and far fewer unintended pregnancies and abortions, which is a goal we all share.

What is at stake in this case before the Supreme Court is whether a CEO's personal beliefs can trump a woman's right to access free or low-cost contraception under the Affordable Care Act.

I strongly believe every American deserves to have access to high-quality health care coverage regardless of where they work or where they live, and each of us should have the right to make our own medical and religious decisions without being dictated to or limited by our employers. Contraceptive coverage is supported by the vast majority of Americans, who understand how important it is for women and families.

In weighing this case, my hope is the Court realizes that women working for private companies should be afforded the same access to medical care regardless of who signs their paycheck. We can't allow for-profit, secular corporations or their shareholders to deny female employees access to comprehensive women's health care under the guise of a religious exemption. It is as if we are saying that because someone is a CEO or a shareholder in a corporation, their rights are more important than the employees who happen to be women.

As I sat inside that Supreme Court chamber this morning listening to the arguments being made on both sides, I couldn't help but think: If these CEOs are allowed to evade this law, what would happen to the other legal protections for employees? Could a boss decide not to cover HIV treatment? Could an employer opt out of having to comply with antidiscrimination laws? Corporations should not be able to use religion as a license to discriminate.

I am proud to be joined in filing the brief by 18 other Senators who were in office when Congress enacted the religious protections through the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993 and again when we made access to women's health care available through the Affordable Care Act in 2010. We are Senators who know that Congress did not intend for a corporation or its shareholders to restrict a woman's access to preventive health care. We all know that improving access to birth control is good health policy and good economic policy. We know it will mean healthier women, healthier children, healthier families, and a healthier America. And we all know it will save money for businesses and consumers.

I know many of our colleagues believe that repealing the Affordable Care Act and access to reproductive health services is somehow a political winner for them. But the truth is that this law and these provisions are winners for women, for men, for children, and for our health care system overall. So I am very proud to stand with my colleagues who are committed to making sure the benefits of this law do not get taken away from the women of America, because politicians and ideology should not matter when it comes to making sure women get the care they need at a cost they can afford.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

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

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

Mrs. MCCASKILL. I wish to speak as in morning business.

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

#### HARPOOL NOMINATION

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I rise to urge my colleagues to vote this afternoon—hopefully this afternoon or, if not this afternoon, tomorrow—for a terrific man to be a judge in the Western District of the Federal District Court in Missouri.

As an old lawyer—too old—I find myself amazed that I have the opportunity to speak to the Senate about someone I have known a long time, about a lawyer I know very well. This is a man whose name is Doug Harpool. He is from Springfield, MO.

Back in the early 1980s he and I arrived as very young lawyers in the Missouri House of Representatives. I had the opportunity to get to know him well—his character, his integrity, his work ethic. I watched him, against tremendous odds and, frankly, some inappropriate pressure, fight for a first major attempt at ethics reform in the Missouri Legislature. His journey was sometimes a very lonely journey, but he had a pit bull kind of mentality about going after this important topic, believing that if a person is in public service, a person's standards must be high; believing that if one chooses—many times at less compensation—a path in the public arena, one has a certain duty to conduct oneself with integrity and the kind of character that could make others proud of their representation.

After his time in the Missouri Legislature, he went on to be a lawyer's lawyer. I don't mean the kind who says "I am a litigator" and never goes near a courtroom, and I don't mean the kind who says "I handle serious cases" and does nothing but shuffle paper, but, rather, a real litigant—somebody who is in the courtroom, by the way, on both sides of the table. This is somebody who helped clients who were suing people and helped people who were being sued.

He has worked with great regard as a practicing attorney now for many years. There is nothing better than being respected by one's peers, especially those whom one has battled because when we battle with someone, we see it all. We see what kind of a person we are up against and what tactics the other person is willing to use. We see a person's raw intellect and their ability to think on their feet. So when I started hearing from so many lawyers who were Doug Harpool's colleagues what a terrific choice he would be, I knew that what I believed about him was shared by so many others.

He will never be a judge who gets "robitis." That is a serious disease which sometimes strikes Federal judges more often than other kinds because they are appointed for life. Practicing lawyers talk about judges who have robitis, which is a malaise that comes upon a judge who all of a sudden removes himself from the common people and that somehow makes him or her above the struggles lawyers are having, makes them above the problems clients are presenting in their courtroom. This is a grounded man. This is a man who will understand what it is like to litigate a case, why his judgments must be fair and also speedy, why he owes it to the litigants to actually read their briefs—not assign it to someone else, to thumb through and then make a decision based on a predetermined notion he might have.

This is someone who will take this work with the degree of seriousness it deserves and with the amount of compassion we all should demand.

I am so proud to be here urging his confirmation. I am confident he will be confirmed by a wide margin. But I am even more confident he will be the kind of Federal judge who will make me proud and all of Missouri proud for as long as he chooses to sit on the bench. Thank you, Madam President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I rise today to speak to the importance of passing the pending legislation to support the people of Ukraine in maintaining their independence at this very challenging time.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea marks the first time one European nation has seized territory from another since the end of World War II. Now President Putin is continuing his military buildup along Ukraine's eastern border, and Russia's actions in the Crimea fly in the face of the basic principles of sovereignty that have underpinned security in Europe and around the world for decades. The United States and the international community must stand with Ukraine and reaffirm our commitment to Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

This moment is a real test for the international community. It tests whether the nations of the world can respond in a unified way to support Ukraine and to check Russia. It will also test whether we in Congress can overcome political differences and leave partisanship at the water's edge.

I believe we can and that we will rise to the occasion. We had a very good vote last night and hopefully that will continue as we take up the pending legislation.

First, we should provide Ukraine with much needed economic assistance. That is why I strongly support the legislation that is currently before us. It authorizes the administration to extend \$1 billion in loan guarantees to Ukraine.

Second, Congress needs to continue to push the administration to impose costs on Russia for its illegal and escalating actions.

I applaud yesterday's decision by the G7 nations to cancel their participation in the upcoming Sochi summit, to suspend Russia's participation, and to convene energy ministers for talks to strengthen our collective energy security.

The latest round of U.S. and EU sanctions are another very important step. However, Congress must continue to explore options for additional bipartisan sanctions legislation. In addition, the administration should be aggressive in responding to Russian provocations using the authorities we give them.

Third, we need to demonstrate support for our other allies and partners in the region who are threatened by Russia's expansionist agenda.

NATO has already taken some commendable actions in the past week. They have deployed additional aircraft and early warning systems, and we are reinforcing our commitment to Poland and our Baltic partners.

This is a significant moment for Ukraine, for Europe, and for the United States. It is imperative that we do our part to help the people of Ukraine secure the bright independent future they deserve. The people of Ukraine and of Ukrainian descent—whether they be in Kiev or in Manchester, NH—are watching and counting on our support.

Our European allies are watching and are counting on our continued leadership. And maybe most important, Vladimir Putin is watching and counting on our acquiescence.

So let us be committed and resolute. Let us stand together in support of the people of Ukraine. And let us start by passing this important legislation.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. REED. Madam President, the Senate needs to do everything it can to help create jobs, improve our economy, and address the basic needs of the average American. Unfortunately, many efforts to make meaningful progress on these issues have been thwarted in the last 2 months. Specifically, for the last 87 days, emergency assistance for job seekers has been blocked by gridlock.

Despite the best efforts of several of my colleagues, including my colleague and friend Senator DEAN HELLER of Nevada, today over 2.2 million Americans are being denied vital assistance in what remains a very difficult economy, but I am pleased to say that a group of five Republicans and five Democrats have reached a principled compromise to end this impasse and help get people back on their feet.

Indeed, I along with Senators Heller, Merkley, Collins, Booker, Portman, Brown, Murkowski, Durbin, and Kirk have introduced a bill to continue emergency unemployment insurance for 5 months retroactive from December 28.

As I have advocated, this bill contains no cuts to the weeks of benefits available or the structure of the tiers of benefits, nor does it include other problematic policy changes. It is, however, fully paid for and includes some positive reforms that better align the unemployment insurance and workforce systems to help get people back to work sooner.

It also includes language my colleagues on the other side of the aisle sought—and that was previously passed in the Senate 100 to 0—which would prohibit millionaires from receiving Federal emergency benefits.

I wish to thank Senator HELLER for his commitment to this issue, for his steadfastness, and for his recognizing that this should not be a partisan issue. He has been an extremely thoughtful, collaborative, and constructive colleague in trying to bring this issue to the floor.

I also wish to particularly thank Senators Collins, Murkowski, Portman, and Kirk because they also have been extremely thoughtful, tireless, and resolute in their efforts to find a pathway forward. They have all brought constructive ideas to the table. We have been able to craft a principled compromise that will provide aid to an estimated 2.7 million Americans, including 12,000 Rhode Islanders.

This is a vital lifeline that can mean the difference between making a rent payment, putting enough food on the table, and keeping the heat on as our constituents search for work in an economy where there are still more than two job seekers for every opening and in fact in some places three job seekers for every opening.

I have been working since last year to extend these benefits. Every day that passes is another day that hard-working Americans do not have the same type of aid as those who were unemployed and looking for work last year had. I am glad we have reached a principled bipartisan compromise. It deserves to move forward quickly so we can provide much needed relief to our constituents and can strengthen our economy.

I understand there have been administrative concerns raised about this bill by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, which Speaker BOEHNER appears to be using as a reason to not take up this bipartisan compromise. Frankly, administrative challenges should not be a reason to deny aid to working Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and are out there hitting the pavement searching for work in a challenging economy.

The Secretary of Labor has sent Congress a letter addressing all of the concerns raised by the national group. This letter notes the Secretary of Labor is “confident that there are workable solutions for all the concerns raised by NASWA. From the Great Recession to the present, the Congress has worked in a bipartisan fashion to enact twelve different expansions or extensions to the EUC program. A number of extensions included changes to the program that were as or more complex than those included in the current bill. The Department of Labor has consistently worked with states to implement these extensions in an effective, collaborative and prompt fashion, and will do so again.”

Indeed, the States have implemented benefits retroactively several weeks after the program has expired previously. I would like to add that my colleagues who have joined as cosponsors of this bill, out of an abundance of caution and a desire to allay these administrative concerns, have included clarifying language to ensure that administrative funding constraints related to the prohibition on millionaires receiving emergency unemployment insurance could not be read in an overly broad fashion, so that it will make this bill administratively easier to implement.

I look forward to debating this bill later this week. I am hopeful that with this strong bipartisan showing, we can convince our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol that this is the right thing to do for the economy and for working Americans who lost their job through no fault of their own and who are searching for work.

Again, I am delighted to join Senator HELLER in this effort and our other Republican cosponsors. They have been extraordinarily thoughtful, constructive, and collaborative. They have served not only their constituents but this Senate and this country with great and deeply appreciated effort.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I would like to begin by thanking my friend from Rhode Island for his continued work to help the American people by temporarily extending unemployment insurance benefits. This is something he and I have been working on together since this past December. I am pleased to have finally reached a bipartisan agreement that can pass this Chamber.

I admire my colleague's dedication and am greatly pleased that we are here this week to support our efforts to help keep American families on their feet during this tough economy. I also wish to thank Senators COLLINS, PORTMAN, MURKOWSKI, and KIRK for their continued willingness to come to the table to craft a bill that can garner enough support to pass in this Chamber.

I would also like to recognize some of my other colleagues: Senator COATS, Senator AYOTTE, who though not cosponsors on this bill today were instrumental in these negotiations from the beginning. I understand their concerns and I also share their desire to see additional reforms to these programs.

Regardless, I am grateful for their contribution over the past few months. I would also like to thank Senator ISAKSON and Senator HOEVEN for their input and am appreciative of their efforts throughout the process. Though it has not always been easy, this process has truly been a collaborative effort at every level.

Fortunately, I believe we have reached a compromise that will garner enough support in the Senate to help 1.3 million unemployed Americans get

back on their feet as they look for work in the toughest job market in decades.

This bill is a responsible, fully paid for, temporary extension of unemployment insurance benefits that expired in December. It addresses concerns that any further extension ought to be paid for. As our economy recovers and people find new jobs, the demand for social safety net programs should naturally diminish, but States such as Nevada, Rhode Island, and many others still have long economic recoveries ahead of them.

I know some may feel there is little reason to extend these benefits, especially since they were allowed to expire at the end of last December, but the fact remains that too many Americans are out of work but want to return to the workforce. I have heard from many Nevada job seekers who in addition to trying to find a job are also struggling to put food on the table for their families, pay their rent or mortgage, and are running out of ways to make ends meet. Extending these benefits will help these families before their situation goes from bad to worse.

My colleagues and I have worked together to come to a reasonable bipartisan agreement on both policy and pay-fors. I think we would all agree there are certain provisions that I think each side would prefer to see included in this bill, such as additional reforms, but this is the nature of compromise.

We also recognize the challenge of dealing with a patchwork of State UI systems of varying capabilities, but I believe we are all open to finding ways to ensure that this extension is implemented as efficiently as possible. This task may not be easy, but I firmly believe it is worth doing.

Again, thanks to all of my colleagues, especially my colleague from Rhode Island who has been involved in this process. I look forward to moving to this bill very soon and am hopeful Congress can finally resolve this matter as soon as possible to help restore some stability for the millions of unemployed Americans looking to get back to work.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to express my robust concern about Russia's actions and the continuing escalation of tensions in Central and Eastern Europe. Even with Ukrainian troops leaving Crimea, Russia continues to extort Ukraine, disavowing an agreement on gas prices that was part of a bilateral agreement

allowing Russia to lease the Black Sea port in Crimea for its fleet. Russia is now arguing it no longer has to provide the discounted gas—because it illegally seized the port—but that it also must be paid back \$11 billion for prior discounts.

At the same time Russia has amassed more than 100,000 troops at Ukraine's border, in addition to 23,000 troops that are in Crimea, making clear the threat of an outright invasion of Ukraine and possibly a portion of Moldova. Putin is watching to see what we will do, to see if we have the resolve to act or if he, in essence, gets the green light to take the next step.

I believe we need to act now. Although I also believe our response to Russia's annexation of Crimea should include the International Monetary Fund reforms that passed in a bipartisan way out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and that obviously received a rather strong procedural vote yesterday in the Senate—and these are critical to strengthening the assistance package for Ukraine and to strengthen U.S. global leadership—I recognize our ability to move this package with those reforms in it at this point is unlikely.

The House Republican leadership has proven itself intransigent on IMF reform, and we all know why. Trying to link support for IMF reforms to C-4 political committees that may have violated campaign finance laws and may involve individuals who illegally used them to influence Federal elections is pretty outrageous. I cannot believe the House leadership will not put national security interests above their partisan political interest but, obviously, politics clearly don't stop at the water's edge on this issue.

So while I am not happy about it, I believe we need to move forward on a bill today that sends the necessary message of support to Ukraine and resolve to Russia. But as we take that step, let us realize it is the IMF that is leading the effort to stabilize Ukraine's fragile economy. Congressional ratification of the 2010 IMF reforms would increase IMF emergency funding to Ukraine by up to 60 percent and provide an additional \$6 billion for longer term support, setting an important marker for other donors, such as the EU and the World Bank.

Let us be clear about what keeping the IMF provisions would have done. The IMF is strengthened at no cost to U.S. finances or influence. The United States retains its executive board seat and the sole veto power at no net cost because the \$63 billion increase in the U.S. quota is totally offset by an equivalent decrease to a separate emergency facility. However, other countries would put in new money, increasing the IMF's lending power.

The fact is this would be a pure win for the United States. We would fully have paid for the \$315 million budget impact of the bill with real cuts and from funds that were underperforming

or no longer needed. Given that the IMF helps to stabilize countries, often an ingredient precluding future need for military action, the minor cost would have been paid back many times over. And we will have another crisis in the future, in which the IMF will be critical to whether that crisis can be diffused and solved.

I repeat what I have said before. This should not be a partisan issue. Presidents Reagan, Clinton, and both Presidents Bush backed legislation to increase IMF resources. Ronald Reagan called the International Monetary Fund “the linchpin of the international financial system.”

In a letter to the House and Senate leadership last week, members of the Bretton Woods Committee, the original entity that created some of the international organizations that have created global stability, such as the IMF, wrote that “Implementing the IMF quota reforms . . . bolsters our leadership in the fund” . . . and provides the United States with “leverage to continue to preserve our national security and economic interests abroad.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter I am referring to.

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

THE BRETTON WOODS COMMITTEE,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,  
*Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*  
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
*Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*  
Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
*Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
*Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER REID, SPEAKER BOEHNER, MINORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: We write to urge Congress to maintain strong U.S. leadership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by enacting IMF quota reform legislation. For over 60 years, the IMF has been a principal tool for advancing U.S. national security and economic interests globally.

The immediate importance of a strong IMF role for countries in crisis is apparent now in Ukraine, which seeks help from the U.S. and IMF to maintain its independence and economic health, and to reduce its energy dependence on Russia. Implementation of IMF quota reform would mean Ukraine would be able to borrow 60% more in rapid IMF financing (from \$1B to \$1.6B) than is possible today. Coupled with the U.S. \$1 billion in new loan guarantees for Ukraine currently being considered by the Congress, Ukraine would have a total of \$2.6 billion in emergency resources to draw upon to stabilize its economy. This enhances the geopolitical position of Ukraine's government in the current crisis with Russia.

The IMF doesn't always get it right but it has been doing important work in countries for decades to stabilize their financial situation and put them on a path toward economic growth for decades. This clearly serves our interests.

ADVANCING NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

The IMF is often the first responder of choice for the United States and our allies, to help countries prevent or manage finan-

cial crises before they destabilize an economy and give rise to conditions of economic stagnation, poverty, and political instability, which can embolden terrorism. When Russia went to war with Georgia in 2008, the U.S.-backed IMF \$750 million emergency loan to Georgia countered the early financial fallout and kept our friend on a path of market-friendly economic policies. It was the IMF that stepped in to provide financial assistance to the former Eastern European countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall. U.S.-supported IMF loans helped stabilize Pakistan after 9/11, and have reinforced fragile economies such as Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco to help ensure our partners can focus on counter-terrorism cooperation and combating radical extremism.

PROMOTING U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS

In its role to promote the stability of the international monetary and financial system, the IMF consistently promotes a growth-oriented agenda based on open markets and strong macroeconomic and structural policies. IMF support to the Euro Area during the recent financial crisis lessened the global fallout and financial instability of highly interconnected economies, and forced long-needed structural reforms to begin to take place. The IMF was first responder to the Asian crisis in the late 1990s, and helped restore growth to Asian economies and create robust export markets for U.S. businesses, which supports American jobs.

Implementing the IMF quota reforms negotiated by the United States in 2010 bolsters our leadership in the Fund without increasing the overall U.S. financial commitment. It requires other countries to make additional financial commitments, effectively providing a larger and more stable source of financing that the U.S.—as the largest shareholder and only country with veto power over major IMF decisions—can leverage to continue to preserve our national security and economic interests abroad. A stronger IMF keeps emerging economies secured in the system we designed without sacrificing any of our influence.

We would therefore urge the Congress to continue its longstanding, bipartisan support of the International Monetary Fund for our national self-interest and for the good of the global system.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Let me cite the names of some of the folks who signed that letter: Madeleine Albright, former Secretary James Baker, Zbigniew Brzezinski, William Cohen, Stephen Hadley, Henry Kissinger, Tom Ridge, Condoleezza Rice, Clayton Yeutter, Robert Zoellick, Lee Hamilton, Brent Scowcroft, Frank Carlucci, Robert Rubin, Larry Summers, John Snow, and Henry Paulson. This is a bipartisan list of “Who's Who” in foreign policy, all saying this is critical to do.

Let me be very clear. Opponents have argued that IMF reforms provide no added relief to Ukraine, so it is superfluous to this bill. That argument is patently false. The 2010 IMF reforms strengthen the IMF. That is why they were done. And as it relates to Ukraine, by increasing Ukraine's quota, the reforms increase available short-term lending from \$1 billion to \$1.6 billion, and longer term resources the IMF can leverage for Ukraine by up to \$6 billion. It also strengthens our ability to shape an IMF support package for Ukraine.

Critics say IMF reforms undermine U.S. influence and increase Russia's influence in the IMF. They are dead

wrong again. We remain the largest IMF shareholder even after reform, we are guaranteed our executive board seat, and we will continue as the only country—the only country—with veto power over major IMF decisions.

Meanwhile, the reforms rationalize the voting structure of the IMF to increase buy-in of dynamic emerging economies in a way that ensures continued U.S. leadership in a more relevant international institution. On the other side, the reforms matter little to Russia, which already has a board seat.

Opponents say IMF reforms cost American taxpayers billions and put taxpayer money at risk. Again, wrong. There is no cost to American taxpayers. The reforms included in the Senate Ukraine bill preserve U.S. leadership, the veto position in the IMF, without increasing—without increasing—our financial commitment to the IMF. The IMF is the most solvent financial institution in the world, and the risk of IMF default is de minimis.

We would have paid for all of this budget impact through real cuts, as my colleague and ranking member on the committee BOB CORKER asked. We came together and we figured it out. The appropriators helped us determine underperforming funds, programs from which we could take these funds, and we ultimately came to a very successful conclusion.

I regret the failure to strengthen the IMF to support Ukraine and other unforeseen crises around the world will endanger the system we have so painstakingly built. And it shouldn't need arguing that fragmentation of global economic governance is not in our national interest. The fact is IMF reform, combined with the aid package for Ukraine, would send a clear and unambiguous message to the world that the annexation of Crimea will not stand.

But I understand this institution and our political realities, so I have come to the floor to ask that we come together to at least send our message of support to Ukraine and another message to Putin. We should act today. We cannot and should not stand for the violations of international norms perpetrated on Crimea by Russia. The world is watching, and the world's superpower cannot be seen as incapable of rising to Russia's challenge. That is the responsibility before the Senate today.

So for those who have criticized the IMF reforms—and because the House leadership doesn't want to pursue it because of extraneous matters having to deal with politics and not policy, willing to risk national security issues—they are going to get their way today. I would hope, therefore, the rest of this package, which provides a loan guarantee to Ukraine of \$1 billion, that provides sanctions against the Russian regime and others who corrupted Ukraine, the previous Ukrainian Government, and who have violated its territorial integrity, that provides assistance to ensure democratic elections

can be held this May in Ukraine, that provides for greater defense cooperation with Ukraine, all other elements of this legislation, should have universal support. We should do it today in order to ensure that we send a clear, unambiguous message, as 100,000 Russian troops are on the eastern front of the Ukraine. I believe this is a critical moment for us to answer affirmatively.

I yield the floor, and 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.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about an issue that has been in the news quite a bit, and quite a bit on the minds of people, I think, all around the Capitol, which is what is happening with, specifically, Vladimir Putin and Russia and the invasion and takeover of Crimea and the activities in Ukraine.

On March 15 Russian forces seized a natural gas distribution station in a Ukrainian village. I think this is key because this was right at the time they were getting ready to have a vote on Crimea leaving Ukraine, joining Russia, and I was in Ukraine at the time. I was there with a bipartisan group. We had eight Senators—Republicans and Democrats from across the aisle and across the broad spectrum of politics in America. What we saw at the time, right before the vote, was the helicopters heading in to take over the gas plant. To me that showed how Vladimir Putin thinks of energy, thinks of politics, and thinks of power.

In the Washington Post that Sunday morning, the day of the vote in Crimea: "Ukraine decries Russian Invasion, Natural Gas Facility Seized." Their first action before the vote even occurred, the Russians came in and seized a natural gas facility. It showed his willingness, his desire, to use energy as a weapon. It is also a reminder that energy for us can be a powerful weapon to counter Russian aggression.

President Putin has repeatedly made it clear that he does not care about democracy, about freedom or about the Ukrainian people. What he does care about is money and power. As the United States considers how to help the Ukrainian people, as we are doing right now on the floor of the Senate with sanctions and aid, I think we need to make sure we take steps to hit Putin exactly where it hurts, which is in his wallet, in his power. Right now some may say: How does this matter? How important is this? Right now about half of Russia's revenue comes from oil and natural gas.

We heard it today in the energy committee. The chairman of the committee stated that in her remarks be-

fore hearing testimony. Fifty-two percent, she said, of Russia's revenue comes from oil and natural gas. I think Senator JOHN MCCAIN was exactly right when he said this past Sunday on CNN that "Russia is a gas station masquerading as a country." He was part of that group of eight Senators who went to Ukraine, went to Kiev, went and saw where the massacres occurred and visited with the new Prime Minister and the new President.

That is why I believe my amendment to this sanctions bill, this aid bill on the floor of the Senate, is so very important not just to us as a Nation but to the people of Ukraine, the people of Europe, those who are trying to regain some freedom from the yoke and the tyranny of what Russia is doing by charging outrageous energy prices to people across Europe and across the Ukraine. We have an opportunity right now to make it easier for the United States to export our own gas to NATO countries and Ukraine. That is what my amendment will do. It is simple. It is two pages. By expediting the approval of facilities to export liquefied natural gas, we can send a very powerful signal to European markets that alternative supplies will be available soon. We can undermine Russia's leverage with its European customers today and undercut Russia's ability to make so much money off gas exports in the future.

Some Washington Democrats continue to act as though the conflict in Ukraine has nothing to do with energy. Other Democrats see it differently. The Obama administration claims that speeding up LNG exports to Europe would not have an immediate effect. That is not what we heard today in the energy committee. That is not what a bipartisan group of Senators has heard and believes.

We cannot ignore Russia's economic dependence on energy and the reality about how energy markets work. Remember, half of Russia's revenue comes from oil and natural gas. That is why the United States shale gas revolution is already undermining Russia's negotiating position with its European neighbors.

This all has come about in the last decade—new techniques of horizontal drilling, directional drilling, all of which makes energy in the United States easier, cheaper to get, and then more available so it can then be more easily exported. By reducing U.S. demand, that frees up supply that can be bought on European markets. Because there is more supply, that forces Russia's state-owned gas companies to adjust their prices. Every molecule of American gas that can get anywhere else in the world is going to be a molecule that those in Europe and those in Ukraine cannot be held hostage to buy from Russia.

That is what The Economist said earlier this year. The more supply there is, then Russia's state-owned gas company will have to adjust its prices. It



ran an article on European efforts to reduce the control Russia has had over gas prices. We can immediately apply more pressure to the region's gas prices and further erode Russia's revenues by approving additional liquefied natural gas export capacity.

I think about that hearing earlier today in the energy Committee, when every witness endorsed LNG exports to undercut Russia. So what is stopping us? Some Washington Democrats have denied any need to act more quickly. The administration has approved just seven applications for LNG export facilities over many years. It spent an average of 697 days processing each of them. The Energy Department has still not processed another 24 applications that are waiting and waiting and waiting.

My amendment would speed up that process, force the administration to act on applications to be able to allow energy to be sent to our NATO allies and to the Ukraine. We don't need more hearings to tell us what we already know. Natural gas and the pricing continues to be a boot on the neck of the Ukrainian people and in Europe.

Majority Leader REID needs to allow a vote on my amendment. To me, it strengthens the Ukrainian relief package. It strengthens the economics in terms of money going from the United States. It strengthens aid, and it strengthens sanctions because it actually works to specifically undercut, undermine Russia's ability to hold others hostage. Plus, it has bipartisan support. There are a number of Democrats who would vote to support it. I think it is time to send a signal to Russia that we are finally ready to use energy to help stop their aggression.

I will point out that I am not alone in this, and there is significant across-the-board support. It is interesting, the number of headlines in the past week or so from papers with various different approaches, including the New York Times: "U.S. Hopes Boom In Natural Gas Can Curb Putin," directly tying natural gas to the Russian President. That is the New York Times.

The Wall Street Journal: "West Tries To Loosen Russia's Gas Grip."

Investor's Business Daily: "Bold Energy Policy Best Response To Russia In Ukraine."

The Wall Street Journal: "Energy Exports as Foreign-Policy Tool" and "Moscow Tightens Squeeze on Ukraine Over Energy."

It is evident the export of liquefied natural gas from the United States will help us as a Nation. It will help us in terms of our foreign policy, and it can be used and should be used and must be used to undermine the Russian economy at a time when they are—with Putin on the move, Putin on a daily basis evaluating the consequences of his actions to decide what he is going to do, planning to do, with the possibility of additional incursions into Ukraine. He continues with troops along the border between Russia and

the Ukraine ready to act, ready to go in, ready to cross the border. All he understands is strength and power, and the way to undercut that is by undercutting his economic strength and power, by exporting liquefied natural gas.

So I come to the floor asking that Senator REID allow an amendment that would strengthen the bill we are discussing right now and making it better for the people in Ukraine, better for the people here at home, and actually doing something significant about the problem we see existing with the additional use of power by Vladimir Putin.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from North Dakota.

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

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I come to the Senate floor today to address the legislation that we are considering, legislation that will provide economic and diplomatic sanctions to deter Russian aggression and also provide financial assistance in the form of a loan guarantee to the Ukraine to provide financial assistance that will be combined with \$15 billion in loan guarantees from the European Union as well as assistance from the International Monetary Fund that can truly make a difference for Ukraine in helping them to stand up to this Russian aggression, while at the same time undertaking sanctions that I believe can be effective in deterring the incursions Russia is making into Ukraine.

A very important part of what we do is to be united with the European Union in this effort. For the sanctions to work, for the economic assistance to Ukraine to work, we have to have a united front. We have to work with our allies throughout Europe. But the European Union's ability and willingness to stand with us is greatly impacted by their energy situation. So how do we help? How do we help them address a very difficult situation in energy so that they will stand with us in putting forth the kinds of sanctions that can truly make a difference now? And the time to take action is now. The time to stand up to Russia's action of invading another country unlawfully, taking part of that country, holding an election that is not bona fide, and amassing troops on the border of a country and threatening to make additional incursions into a country—the time to stand up and put sanctions in place that will deter that behavior is now.

But the European Union finds itself in a situation where fully one-third if not more of its energy comes from Russia. Half of that is piped through the Ukraine and 50 percent or more of

Ukraine's energy comes from Russia as well—specifically, natural gas. So the EU finds itself in a very difficult position when it comes to energy, and obviously that is a very important factor as they deliberate their steps in terms of both sanctions against President Putin and Russia and the activities he has undertaken and may undertake in the future and also in terms of their willingness to stand up and to halt those actions and to assist Ukraine.

So as part of this legislation we are considering, we have offered to help provide energy to Europe. The good Senator from Wyoming, Mr. BARRASSO, was on this floor. He is the prime sponsor of legislation that would help move natural gas in the form of LNG—liquefied natural gas—from this country to Europe. I am a cosponsor of that legislation. We filed that legislation as an amendment to the bill we are considering, and we are asking for a vote on that legislation. I think there would be very strong bipartisan support in this Chamber, and I have no doubt whatsoever that the legislation will pass the House as well. Representative GARDNER has introduced the same or very similar legislation on the House side, and there is no question that the support is there to pass the legislation.

So as we look this week—and I think we will pass a bill this week—to both put sanctions on Russia in place and to assist Ukraine, we can add this energy legislation which is an integral piece in helping the EU stand with us in standing up against Russian aggression—very simple, straightforward legislation.

What the legislation provides is that for companies in the United States that are willing to build LNG facilities and export liquefied natural gas, which they are prepared to do—and we will expand the countries to which they can export. Right now we have a limitation in terms of the exports. They can go to countries with which we have free-trade agreements, but there are many other countries that we have strategic security interests in that make a huge difference in terms of our security and security in the world, NATO countries, the EU, Ukraine.

I understand it would take time to build the facilities and move that product, but there is no question in the near term that if we pass this kind of legislation, we will be sending a very strong signal to world markets and, even more importantly, a very strong signal to President Putin that we are serious about working with the EU to provide energy so that they have sources other than Russia. That strengthens the EU, and it also weakens Russia because Russia is entirely dependent for revenue on their sales of energy. So as we take this step, we not only strengthen our allies, we weaken Russia's ability to make the kinds of incursions they have made into the Ukraine.

This is a very straightforward amendment. It has bipartisan support.

We are offering it as part of this bill. As we work through the amendment process and we determine the form this bill is going to take—and again, I think there is strong bipartisan support to move this legislation. I believe we can move it this week. I believe we can get agreement to have the votes and to move it this week. But I call on our leadership, I call on the leadership of the majority party in a bipartisan way to come together and give us the opportunity to vote on this amendment. It is part of a commonsense, comprehensive approach to truly deal with the situation in Eastern Europe.

In addition, I would like to take a moment to call on the President of the United States to take concrete steps that could make a big difference in the energy equation. The President is negotiating with our NATO allies right now, with the EU, which is now the G7—formerly the G8 but the G7 without Russia—talking about what steps can and should be undertaken to address what Russia has done and may do in the future.

On a bipartisan basis, I joined with Senator MARK WARNER of Virginia, and on May 21 we wrote a letter to the President calling on him to undertake an energy plan. I would like to take a minute to read that letter on the Senate floor because I think it is a straightforward, commonsense energy plan that the President could undertake right now and show the world and show specifically President Putin that he is serious, that we are serious about working with the EU starting immediately. So it addresses taking short-term steps but undertaking a long-term plan that will ensure that the EU, working with the United States and others—countries such as Norway, which is producing incredible amounts of natural gas in the North Sea—working with countries that can supply natural gas to the EU, that we will end their dependence on Russia. And if Russia continues the kinds of activities it is undertaking, they will find themselves isolated.

Dear President Obama. We write to you today because we are deeply concerned with the events unfolding in Ukraine and Crimea that have been instigated and supported by Russia. President Vladimir Putin's aggressive actions and intransigence, and his continued dismissal of U.S. and European Union warnings, is of particular concern. We share your view that tough sanctions from both sides of the Atlantic will be required to provide the necessary motivation to change Putin's behavior, and to enable a diplomatic resolution of this crisis.

The sanctions that have been implemented so far are good and appropriate; however, we believe that energy security is a critical component to achieving a successful outcome in the region. Russia provides one-third of Europe's natural gas needs. With Russia in a position to slow or stop gas flowing into much of Europe, Putin retains leverage to continue to dominate European energy markets. Though Russia has publicly committed to maintaining a full supply of gas to Ukraine and Europe, their recent history contradicts those proclamations. In January 2009, Moscow cut its supply of gas

flowing through Ukraine, and at least 18 European countries saw their supplies completely or partially reduced. Some governments declared states of emergency and ordered factories and schools to close, while millions of people struggled to cope in freezing temperatures.

As long as Vladimir Putin continues to use energy as a weapon, we must take this threat seriously and take this Russian threat off the table. For the first time in a generation, America is in a position to export energy, and acting strategically to increase our natural gas exports accompanied by a more comprehensive U.S.-EU energy security dialogue will weaken Putin's grip on European energy markets.

We produce 30 trillion cubic feet of gas a year in the United States. States such as mine are producing incredible amounts. We are flaring off gas we would like to get to markets. This is a winning proposition to the United States. If we provide gas to the EU, that generates economic activity and jobs here and helps strengthen the EU and reduces our dependence on natural gas from Russia.

We urge you to take five specific actions that will have near and long term positive impacts on the energy security of Ukraine and the EU.

First, direct the Department of Energy to accelerate the natural gas export permit process by approving the pending permits within 60 days, or providing specific reasons why it cannot approve individual permit applications. Though exports would not start immediately, and though the price points in Asian markets are currently more attractive to natural gas exporters, calling for expedited approval of Liquefied Natural Gas exports will increase liquidity on the global markets and will improve the European energy security.

Second, conduct a strategic review of U.S. energy policies, and expand the group of nations that currently qualify for U.S. energy exports beyond those with free trade agreements to include our NATO allies, the EU, Ukraine, and any others that are in the national security interest of the United States.

It just makes sense.

The review could include examining the potential of additional investments of facilities capable of liquefying natural gas.

Third, launch a joint U.S.-EU initiative on energy security at next week's—

Meaning this week—

U.S.-EU summit in Brussels, with specific near-term and future deliverables. One area of critical importance to ensure greater energy security in Europe is the natural gas infrastructure. While some European countries such as Lithuania and Austria receive 100 percent of their gas from Russia, others receive far less, and by improving the interconnections, these countries could far more easily direct supplies to one another in case of an outage. One specific fix would be to reverse the flow of gas from Slovakia to Ukraine, a proposal that is under consideration by the European Commission. Additionally, we should assist Ukraine to establish and maintain a high level of security around its strategically significant gas storage facilities in Southern Ukraine.

Countries such as Norway—Statoil—can supply more gas. Working cooperatively, we could have an impact right now as well as put a long-term plan in place that sends a very clear message

to President Putin that we are going to change the energy equation.

Fourth, help Ukraine implement a significant energy productivity initiative. U.S. businesses have developed many off-the-shelf technologies that can greatly reduce energy waste and promote greater efficiency, which will reduce Ukraine's energy needs. This has the potential to greatly reduce the amount of energy required by Ukraine and lessen their dependence on Russia.

I was recently in Ukraine. We have many U.S. companies doing business over there. Many of the companies were from my State. I met with 10 CEOs from different companies in Kiev that are doing business throughout Ukraine. There is no question that by working with our companies they can have a major impact on what happens in Ukraine both in terms of conserving energy but also producing more energy, and that goes to the final point.

Finally, help Ukraine implement energy development technology to enhance domestic production and promote energy security. We have been contacted by several U.S. companies that are ready to make strategic investments to help Ukraine increase production of their own energy resources to reduce reliance on Russian energy supplies.

We urge you to support and encourage the U.S. State Department's Unconventional Gas Technical Engagement program that allows U.S. local and state-level officials to share best practices with European government officials. Already, U.S. oil and gas companies are leading EU countries in shale gas exploration and off-shore exploration in Eastern Europe to help these countries diversify their energy sources.

We urge you to use the meetings to encourage more European cooperation to solve their own energy dependency problem. A recent proposal from the United Kingdom provides a series of recommended reforms to the European energy infrastructure. We believe our proposal aligns with the British recommendations will provide a helpful starting point for the discussions next week. The U.S. has a long history of supporting the transatlantic relationship on areas of security and defense, and energy security should be part of that dialogue.

We then close the letter saying:

We look forward to working with you to implement this plan.

Think about it. These are steps the administration can and should take now. There is bipartisan support for energy legislation in this body to back it up and make it happen.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together as part of an effort to deter Russian aggression, help Ukraine. To help the EU stand strong and united with us, we need to address the energy issue. We can and we should.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I appreciate Senator HOEVEN's work on the Ukraine issue. I know he went there recently, and I have also visited the great energy resources in his State as his guest and know they have a broad range of energy sources, as does Minnesota.



I rise to talk about the importance of the Support for the Sovereignty, Integrity, Democracy, and Economic Stability of the Ukraine Act, and I urge the Senate to act as quickly as possible to get it done.

As the past week has made clear, the crisis in Ukraine is not waiting for us. We witnessed Russia's blatantly illegal annexation of Crimea and its continued efforts to bully, intimidate, and weaken the new Ukrainian Government.

It is critical we immediately demonstrate to the world, one, our support for Ukraine as it charts a new democratic future for itself; two, our abhorrence of the Russian Government's actions that violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity; and three, our commitment to continue leading the world through a tough and determined response to the crisis.

This legislation, which was backed by our colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee on a strong bipartisan vote, accomplishes these important goals. It provides badly needed assistance to Ukraine to help its new government stand on its own two feet.

It also punishes those who contributed to the crisis by authorizing sanctions targeting Russia's officials, Crimea's self-appointed leaders, and the former leaders of Ukraine who lined their own pockets at their country's expense.

It is unfortunate we have not passed this bill already, given that the vast majority of our colleagues agree on the basic framework of how we should respond to events in Ukraine. I understand some of our colleagues may want to add something else to this bill, but almost everyone agrees we should provide assistance, including loan guarantees to the new Ukrainian Government and impose sanctions on Russian leaders and key institutions.

Now is the time for us to move forward. Together, the United States and our allies have taken important steps, such as barring Russia from the Group of Eight and imposing sanctions on key Russian officials. President Obama is in Europe this week working to convince our allies to take even stronger measures to help Ukraine and hold Russia accountable. We in the Senate must also act.

I think it is important to step back to reflect on how we arrived at this point. This is not a crisis the United States sought. The situation in Ukraine became a crisis because the former President of Ukraine and Russian leaders sought to keep the Ukrainian people from pursuing their right to determine their own future.

The Ukrainian people rose last November after their then-President turned his back on an association agreement with the European Union. This agreement would have helped bring Ukraine into the prosperous community of European nations while also compelling it to reduce corruption and enhance the rule of law. In short, it was a treaty that would have helped

lift Ukraine to a better future with greater opportunity for its people.

When the former President abandoned that treaty, the people of Ukraine did not go quietly. They demonstrated courageously for months in the face of severe repression by the regime, including snipers shooting at civilians in the streets of Kiev. In the face of all odds, they succeeded in forcing the regime to the negotiating table.

The President fled the country, taking with him his ill-gotten wealth. It seemed the Ukrainian people would at least have the freedom they had worked so hard to achieve. The new government even signed—at long last—the association agreement with the European Union that the old regime had rejected.

Unfortunately, President Putin has long sought to keep Ukraine from charting its own course, first through economic manipulation and now through brutal force. When it became clear that the people of Ukraine would not be denied, President Putin carried out a military intervention to cut off Crimea and stage a sham referendum before illegally annexing the territory in a flagrant breach of international law and Russia's own past commitments to Ukraine's sovereignty.

Even though he claims Russia will seek no more territory from Ukraine, he continues to harass and undermine the new government by reneging on previous agreements to provide subsidies for gas and slowing deliveries, something my colleague from North Dakota has focused on. Russia's military continues to mass on Ukraine's borders.

I find it interesting that just a few months ago President Putin wrote a New York Times op-ed on the subject of international law and the use of force. He declared:

Under current international law, force is permitted only in self-defense or by the decision of the Security Council. Anything else is unacceptable under the United Nations charter and would constitute an act of aggression.

In President Putin's view, force must be approved by the U.N. Security Council or it is an act of aggression, except when it comes to Ukraine.

It should be clear by now that President Putin will use any means to advance his ends. He employs the language of ethnic nationalism while he tries to take apart Ukraine. His dissenters are sent to prison on trumped-up charges, children languish in state institutions as a result of the adoption ban, which is something we care so much about in Minnesota as one of the top States for adopting kids from Russia and across the world, and the Russian LGBT community lives under the constant threat of oppression.

All the people of Ukraine want is a simple freedom to seek a brighter future for their country, to not be a pawn to President Putin's efforts to resurrect the Soviet Union. The whole world sees that.

On March 15, 13 members of the U.N. Security Council voted for a resolution to condemn Russia for the very use of force that President Putin criticized last year. Only one country voted against it and that country was Russia.

Now the world is watching us. They are watching to see whether the Congress of the United States will act. We have talked a lot about Ukraine over the past several weeks. I was proud to cosponsor a bipartisan resolution, led by Senators DURBIN and COATS, that expressed support for Ukraine and criticized Russia's actions. That resolution passed unanimously 2 weeks ago. Now is the time to show we are actually doing something.

Ukrainians need to know that the United States stands with them, not just in the very important speeches on the Senate floor but also with real assistance and real action. President Putin needs to know we will not meekly return to business as usual and allow him to bully Ukraine with impunity.

Our allies and adversaries around the world need to know we will stand together to protect our vision of a world governed by democracy and law, where nations do not live under the threat of force by their neighbors.

This is one of those times where the impact of our votes will be felt far beyond the walls of this Chamber. In Ukraine they are going to be watching this vote. In Russia they are going to be watching this vote. All over Europe they are going to be watching this vote and in those countries from the former Soviet Union. The world is watching. So other people, other countries that may choose to engage in this illegal breach of international law, that may choose to tread on this illegal ground will be watching, and that is why this vote is so important.

I urge my colleagues, in the support of the people of Ukraine, to support this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I wish to take a moment to commend the Senator from Minnesota on her remarks. She expressed what we feel very strongly in this body. I wish to express both my agreement with her comments as well as the importance of moving this legislation. I believe there is very strong bipartisan support to move this legislation. I think we can get it done this week.

Again, I express my appreciation for her words here today and I believe that is exactly the kind of cooperative spirit we need on the part of all 100 Senators to get this done. Now is the time for action. I join with the good Senator from Minnesota in calling for that action.

With that, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 4152

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, the motion to proceed to S. 2124 be withdrawn; that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 328, H.R. 4152; that following the reporting of the bill, a Menendez-Corker substitute amendment, the text of which is at the desk, be made pending; that no other amendments be in order; that no points of order or motions be in order other than budget points of order and the applicable motions to waive; that on Thursday, March 27, following morning business, there be 2 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to a vote in relation to the Menendez-Corker amendment; that upon disposition of the amendment, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I note in the majority leader's requested consent order he stipulates that no other amendments be in order, which I think is deeply regrettable, given the fact that this matter has been considered in the Foreign Relations Committee and then came to the floor without any opportunity for the rest of the Senate to participate, either in the deliberative process or to debate important improvements to the legislation. I would note two for the majority leader's consideration.

Two amendments which seem to enjoy a tremendous amount of bipartisan support are in recognition of the stranglehold Vladimir Putin and Russia have on Ukraine's energy supply as well as the energy supply to the rest of Europe. There is a Barrasso amendment many of us support that calls for the expedited consideration and permitting of exporting liquefied natural gas.

There is another amendment I have offered that would provide military assistance to Ukraine. Right now, the underlying bill provides \$100 million. It doesn't specify the precise nature of the assistance, but it appears to be in the nature of rations, uniforms, and medical supplies. I would think at a minimum we would want to make sure the Ukrainians who are defending their country are supplied additional U.S. military assistance in order to defend themselves against this Russian aggression.

So I ask the majority leader to modify his unanimous consent request with the following: that the first amend-

ment in order be a Barrasso amendment related to the exportation of liquefied natural gas; and that following the disposition of the Barrasso amendment, the majority leader and the Republican leader or their designees be recognized to offer relevant amendments in an alternating fashion, including the Cornyn amendment on military assistance to Ukraine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the majority leader so modify his request?

Mr. REID. I reserve the right, and will just make a brief comment. The committee action on this bill was really historic. The issue my friend just suggested be part of an amendment process was discussed at some length in the committee.

As I discussed this morning, the situation in Ukraine is critical. The Senate must act as quickly as we can on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations bill.

The bill before us gives additional aid to the fragile Ukrainian economy. As Secretary Kerry said yesterday, he wants this aid that is in our bill now, but he also wanted what was in our bill—IMF funding. But he said: If I cannot get both, the most important thing we do now is the funding that is in our bill, and he is probably right.

We already know there have been many signals—not any hidden signals—from the House that they would not accept the IMF. The Republican leader said he was concerned about the IMF.

So I am very pleased the sanctions inside this legislation that I hope will pass on Thursday is something that is going to help Ukraine. I am confident it will. It sanctions those inside Ukraine and Russia who have undetermined Ukraine's sovereignty and stability.

I think, as far as I am concerned, we will have more legislation on this in the not distant future. As far as I am concerned, I think there should be more sanctions that we look at. I think they need more aid. On Sunday shows, I heard Republican Senator AYOTTE, Democratic Senator DURBIN both talking about the need for sleeping bags, small arms fire, and things such as that that the Ukrainians simply do not have.

That is why I am pleased we have been able to come to a tentative agreement to vote on this measure Thursday. I would have preferred to include, as I have already indicated, the International Monetary Fund provisions in this bill. It is something that is needed. These provisions would have provided additional funds to stabilize this fragile Ukrainian economy, but my Republican colleagues, for reasons unrelated to Ukraine, were ready to kill the bill over the IMF issue.

Today we are ready to move forward on the bipartisan Senate Foreign Relations Committee bill without the IMF language. Let me just take a minute—a brief minute—to extend my appreciation—and I think I speak for the entire Senate—for the hard work that has allowed us to get where we are.

Chairman MENENDEZ, Ranking Member CORKER—they have worked very well together on legislation generally but on this specifically. Senator MCCAIN, who is a long-time leader on national security issues, has been very articulate and forceful in his view as to what should be done. By the way, both Senators CORKER and MCCAIN suggested we should have the IMF money in this, but I called Senator MCCAIN this morning and told him reasons why I thought we could not go forward with it, and I think he agrees with that.

I hope my colleagues will join us in voting to pass this important bill on Thursday. The people of the Ukraine are watching. The Russians are watching. It is time for the Senate to act. It is time for Ukraine to get the support it needs, it is time for this body to sanction the Russians, and it is time to send a clear message to Putin that the United States condemns the Russian annexation of Ukraine. I say once again, if he so likes these votes he created in Crimea, why doesn't he have one in Chechnya? Why doesn't he have a vote there? Because I think that would turn out much differently than what he would want.

I understand Senator BARRASSO is talking about this issue that my friend from Texas suggested, and it and other issues are something we need to bring up when we talk about further work on Ukraine.

So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I will be brief, but further reserving the right to object to the majority leader's request, I just want to make sure the majority leader understands no one is talking about slowing down this bill. It is anticipated, I think even under the majority leader's consent request, that we will be finished with this bill no later than Thursday. It is one of those circumstances where, given the context of what is in the legislation, there is actually bipartisan support because of the importance of sending a unified message to the Russian leader about this aggression.

But I wish to be clear that my position is that sanctions are not enough. We need to go further and to provide a means for the Ukrainian people to defend themselves against this sort of aggression, which they do not presently possess. We need to find a way to relieve the stranglehold Putin has on Ukraine and much of the rest of Europe that he is going to keep using as long as he feels we have not acted to undermine or jeopardize that stranglehold.

That is the purpose of these amendments, and I regret the majority leader has seen fit to object to my request—reasonable request—for germane amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, my friend from Texas is absolutely right.

We need to do more on Ukraine—there is no question about that—and I look forward to working with him and all Senators to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The motion to proceed is withdrawn.

#### PROVIDING FOR THE COSTS OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR UKRAINE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report H.R. 4152.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4152) to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

AMENDMENT NO. 2867

(Purpose: To provide a complete substitute)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the substitute amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Mr. MENENDEZ, for himself and Mr. CORKER, proposes an amendment numbered 2867.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that 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.")

Mr. REID. Madam President, is there more that the Chair needs to do?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is not on that matter.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 26, 2014, the Senate proceed to executive session, and that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Executive Calendar Nos. 581, 582, 583, and 584; further, that if cloture is invoked on any of these nominations, the time until 2:30 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees and that at 2:30 p.m. all postcloture time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order upon which cloture was invoked; further, that following Senate action on these nominations, the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of Calendar No. 694; further, that there be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote and all roll-call votes after the first vote in each sequence be 10 minutes in length; further, that following the disposition of Calendar No. 694, the Senate resume legislative session; further, that upon disposition of the listed nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE- FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RE- SPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 333, H.R. 3979.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 333, H.R. 3979, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am now here for the 62nd weekly effort to have my colleagues wake up to the threats of climate change. Congress continues to remain sound asleep. I suspect anesthetized by the narcotic drip of polluter money into our veins. But the signs of change around us continue.

These are the Mau Loa monthly carbon dioxide concentrations. We have just passed, again, 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This is the second year in a row this has happened. This year it happened 2 months earlier than last year. So why does it matter that we are at 400 parts per million? What does that mean to anybody?

We have actually gone back and measured where the carbon concentration in the atmosphere has been going way back. We can measure back in ancient ice so we know that for at least 800,000 years, our carbon concentration is between 170 and 300 parts per million. That is a long run for a species that has only been homo sapien for about 250,000 years. That has been a long and hospitable window, during which our species has developed from very primitive hunter-gatherers into the complex people that we are now.

So when you take something like that, the carbon concentration, and you bust out of a range that has sheltered us for 800,000 years, that is not nothing. It is particularly not nothing when you know that carbon dioxide in the atmosphere raises the temperature of the Earth. We have known that since Abraham Lincoln was President. This is not something that is debatable. This is not new news. This is established science for 150-plus years.

We also know—because you can replicate it in the laboratory—that when you put higher concentrations of carbon in the air over seawater, it acidifies

the seawater. If you doubt any of that, you can go out and measure that it is actually happening—the known provable theories, the known principles, I should say. In fact, laws of science are actually manifest in sea level rise from the warming oceans, in warming ocean temperatures, in increased acidification. These are measurements.

As this continues, we continue to do nothing about it, but we let the big polluters continue to spew carbon pollution into our atmosphere. Some of us in Congress are tired of waiting for folks to wake up. This month 31 Senators from every part of the country held the Senate floor through the night to sharpen this Chamber's focus on the threats of climate change. I thank Senator SCHATZ of Hawaii for leading us through this wake-up call, and to Senator BOXER for her leadership of the Senate Climate Action Task Force, and to the Presiding Officer, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, for her enthusiastic participation and support in that effort.

The American people tuned in, tweeting over 54,000 times at the hashtag up4climate in the 24-hour period of this effort. Also, Americans added more than 200,000 signatures to online petitions urging Congress to get with it and do something about this climate problem. The public knows it is a problem and has been pushing us to act now for years.

I have heard it from Rhode Island fishermen who now have to chase their catch further offshore into cooler waters because our coastal waters have warmed. The Presiding Officer has heard it from her Massachusetts fishermen as well. I have heard it from homeowners in South Kingston, RI, whose houses are falling into the ocean as the sea level rises and they encroach further inland into what had for generations been family homes.

Rhode Island does its part to try to address climate change. We are participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and we are everywhere readying our coastlines for worse storms and higher seas. But the Ocean State cannot do this alone. The health, the safety, the prosperity of the people I represent in Rhode Island's communities depend on national action. We need a national groundswell of citizens and elected officials from every State.

So last week I went to Iowa to share with that State Rhode Island's climate change stories and to listen to Iowans tell me their climate change stories and how it is affecting their communities. I was invited to Iowa by Senator Rob Hogg, who is a passionate defender of the Iowan environment and way of life and a very knowledgeable expert on climate change.

I want to thank him and I also want to thank the Iowa legislature, particularly house minority leader Mark Smith and senate majority leader Michael Gronstal for their warm welcome. I also want to thank my colleague Senator HARKIN and his staff for