

ObamaCare legislation followed by about 25,000 pages of regulations, which people in this country have to try and discern and figure out.

I would submit that there are things that will create jobs. We know the Keystone Pipeline will create jobs. Passing trade promotion authority and allowing our trade negotiators to create more market opportunities for small businesses and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs in this country and around the world will create jobs. Passing trade promotion authority and getting the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the European trade agreement enacted they say will expose American businesses to 1 billion new consumers worldwide. Those are the types of things that do create jobs, and we know that.

Instead of having an election year agenda that is transparently stated to be that, why don't we actually talk about things that will create jobs and will improve the overall standard of living for people in this country?

I would make one other observation, and that is another thing coming out of the administration right now, which will be incredibly harmful to the economy and make it very difficult for lower income and middle-class Americans to make ends meet, are policies coming out of the EPA that are going to drive the cost of energy. Energy is an important input. It is a huge factor in places such as South Dakota where we have a cold-weather climate and an agricultural-based economy. We travel long distances to get places. When you talk about raising the cost of energy in a State such as South Dakota, you are significantly increasing the cost of doing business in a way that will make it more difficult and more expensive to create the jobs we need, get people back to work, and get the economy growing at a faster rate. These things are harmful to job growth.

I talked to a bunch of small businesses in my State last week and asked them about some of these policies. I asked them: What are the biggest obstacles right now to your success and what are things that could be done that would actually be helpful?

Of course, ObamaCare is something that immediately comes up, but also the whole issue of the minimum wage. The smallest business owner I talked to I believe had 30 employees and the largest had maybe a little over 200 employees. They said, look, this is a job killer. What that means is we are not going to be able to hire as many people. It adds significant higher operating costs every year to our businesses and makes it more difficult to create the jobs for the people who actually need those jobs, most of whom, in a lot of these places, are going to be young people who are trying to get that first job and make their way up the economic ladder.

There are lots of things we could talk about that do address the problem rather than just addressing the symp-

toms, and we want to vote on an extension. We are going to vote on an extension of unemployment insurance, which will be the thirteenth time we have done that. When you go through an economic downturn, obviously there is a need to help people who have lost jobs and been displaced in the economy. But when are we going to start focusing on the problem rather than the symptom?

The problem is we have almost 4 million Americans who have been unemployed for more than 6 months. We ought to be looking at what we can do to create jobs for the people who don't have jobs in our economy. I have introduced an amendment to the unemployment insurance legislation, which I don't think is going to get voted on, that has some simple solutions.

One of those things is to waive the employer mandate for any employer who hires somebody who has been unemployed for more than 6 months. So if you are a long-term unemployed person and an employer hires that person, you get a waiver from the employer mandate which could save an employer several thousand dollars a year. It also calls for a 6-month payroll tax holiday for employers, which if you have a \$40,000-a-year employee on your payroll, you would save about \$2,400. You could save \$4,000, \$5,000, or \$6,000 a year in the cost of hiring someone with those two suggestions. Another suggestion is to allow people to have access to low-interest loans—up to \$10,000—to relocate to places where there is lower unemployment.

My State of South Dakota is looking for workers. When I travel through my communities, we can't find workers. One of the biggest obstacles for people to get to jobs is to relocate. If we gave them a low-interest loan that would allow them to move to places where there is low unemployment and where there are jobs, it would make a lot of sense.

Finally, it adopts the SKILLS Act that has passed the House of Representatives, which consolidates 35 Federal programs into 9 programs so you don't have all of this duplication and overlap in all of these Federal programs for worker training and shifts that resource out to the States where States can design programs that actually prepare and equip the people in their States for the jobs that are available.

Those are the types of solutions we ought to be talking about rather than top-down, heavyhanded, government-driven solutions that make it more difficult to create jobs and is equivalent to throwing a big wet blanket on the American economy at the time we can least afford it.

My State of South Dakota is a good example. We have balanced our budget every year since 1889. We have zero personal income tax, zero corporate income tax, and we have a very well-trained, hard-working, educated workforce. We have a good climate for doing

business with a light regulatory touch. We have a low unemployment rate and a vibrant economy mainly because we understand that it isn't the government that creates jobs.

When the Senate Democrats and the President come out with the election-year, poll-tested agenda, which is clearly driven simply to try to generate votes in the midterm elections rather than actually solve the problems—and it says that in the stories. The stories are very transparent about what they are trying to do. We ought to be focused on things that actually create jobs, such as passing the Keystone Pipeline, passing trade promotion authority, and looking at real solutions that do more than just treat symptoms, and actually get at the problems.

The problem is we have too many people in this economy who have been unemployed for a long period of time. We need to get them back to work and get the economy growing faster than 1.9 percent a year. If we get growth back up to 3 or 4 percent a year, it will dramatically change the future for middle-class families in this country, and that is what we ought to be focused on.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2164 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

PROVIDING FOR THE COSTS OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR UKRAINE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4152, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Pending:

Reid (for Menendez/Corker) amendment No. 2867, to provide a complete substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their assigned designees.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time under quorum calls be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan agreement I have reached with five of our colleagues from across the aisle Senators HELLER, COLLINS, PORTMAN, MURKOWSKI, and KIRK to provide emergency unemployment insurance to 2.7 million Americans. This commonsense, bipartisan agreement is one of the many things the Senate should do to help create jobs and strengthen our Nation's economy so it works for every American, so everyone has a fair shot. So I hope my colleagues will join with us and pass this bill quickly so it can be taken up for a vote in the House.

The individual and economic consequences of a lapse of these unemployment insurance funds are very clear. I have described many times, and my colleagues have come to the floor many times, and indicated the individual cases where people who have worked for years found themselves without a job, through no fault of their own, desperately needing some modest assistance—and these benefits are about \$300 to \$350 a week—just to keep going, to keep looking for work, to keep trying to be part of the workforce, which they desperately want to do. We have shared these stories. These individual hardships ripple across our entire economy.

Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office and other economists looking at this, not from the individual perspective but from the overall economy, find this is one of the most effective ways to keep the economy moving forward. The CBO has indeed estimated our failure so far to extend benefits through 2014 would cost the economy 200,000 jobs. That is simply as a result of these payments to individuals going right back into the economy. It stimulates other workers who have work and creates demand.

So restoring economic assistance for Americans who have lost their jobs and who are trying to find new ones is not only the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do for our economy. That is why I have been pressing for an extension of these benefits over a longer period of time. But, we have reached a principled compromise—and I have to underscore the word “compromise”—to do it over a 5-month period, with some retroactive and some, if we move quickly enough, prospective. But it is frustrating to realize that some in Congress don't want to do this. I think that is unfortunate not

only because of the effect it has on individual constituents but also because it is going to adversely affect our economy. It is not going to add jobs. In fact, as CBO suggests, it could indeed take away jobs.

Let me take a few moments to address some of the arguments being raised, particularly in the House of Representatives, as to why they can't support this. Basically, it comes from the notion that: Well, this is too hard to implement. Even if you concede these benefits are absolutely important, they would provide economic stimulus, we just can't implement them.

These concerns were highlighted by a letter from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies. But all of these concerns are addressable. Indeed, the Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, has addressed these concerns point by point in a recent letter, and he has, importantly, committed to work collaboratively with the States—as has been the case in all of the 12 extensions or expansions of this program since the great recession—to do this.

We have repeatedly extended this program. There have been periods of time where there has been a gap between extensions, and they have had to look backwards, these State administrators. Secretary Perez is committed to do all he can and have all the efforts of the Department so this can be implemented successfully, and I am confident it can and he is confident it can.

But there were four basic assertions that were made that I want to address.

First, NASWA indicated that, well, States are struggling with antiquated computer systems that make it hard to implement changes quickly. Well, the States have received over the past 5 years \$345 million to modernize their unemployment insurance systems. That is Federal money going to States so they can fix their computer systems. So this is not exactly an area we have neglected in terms of helping them modernize their computer systems. Complex program changes we have made in the past—I was part of the effort in 2012 to extend unemployment compensation benefits—and we made some significant changes. We reduced the total number of weeks from 99 to 73.

So we are not talking today about some complicated new system; we are simply extending the existing system. We are not changing the tiers. We are not changing any of the calculations they have to make. Indeed, that is one of the reasons why I have been arguing consistently for a straight extension—not altering the number of weeks you qualify for tier 1 or tier 2 or tier 3, but simply taking the system that was in place on December 28, and fund it retroactively to benefit those who have lost their benefits unexpectedly, and then prospectively as far forward as we could go.

Let me also point out that I was making this request before December

28. I would have hoped we could have moved in December or at least early in January to go ahead and extend this program so there would be absolutely no disruption whatsoever to the States or for the recipients. But it has been a difficult and long process to get here. Frankly, without the collaboration and efforts of many of my colleagues, and particularly, as I have indicated, my Republican colleagues—Senators HELLER, COLLINS, PORTMAN, MURKOWSKI, and KIRK—and my Democratic colleagues, including Senator BOOKER, who is here, we would not be at this point. So I am glad we are here. But we would not have any of these implementation problems had we acted in December.

Second, there was a concern that one provision relating to Federal funding for the administration of the program could be read in an overly broad fashion so that the State agencies would be so confused and it would be so complicated they could not function. So out of an abundance of caution, we have worked to address this. We have revised the legislation we had proposed to clarify the particular provision so it could not be misconstrued.

In so doing, we make it crystal clear that the prohibition on the use of Federal funding is limited solely to eligibility determinations relating to ensuring millionaires do not receive emergency unemployment insurance benefits.

Third—and this is a related issue to the whole millionaire issue—there was some concern it would be difficult to administer this prohibition. Well, in our legislation, we have a pretty straightforward requirement that individuals certify their income in the preceding year was not more than \$1 million. This is a simple certification that I think could be accomplished rather efficiently and quickly by the agencies. And the Secretary of Labor has committed to issuing guidance to help States with implementation, as the Department does when any new statutory provision is enacted.

As I said before, the Secretary has assured all of the States that he is going to work to expeditiously and efficiently give them the tools to implement this program as soon as the Congress passes it and the President signs it.

Finally, there was a concern about the retroactivity. That challenge, as I said before, is why I and others pressed so hard to get this done prior to December 28 of last year. But even so, States were able to successfully work with the Department of Labor during previous lapses to provide this aid to unemployed workers. We have had these situations before where there has been a disruption of benefits, and then we have renewed the program several weeks later. And the Department of Labor is confident these challenges can be overcome.

Frankly, all of these administrative challenges for the States seem to me to pale in comparison to the challenges

being faced by our constituents, who are in a job market where in some places there are three applicants for every job, in a job market where, if you have worked for 25 years, you are about 50 years old and you are competing with 25- and 30-year-olds who have gotten recent education. Maybe they have more high-tech skills and computer skills than you have in a market that is rapidly becoming more technologically oriented in terms of labor demand.

They are facing severe challenges. These resources are not lavish. The idea that someone would not work because they are getting \$300 a week is difficult, I think, to imagine for many people, particularly the people who have records of work for 10, 20, and 30 years. And what they are doing with this money is putting it right back in our economy. Many are trying to hold on to their homes, and we have heard stories about that. They are trying to put gas in the car. People have contacted me indicating that they use it to keep their phones working because without a phone they cannot get the callback for the job interview to go and find a job.

So this is something that I think has to be considered and, in my book, weighs much more heavily than administrative issues, which the Secretary of Labor assures us will be dealt with, can be dealt with, and he will work with the States to make sure it is done effectively.

Let me conclude by thanking our Republican colleagues who have joined with us. They have been extraordinarily thoughtful and collaborative. They have really contributed in an atmosphere of exchanging ideas of thoughtful consideration. It is a model, I think, of how this Senate should work more frequently, and I thank them and commend them. They have done a great service for their constituents and for the economy and the country. Indeed, ultimately, many Americans will benefit through their great contribution.

So I will hope, as we come up to these procedural votes, that we can move forward, and then we could move this expeditiously. Then we would hope the House would respond appropriately, and we can give some hope and give some confidence to people who are struggling to find jobs in this very difficult time.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the pending legislation be-

fore the body. I urge the vote of all of my colleagues. This legislation is a bipartisan effort led by Senators MENENDEZ and CORKER, the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. It is very important.

Today the people of Ukraine will be watching the Senate and later the House as to whether we are going to give them initially the support they need after their country has been dismembered by Vladimir Putin in a blatant act of aggression that cannot go unresponded to.

A long time ago, 15 March 1938, Adolph Hitler made a speech to the Viennese people from a balcony of the Hofburg Palace, in the background of the heroic statue of Archduke Karl. The crowd in the square Heldenplatz numbered several hundred thousand. Hitler's words on that day about the obligation he had to take care of the German-speaking people and the German population in Austria is eerily reminiscent when we look at the speech Vladimir Putin made as he announced the absorption of Crimea into Russia.

I am not predicting we will have a World War III. I am predicting that unless we act and act vigorously—and a lot more than this legislation today—Vladimir Putin will be dramatically encouraged to take further aggressive actions, whether it be in Eastern Ukraine, whether it be Moldova, whether it be the Baltic countries, where he has already put significant pressures. Or will we send a message to Vladimir Putin that the cost of further aggression will not be matched with the benefit?

Have no doubt about the ambitions of Vladimir Putin; that is, to restore the Russian Empire. All of the illusions we had about him should have finally been dispelled. He must be treated for what he is, a KGB colonel who repeatedly stated the worst thing that happened in the 20th century was the dismemberment of the then-Soviet Union.

What Vladimir Putin understands is strength. In the words of Ronald Reagan, we can achieve “peace through strength.” This legislation is a good start. It is important we get it done as quickly as possible, but we have to understand he will never be our partner. He will always insist on being our adversary, and he will continue, if unchecked, to continue that vision of his expansion of the old Russian Empire.

I predicted that Vladimir Putin would go into Ukraine because he could not give up the Sevastopol naval base and access to the Mediterranean. I do not know exactly what Vladimir Putin will do in Eastern Ukraine as we speak, but there has been a buildup of Russian forces on the border of Ukraine and Russia.

This should disturb all of us. All of us should be disturbed. All of us should recognize that the kind of signal he gets in response to his latest aggression will, in many ways, dictate his future behavior in the coming days and

weeks. There are many steps we need to take. We have to support Ukraine. We have to give them the economic assistance they need. We have to ensure that the March elections in Ukraine occur on time, freely, and fairly.

We have to meet Ukraine's request for immediate military assistance. Military assistance is their first priority. What did this administration do in response to their plea for the ability to defend themselves? Send them MREs. That is the same thing we did in Syria. We now have an MRE doctrine; that when a country is under threat, such as Ukraine and other countries are, we send them MREs.

We need to send them defensive weapons, which we should have done with Georgia back in the Bush administration when Vladimir Putin annexed South Ossetia and Abkhazia. His troops are there today.

We have to give them the military assistance, short term, and a long-term military assistance program of training and equipping which, by the way, we do with about 50 other countries in the world. It is not a breakthrough.

When my friends and colleagues in the administration say it would be provocative, what does it take to be further—the next time we provoke Vladimir Putin, is it going to be Alaska? We have to support countries such as Moldova and Georgia. Moldova is not a member of NATO. Transnistria is occupied by 1,500 Russian troops as we speak.

We can see the same scenario taking place in Moldova as we have seen take place in Crimea. The Baltic countries are under pressure, and continuing and increasing pressure from Russia, particularly where the “Russian-speaking” population is, especially in Latvia and Estonia. We have to expand sanctions under the Magnitsky Act, increase sanctions against Putin's sources of power, especially for corruption, target corrupt people, push for an arms embargo against Russia, prevent defense technology transfers, use the upcoming NATO summit to enlarge the alliance, move the process for Georgia into a membership action plan, expand NATO cooperation with Ukraine, conduct significant contingency plans within NATO to deter aggression, defend alliance members, especially along the eastern flank, strategically shift NATO military assets eastward to support deterrence. All of these things and more need to be done.

I wish to emphasize that does not mean American boots on the ground. I repeat. It does not mean American boots on the ground. So the response by some of my colleagues and those in the commentary community is that the American people do not want us to do it. Sixty-three percent of the American people say leave it alone. Sixty-one percent say do not get involved in any way.

I understand that. There have been previous times in history where the American people did not want to be involved. Yet leaders stepped forward.

Leaders explained to the American people why the United States has to be involved. I notice that the President's approval rating on the handling of foreign policy is sinking. I also understand the contradiction that over 60 percent of the American people do not want the United States engaged. That is because the American people have not been told what is at stake.

Neville Chamberlain, in 1938, when talking about Czechoslovakia, said: We are not going to send our young men to a country that they do not speak our language and we do not know. Again, I am not predicting World War III, but I am predicting that Vladimir Putin will go as far as he thinks he can in order to realize his ambition, which he has stated on numerous occasions, to restore the Russian Empire.

What does Vladimir Putin understand? Strong alliances, reprisals, consequences for misbehavior. That is what he would understand. This legislation before us, which I hope is passed 100 to 0, will indicate the first steps we are taking in response. I wish the President of the United States had not stated so clearly that we have now acquiesced to the absorption of Crimea into Ukraine.

My message to the people of Ukraine is that in the Cold War it took a long time. But we will never give up. We will never give up in our efforts to see that their country is fully restored, as guaranteed by a solemn agreement when Ukraine gave up their nuclear weapons inventory. At the time they were the world's third largest nuclear power.

In return for giving that up, their security and territory integrity, including Crimea, was maintained. There are other countries that may have nuclear weapons. What lesson do they take from this? Would Vladimir Putin have invaded Crimea if Ukraine still had nuclear weapons? That is an interesting question. So the point is that we have seen a blatant act of aggression.

Sometimes I am astounded at the media reporting. An overwhelming majority, 96 percent, voted for Crimea to be part of Russia. My friends, 12 percent of the population of Ukraine are Tatars who were deported by Joseph Stalin; half of them killed, and they were allowed to come back. I can guarantee you there is no one in that 12 percent of the population who would ever vote to be part of Russia. It was a phony election. There were no observers. I know of a poll taken a few months ago that showed 53 percent of the people in Crimea wanted to be part of the Ukraine. But the point is, here today, I hope we are beginning a path to, one, recognizing Vladimir Putin for what he is and what his ambitions are; two, dedicating ourselves to supporting these countries, these fledgling democracies—it has not been that long since the end of the Cold War—to help them on the path as they move forward to democracy, particularly Ukraine, so we can help them rid that country of cor-

ruption, rid it of its dependency, long term, on energy supplies from Russia.

We can, over a relatively short period of time, months if not years—but probably months—arrange it so we can supply Ukraine and other European countries with energy to have them become independent of Russia.

Finally, I have no illusions about what the Europeans are going to do. Very little, if anything. I have very little confidence in what this administration is going to do. So it is up to the Congress. It is up to us to act and to act decisively and send a clear message. By passing this bill today, hopefully with the House getting it done as quickly as possible, we send a message to the people of Ukraine: We stand with you. We will help you. We will do everything we can to see, over time, the restoration of your nation, as we have in times of old. We stand with you and we stand for freedom.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today the Senate will finally adopt, after some unfortunate delays, urgent bipartisan aid and sanctions legislation on Ukraine developed with the cooperation of a number of committees here in the Senate, and constructed by Foreign Relations Committee Chairman MENENDEZ and his ranking member, Senator CORKER. Both are also distinguished senior members of the Banking Committee, which I chair, and which has jurisdiction over the economic sanctions provided for in the bill. I am pleased to have been able to work closely with them to ensure this sound result, including provisions to impose targeted asset freeze sanctions against individuals and businesses found by the President to have been responsible for threats to the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and for certain acts of corruption in Russia.

Once we pass this bill, I hope the House will act quickly to approve it and send it to the President for his signature. With this legislation, Congress is providing the President with flexible new tools to make clear to President Putin and his allies that Russia's recent moves against Ukraine are unacceptable, and that there will be an increasingly painful economic and political price to pay for these actions.

Economic sanctions are an important tool of American diplomacy. In Iran, years of tough, comprehensive economic sanctions have helped finally to bring Iran's leaders to the nuclear negotiating table. Sanctions have been wielded effectively against Sudan, North Korea, Yemen, former military and security officials in Burma, warlords in the Congo, and elsewhere. If developed in close consultation with administration officials at Treasury and the State Department who are responsible for implementing them, appropriately targeted, and applied multilaterally, sanctions can be a potent tool in the President's foreign policy arsenal. In the case of Ukraine, they will serve both to punish former

Ukrainian officials and others responsible for the violence there, and to punish Russian officials for irresponsible behavior. If wielded effectively, as part of a larger diplomatic and political strategy, they can also help to deter future aggressive actions by Russia against Ukraine.

That is why I support this legislation to provide critical economic and security assistance to Ukraine, and to provide new sanctions authority to the President. I support it even though I am deeply disappointed that opposition from some of my Republican colleagues here and in the House forced the removal of important International Monetary Fund, IMF, reforms that had been included in earlier versions of the bill. Those reforms would have enabled the IMF to better implement the economic aid and reform package it has developed with the new Ukrainian Government's leadership in recent weeks, which it announced yesterday. We must get those reforms enacted as soon as possible, by other means.

This measure, along with the steps already taken by the President, the multilateral aid and sanctions measures adopted by our allies, and the economic stabilization package offered by the IMF should help to reduce tensions as this situation moves forward. I look forward to working with my colleagues not only to ensure Ukraine's stability but also the security of all our allies in Europe and beyond.

Again, I thank my colleagues Chairman MENENDEZ and Ranking Member CORKER for working so hard to perfect this legislation and move it quickly.

I urge my colleagues to support it and deliver on the promises this body and this country have made to support the people of Ukraine.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea is an affront to decent standards of international conduct. It is a violation of international law and of Russia's explicit commitment under the 1994 Bucharest Memorandum to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity. It has undermined the international order that has been put in place over the last 60 years to promote peace and stability.

President Putin and his advisers in Russia have resorted to these illegitimate actions in order to seize 10,000 square miles of Ukrainian territory. Perhaps the Kremlin believes its robbery has paid off. If so, Putin and his advisers have miscalculated. And we will aid in the task of making clear the costs of Russia's actions today with passage of this legislation.

This bill sends a message to the people of Ukraine and all those in Europe concerned about Russia's aggressive provocations. We provide important loan guarantees that will help stabilize a Ukrainian economy that was struggling even before Russia's aggression. We authorize funding to help the Ukrainian government provide the fundamental necessities of democratic

governance, including free and fair elections, strong civic institutions and protections against corruption. It will aid the Ukrainian government in recovering assets stolen by its disgraced former prime minister and other kleptocratic public officials. It will support Ukraine's efforts to free itself from captivity to Russian energy supplies. And it provides for increased security cooperation with Ukraine and with other nations in Central and Eastern Europe, including military assistance, training, and advice.

Passage of this bill would also send a strong message to Russia. It mandates sanctions and asset freezes that target Russian and Ukrainian individuals responsible for the human rights abuses against peaceful protesters in Kiev under the previous Ukrainian government. It also targets those Russians or Ukrainians whose actions have undermined Ukraine's territorial integrity.

By demonstrating our support for Ukraine and the other democratic nations of Central and Eastern Europe, and by taking action against the individuals who have participated in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Congress can provide a key element in the broad, sustained, and energetic diplomatic approach this situation requires. The United States must act together with our European allies and other nations around the world who have an interest in maintaining respect for established borders and international law. Key to exacting a high price for Russia's actions is isolating Russia in the international community.

While this legislation is important to accomplishing our goals, it must be part of a sustained and, if necessary, intensifying effort in Congress, by the administration, and internationally. President Obama has wisely refrained from responding to Russian provocation with actions that would further destabilize matters or work against Ukraine's interests or our own. One important step in de-escalating the tension in Ukraine is the dispatch of international observers to eastern Ukraine to monitor the ground truth and hopefully discourage further provocations. But, along with NATO, we have made clear that Russia's actions will not go without response. President Obama has stated that Russia will face an escalating diplomatic and economic response if it does not reverse its course. Russia should be under no illusion that the U.S. response to its actions ends today with the passage of this legislation. We must remain prepared to take additional steps to ratchet up the pressure on Russia and to help stabilize Eastern Europe.

Russia also should have no doubt that the United States and our NATO allies take seriously our responsibilities under article 5 of the NATO treaty. Under article 5, an armed attack against any NATO ally is considered an attack against all members, and will draw any actions deemed necessary to assist the ally under attack, which

may include the use of military force. Actions such as redeployment of military assets, adding aircraft to the NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission and surveillance flights over Poland and Romania are evidence that we take those article 5 responsibilities seriously. And, as our NATO commander in Europe, General Breedlove, has said, if Russia continues such provocative actions, "we need to think about our allies, the positioning of our forces in the alliance and the readiness of those forces in the alliance, such that we can be there to defend against it."

And as this legislation makes clear, we will continue to enhance our security cooperation with Ukraine and other Eastern European nations. One important step will be for our uniformed military professionals to expand their relationships with counterparts in Ukraine and other Eastern European nations to help build the kind of capable, professional forces that can improve their security.

Some may wonder what these events in a distant land involving old territorial disputes have to do with us as a nation. But Russia's blatant flouting of its commitments, of the territorial integrity of its European neighbors, and its trampling on the international order is damaging to our security and to the values that define us.

By passing this legislation, supporting U.S. and international actions to impose consequences on Russia and reassure the nations of Eastern Europe, and standing ready to take additional actions if required, we protect our interests and the interests of those who value peace and stability.

I suggest 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 Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORKER. I rise today to speak about the bill we are going to vote on at 12:15 p.m. relative to Ukraine.

First, I wish to say it speaks to the best of the Senate, where by working together we are going to end with a bill that sends a very strong signal to Russia but also to Ukraine in support and to the world. I believe it will be done in an overwhelming fashion in the Senate today and hopefully later today or tomorrow in the House. It is exactly what we should be doing at this time.

First, I thank Senator MENENDEZ for the way he marshaled this through the committee. I was pleased to work with him as ranking member.

I know our original piece of legislation had in it the IMF reforms that I strongly support. It was evident that the IMF reforms were not going to make it through the House and actually become law.

We all felt it was incredibly important that all of us speak in a united voice to push back on Russia's illegal actions in Crimea and potentially in Ukraine but also to do what we really need to do to support our friends in Ukraine and in the region. This bill does that. It passed out of committee with strong bipartisan support. My sense is today it will pass out of the Senate with incredibly strong bipartisan support. It will become law soon and will tremendously reinforce the way our Nation feels about what Russia is doing in such an illegal fashion—that was outmoded centuries ago—and support the people of Ukraine.

All of us know this bill provides economic support for Ukraine. We all know they are entering into an agreement with the IMF. The IMF is going to be providing some loans to help move them through the problems they have had. They have tremendous corruption in their country. They use far too much energy. They have massive deficits. Through working with the IMF and signing on to agreements, ultimately they will be forced as a nation to move ahead and to orient themselves toward stronger countries or toward the West and operate in a more democratically free manner and certainly in a way that would allow them to economically sustain themselves over time.

In this bill we also provide additional loan guarantee support, which they will need. They are facing extreme difficulties. I believe people know that recently they have agreed to charge their citizens twice as much for natural gas usage there to try to get their budgets back in balance. But it is very important that we send this signal and this strength of economic health through this \$1 billion loan guarantee, which is a part of this bill today.

Another important part is sending a strong signal to Putin and to Russia. If they feel they have no price to pay for the activities they have already undertaken, they will continue to do more.

What this bill allows us to do is show strong support for what the administration has already done but, in addition to that, to make these sanctions mandatory and actually add additional elements should Russia continue to do the things they are doing in such a terrible way.

I do want to say relative to the sanctions—I appreciate the Executive order the President signed the other day that gave them the ability to put sectoral sanctions in place. The energy sector, the banking sector, and other sectors of the economy can now be targeted with sanctions.

I understand the balance that has to be put in place with sanctions where if we throw in everything but the kitchen sink on the front end, then Russia really has nothing to lose by going on into Ukraine. So we want to calibrate those in a way that deters their behavior but also gives them the ability to de-escalate.

I will say that I do think the President's comments over the past several days in Europe have seemed cautious, have seemed timid. What I hope the administration will do very soon is turn up the volume dramatically and actually send some strong sanctions into some of these sectors—into the energy and banking sectors. We don't have to do all of the companies in those areas, but if we were to do that especially with three or four additional banks in Russia, it would send a strong signal to their economy, continue to weaken their economy and to show Putin there is a heavy price to pay for the activities he is engaged in and may engage in further relative to Ukraine itself.

I encourage the administration to step ahead stronger. The European Union follows our lead, let's face it. If we act in a timid, cautious way, they are going to do the same. I think everybody in this body knows we do about \$40 billion worth of trade annually with Russia, but the European Union community does \$450 billion worth of trade. Generally, we are trying to work in unison, but if we as a nation act in a timid way, it encourages them as multiple countries to do the same.

Again, I do hope we will turn up the volume, and I do hope we will go ahead and sanction some additional entities in Russia. There are many state-owned enterprises there. We all know that. That is one problem with the Russian economy right now. I think we all know they are really an autocratic petrostate. We know that they are not doing well, that their budget is based on the fact that oil sells at \$110 per barrel, and that really that is mostly their economy.

Again, what we need to do as a nation—we are supporting the administration in this bill. We are supporting Ukraine with this bill. We are also authorizing some assistance to some of our allies in the region. We are also authorizing some democracy assistance. The bill has no fiscal areas that are not paid for. This is a great piece of legislation.

I do hope that over time Senator REID will allow us to revisit the issue because, let's face it, we created this piece of legislation about 2 weeks ago. The events in Ukraine continue to unfold. So I hope we will come back again as changes occur. I know there are many people in this body who are actually trying to put additional pieces of legislation into place not only to sanction Russia even more fully, not only to assist Ukraine in other than economic ways, but also to use some of the strategic assets we have as a nation not only to benefit our economy but also to help our allies in the region so that they are not really subject to the economic extortion we have seen Russia try to carry out with our friends and also try to carry out with Ukraine, which this bill is all about.

I close by thanking Senator MENENDEZ.

I thank Senator REID for filing cloture on a bill that came out of the committee immediately so we would be in a place today to deal with this.

I thank Senator MCCONNELL, who was able to work with Senator REID and the House to deal with this legislatively in a very creative way, using a vehicle that came from the House and sending something back to the House so that this can become law very quickly.

I thank the House for cooperating with us on this bill because to have a piece of legislation go out of the Senate today and likely become law very soon is something that takes a lot of coordination. I thank the leadership in the House for helping us make this happen.

I again thank the administration for their focus on this issue. I hope this bill will show strong support for some of the efforts that have already taken place, and I do hope the administration will not undercalculate. I think that right now Putin doesn't yet know what he is going to do relative to South and Eastern Ukraine. I don't think he knows, and I think he is watching us and he is calibrating what his steps are going to be based on the pain his own country will receive if they take the wrong steps. It is very important that the President send additional sanctions into Russia, send additional signals, and that we send shock waves into their economy now—not everything we have to throw at them but some of it—so they know that if they take additional steps, real pain is on the way.

This bill supports those efforts of the administration, it supports Ukraine, it pushes back on Russia, and it shows support for allies in the region. It is a great piece of legislation. It is the first step. More should come.

I am pleased we are at this point today. I thank all those involved, and I look forward to a very strong vote in the Senate at 12:15 p.m.

I yield the floor, and 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. MENENDEZ. 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. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor as we are at a moment of truth and a moment of incredible importance, and I wish to start off by acknowledging the distinguished Republican ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, for the spirit in which we have worked together to marshal forces to bring critical legislation to the floor at a critical time in history. This is the type of relationship we have had for the last 15 months, during which time we have often seen such partisanship, where on every major piece of legislation that has passed out

of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it has passed on a strong bipartisan vote, and I appreciate his leadership and his working with us.

Let me reiterate what I have said on the Senate floor. President Putin is watching. He is waiting to see what we will do, waiting to see if we have the resolve to act, waiting to see if he has a green light to take the next step. I believe we need to act now and pass this legislation, and I welcome the flexibility the House has shown in its resolve to move this quickly upon receipt.

Although I believe our response to Russia's annexation of Crimea should have included IMF reforms to strengthen the U.S. role in the international community, that will not be the case, but we still need to act on this issue today. So I hope, in short order, we can have the IMF reform legislation on the floor and take a responsible vote on an important issue.

But let us be clear where we are at this moment. Let us be clear about what happened in Ukraine over the last several years and what is happening now as Ukraine simply looks westward. Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was elected on a platform that advocated closer ties to Europe. In fact, his first trip abroad was not to Moscow but to Brussels to meet with European Union officials. For 3 years Ukraine officials voted in good faith with their European counterparts. They believed they did so with their President's support. Ukrainian public opinion polls favored the conclusion of an agreement between the EU and the Ukraine that would increase trade and cooperation, allowing more people, goods, services, and ideas to cross the border from the West.

On November 21, Yanukovich flipped 180 degrees. He announced an end to talks with the European Union, and Ukrainians felt bitterly betrayed. For 20 years, Ukraine has struggled to economically develop. They have struggled to establish representative government. They have struggled to achieve a stable way forward, a path of economic security and political democracy. The association agreement with the European Union had promised a path toward those goals. So people were furious, and they took to the streets. They knew from personal experience what the world now knows—that Yanukovich and his government and his family had stolen tens of billions of dollars from Ukrainian taxpayers, jeopardizing the solvency and independence of their country to support a lavish lifestyle while the public went without.

The people who took to the Maidan Square in the freezing cold were simply looking westward. They believed the European Union was their last best hope to break the cycle of corruption. They knew their future was being stolen. So they marched and they took beatings from Yanukovich's paramilitary forces, not for a treaty but for the hope of a better, more honest and free Ukraine that it promised.

Putin resorted to outright extortion to keep Ukraine in his sphere of influence, essentially offering to buy Ukraine by offering Yanukovich \$15 billion, and it would have worked but for the uprising of the Ukrainian people who realized this was a Faustian bargain and that Putin was the devil, not their savior.

Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians demonstrated for 3 months to call for the President's resignation. On February 22 of this year, President Yanukovich fled to Russia and an interim government was installed in Ukraine.

Almost immediately, Russian forces took control of the Crimean Peninsula, a clear violation of international law and Russia's own commitments under the Budapest agreement and the Helsinki Final Act. This demands a swift and coordinated and powerful response from the international community and from this Congress. It demands a message to Putin of our resolve and to the Ukrainian people of our support.

That message came, in part, on March 13, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed, by a bipartisan vote of 14 to 3, the Support for the Sovereignty, Integrity, Democracy, and Economic Stability of Ukraine Act of 2014.

In addition to providing \$1 billion in loan guarantees for Ukraine to provide crucial support to stabilize Ukraine's economy, this legislation authorizes assistance for democracy, governance, and civil society programs as well as for enhanced security cooperation. It provides support to the Ukrainian Government to help recover access linked to corruption by former President Yanukovich, his family, and other government officials.

It imposes sanctions against those who are responsible for violent human rights abuses against antigovernment protesters as well as those responsible for undermining the peace, security, stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity of the Ukraine. It imposes asset freezes and visa revocations on Russian officials and their associates who are complicit in or responsible for significant corruption in Ukraine and authorizes sanctions against any Russian official engaged in corruption in the Ukraine or in Russia. Putin's cronies should recognize that Putin may not be the right horse to be betting on any longer. Finally, it sends a powerful message to Russia that there are consequences for using force to annex sovereign territory against the established norms of the international community.

I will take one other moment to say that I have read some editorials suggesting that Ukraine is not that important to us; that it is more important to Europe than it is to us, so what could be our interest. Let me offer a few observations of what the interest of the United States is.

For some time we have been working to see Ukraine move to a democratic, stable government, looking westward,

and in doing so strengthening a big part of Eastern Europe at the end of the day in a way that strengthens the security of that region and the fiscal opportunities of that region.

We look at the Ukraine and we say to ourselves, well, they are not a NATO member. But other NATO allies—some of which I met with when I was in Brussels this past week—who are NATO members are watching and asking: What will Europe and the United States do in the face of Russian aggression? What is our ultimate security going to depend on? We are a NATO member. We are, under article 5 of NATO's treaty, ultimately supposed to be protected because we are committed to the protection of all our other neighbors under NATO. Some of those countries actually meet the full responsibility they have under NATO to pay their quota for the collective defense.

So Ukraine is not a NATO member, but they are looking at what the West's resolve is in the face of this aggression and the possibility of Russian forces moving further west, asking: Is NATO going to stand up for me? That agreement is one of the fundamental institutions that has created security on the European Continent and for which America twice—twice—sent its sons and daughters abroad to ultimately guarantee that security. We need to ensure that NATO continues to be a vibrant entity for the collective security of the United States and of Europe. This is another reason we are interested.

Thirdly, I would just simply say, as I have said on the Senate floor before, the world is watching. China is watching, and they are wondering what America and the West will do as they look at territories they dispute with our allies—Japan and South Korea in the South China Sea. They say: The West let Putin get away with this. Why should we not take those territories? There will be no consequence. Or as we are negotiating with Iran across the table to stop their nuclear weapons program, the Iranians look and ask: How much will the West punish Russia for this aggression, because if there isn't much consequence, then why should I not try to get the maximum of this deal or not accept the deal at all. Or North Korea, which wants to advance even further its missile program, which already possesses nuclear capability, what is their calculation?

I could go around the globe describing at this moment, beyond the Ukraine, how the European Union and the United States acts will send a very clear message to world actors, and that message hopefully will be one of strength, because in doing so we may avert the consequences of security challenges around the globe, avert the possibility we will have to send our sons and daughters into harm's way if we act decisively, if we act with strength.

That is the opportunity we have. The world is watching, and we must rise to

the challenge. Passing this legislation goes a long way toward that goal, and that is both the opportunity and the responsibility before the Senate. I urge my colleagues to speak with one voice.

I hope we get as near to unanimity as possible, as we have done at other times; for example, on the question of sanctions on Iran. This is such a moment. If the Senate speaks with one voice, I think President Putin will understand the consequences of miscalculating further. I hope that is the opportunity of which we will avail ourselves and, in doing so, send a message beyond Putin to the rest of the world that we have the resolve necessary to rise to such challenges.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. JOHANNES. Madam President, 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. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

All time is expired.

Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2867, offered by the Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 88 Leg.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Cornyn	Johnson (WI)
Ayotte	Crapo	Kaine
Baldwin	Cruz	King
Barrasso	Donnelly	Kirk
Begich	Durbin	Klobuchar
Bennet	Enzi	Landrieu
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Leahy
Blunt	Fischer	Lee
Booker	Flake	Levin
Boozman	Franken	Manchin
Boxer	Gillibrand	Markey
Brown	Graham	McCain
Burr	Grassley	McCaskill
Cantwell	Hagan	McConnell
Cardin	Harkin	Menendez
Carper	Hatch	Merkley
Casey	Heinrich	Mikulski
Chambliss	Heitkamp	Moran
Coats	Hirono	Murkowski
Coburn	Hoeven	Murphy
Cochran	Inhofe	Murray
Collins	Isakson	Nelson
Coons	Johanns	Portman
Corker	Johnson (SD)	Pryor

Reed	Scott	Udall (NM)
Reid	Sessions	Vitter
Risch	Shaheen	Walsh
Roberts	Shelby	Warner
Rockefeller	Stabenow	Warren
Rubio	Tester	Whitehouse
Sanders	Thune	Wicker
Schatz	Toomey	Wyden
Schumer	Udall (CO)	

NAYS—2

Heller Paul

The amendment was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am hopeful and confident the next two votes will be by voice. We expect to have the next vote around 1:45 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment of the amendment and third reading of the bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (H.R. 4152), as amended, was passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask to be recognized for 3 minutes.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I understand that this will be a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Thank you Madam President. I want to thank my Senate colleagues and Senator RISCH for helping us get the next Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration to the floor.

First, I want to recognize everybody's thoughts and prayers here for Oso and Darrington, WA, and for the people who have been hit by an unbelievable tragedy. Our hearts go out

to this community and I want to say that this has been a tremendous effort by first responders.

There are hundreds of volunteers, thousands of dollars of contributions. And Darrington High School students made 1,300 sandwiches to try to support the research and recovery effort. I thank them for all of their hard work.

One of the reasons I want to get a Small Business Administrator is because this agency is going to play a role in this recovery. I thank my colleague, Senator MURRAY, for her help and support.

The Small Business Administration plays an important role for communities in disasters and the woman we have before us is a well-qualified woman who can help us with this crisis and continued small business lending.

The SBA has been without an Administrator for 8 months, and it is critical that we get this position filled today. We cannot forget that small businesses create two out of three new jobs in our country—and the SBA provide \$28 million small business assistance that helps them create more jobs.

So every single day we need to think about small businesses in our community and how much we need to help and support them. Businesses, from Chobani Yogurt to Ben & Jerry's ice cream to Federal Express, have benefited from the SBA program. To have somebody like Maria Contreras-Sweet to be this person is critical for us.

I urge my colleagues to support her in this nomination and to move forward on an SBA agenda. Everything from making sure we approve the 504 program, to the STEP export assistance program, and to make sure that we continue to make ground on exporting small business products—made in the United States of America—to the growing middle-class around the globe.

I thank my colleagues and I urge them to support this nominee.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise to express my strong support for Maria Contreras-Sweet—a woman eminently qualified to serve our country as the next administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Maria Contreras-Sweet is the right person to lead the SBA given her distinguished record of public service and her deep understanding of the challenges and needs facing small businesses today.

As the founder of ProAmérica Bank, the first Latino-owned business bank in California in over 30 years and a leading financial services provider and SBA lender, she successfully expanded access to capital for small- and medium-sized businesses that often lacked access to larger, traditional financial institutions.

Just yesterday, my colleagues in the Hispanic Task Force and I met with Latino business leaders from across the Nation, and the No. 1 issue that was raised by nearly everyone in the room was the need to assist minority entrepreneurs and small business owners

with obtaining financing and access to capital—an essential function of the SBA, and one that Maria-Contreras Sweet understands first-hand.

Her commitment to supporting small businesses owners embodies the entrepreneurial spirit that makes our country great—and is exactly the kind of leadership the SBA needs.

Maria Contreras-Sweet also has a proven track record as a dedicated public servant. She previously served as secretary of the California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, where she was the driving force behind major job creation and public investments in infrastructure and housing.

As the first Latina to serve as a cabinet secretary in the state, she managed a budget of \$14 billion and oversaw more than 40,000 employees. This is truly a remarkable nominee who brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to the Small Business Administration, as well as a compelling personal story.

Maria Contreras-Sweet, like me, has humble beginnings. As a young child, she immigrated to the United States from Guadalajara, Mexico. She settled in California, where her mother worked long hours at a chicken packaging plant to support her and her five siblings. Her family did not speak any English when they arrived, and Maria has said that it was precisely hearing no' so many times and seeing so many doors close for them that prompted her to speak up for others, to fight to level the playing field for all, and to find a way to say yes' to people with good ideas who can drive innovation who are all too often overlooked for the wrong reasons.

Maria Contreras-Sweet represents the promise of America, the fulfillment of the American Dream, and the expansion of this dream to millions more entrepreneurs and small business owners across the Nation. She is building wealth for American families and communities, and building pathways to growth and prosperity that extend far beyond the business sector.

Maria Contreras-Sweet is the right nominee for the job. I applaud President Obama for selecting her to be our nation's next SBA administrator, and I thank Leader REID for moving quickly to confirm her nomination without delay. I'm very pleased the time has finally come for good people like Maria Contreras-Sweet to get the up-or-down vote they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm this qualified, competent nominee without hesitation.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I am pleased to support the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration. The SBA Administrator plays an important role in helping small businesses create jobs, mainly by making sure small businesses have access to capital. Ms. Contreras-Sweet is remarkably qualified for this position,