

water, without this legislation the Tax Code would shove them back underwater once more. I don't think that is where our country wants to go.

I don't think our country wants to give a back of the hand to millions of students already up to their eyeballs in debt. Without this legislation, they would have to go even deeper into debt.

Producing clean energy will become more expensive, risking the kind of high-tech jobs the Congress wants and is working in a bipartisan way to protect.

So with the EXPIRE Act we can address all these issues, bring greater certainty to our economy, put an expiration date on the broken tax system, and lay the foundation for working on tax reform and moving away from what has been a long run of stop-and-go tax extender policies. We ought to get away from that, and the point of this legislation is, between now and the end of 2015, to work on comprehensive bipartisan tax reform.

A number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have talked about their interest in this and that they wish we were doing comprehensive reform. I think colleagues have heard me say on the floor of the Senate I'd much prefer to be doing comprehensive tax reform, but when Chairman Baucus went to China, it became clear to me it wasn't going to be possible to get comprehensive tax reform done in this session.

What I sought to do is to make sure we wouldn't do further harm to middle-class families, and small businesses, and those who are creating the innovative jobs. That is why we need this legislation and need to use the legislation when it passes as a bridge to tax reform.

The bill is called the EXPIRE Act. People have often said: What does that mean? It is not just what it means—the bill actually does expire. I have indicated to my colleagues on the Finance Committee that this will be the last extenders bill on my watch. We are not going to have any more of them on my watch. We are going to move to create a stronger, better, more pro-growth, fair tax system, which allows us to be more competitive in a tough global economy and create good-paying jobs. The tax reform process is not going to be a walk in the park, but it is only going to grow harder if the Senate fails to pass the EXPIRE Act first.

We have had bipartisan proposals in the past. Our former colleague Senator GREGG worked with me for 2 years, and we sat together on a sofa almost every week for 2 years to create what is the first bipartisan Federal income tax reform bill in three decades. With his retirement, thankfully Senator COATS and Senator BEGICH stepped in. So we know it can be done, but that task will simply be harder if the Senate fails to pass the EXPIRE Act.

The first thing people are going to say is: If the Senate couldn't deal with these extenders on a temporary basis,

how in the world will the Senate be able to take up comprehensive tax reform?

Fortunately, at a time when many think Washington is utterly broken, the distinguished senior Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, was willing to work with me and meet me halfway in terms of producing a comprehensive, bipartisan effort to move forward on these extenders. It wasn't easy, but it got done, and it got out of the Finance Committee with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote. The bill may not be perfect, but the committee got it done with the kind of bipartisan approach Americans want to see more of. I hope the Senate will want to do the same thing. I was encouraged by the procedural vote we had earlier this week.

So with tonight's developments, I simply underscore the importance of passing the EXPIRE Act. I hope Senators on a bipartisan basis will join me in supporting the legislation. It is going to meet urgent needs of our people now, and if we can get it passed and signed into law quickly, it will allow us to turn our attention exclusively to the kind of tax overhaul that is long overdue. That can bring Democrats and Republicans together, as we saw several decades ago when progressive Democrats and conservative Republicans joined together for tax reform. We can go to that agenda as soon as we address the immediate needs behind the urgent requirement of enacting the extenders bill quickly.

I hope we will see the Senate do that in the next few days ahead.

I thank my colleagues, particularly on the Finance Committee—Democrats and Republicans—for the good and cooperative bipartisan work.

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.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, on Thursday, May 15, 2014, at 11:15 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar Nos. 667, 668, 669, and then proceed to consideration and vote on confirmation of Calendar No. 693 and Calendar No. 541; further, that if cloture is invoked on Calendar Nos. 667, 668, or 669, at 1:45 p.m. all postcloture time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of Calendar No. 669, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar No. 732; and that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be expired and the Senate resume legislative session and proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the substitute amendment No. 3060 to H.R.

3474; further, that on Tuesday, May 20, 2014, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to vote on the confirmation of Calendar No. 732; further, that there will be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote, equally divided in the usual form; that any rollcall votes following the first in each series be 10 minutes in length; further, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD and that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with this agreement, on Thursday there will be as many as five rollcall votes starting at 11:15 a.m. and as many as five rollcall votes beginning at 1:45 p.m. That could change a little bit. We will see how the day goes.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

FRATERNITY OF THE DESERT BIGHORN 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn in Southern Nevada.

The Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn was established in 1964, and in partnering with local, State, and Federal wildlife organizations and agencies, they have played a vital role in the restoration of the iconic desert bighorn sheep in Nevada. These incredible animals are a symbol of our State's unique wildlife habitat, geography, and climate. In the Sloan Canyon and Gold Butte areas of Southern Nevada, ancient petroglyphs and rock art dating back thousands of years depict the bighorn sheep and tell the story of its important contributions to our State's history and culture. The desert bighorn is a noteworthy part of Nevada's mountainous landscapes and was officially named the State animal in 1973.

Following westward expansion in the 1800s, bighorn sheep populations struggled to survive against the spread of disease from domestic livestock and the loss of water resources and habitat. By the 1960s, desert bighorn sheep populations, once in the tens of thousands in the United States, dropped to an estimated 6,700 to 8,100. However, the commitment of organizations like the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn to species restoration has helped to more than double the bighorn sheep population throughout the United States.

The fraternity has worked hard to promote responsible management of the desert bighorn and its habitat. By building and maintaining hundreds of water development projects, fighting disease, and educating domestic sheep herders on the importance of maintaining strict separations between bighorn sheep and domestic herds, the fraternity has provided necessary water resources to Southern Nevada wildlife and ensured a healthy bighorn sheep population for future generations.

I commend the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn on their 50th anniversary, and I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MIRA BALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and congratulate my good friend, Mira Ball. On June 5, Mira will receive the Midway College Legacy Award for her many contributions and years of service to Midway College, located in Midway, KY.

Mira is the first ever recipient of this award, which will be given out at the Inaugural Spotlight awards in June. The purpose of the Legacy Award is to recognize "a person or persons that have impacted Midway College over a period of many years by giving time, service, support and/or resources." With such a description, it's no wonder that Mira was the first in line to receive it.

Mira's contributions to Midway College, which is Kentucky's only women's college and a leader in degree programs for men and women, are aplenty. She has served on the board of trustees since 1990, became the first woman to chair the board in 1997, and was honored to be elected a life trustee in 2000. Last year, she served as interim chair while the institution was in a transitional period.

Even with her devotion to Midway College, Mira has amazingly found time to pursue a multitude of other interests and causes. She became the first woman president of the Lexington Chamber of Commerce in 1991 and was also the first woman to chair the University of Kentucky board of trustees, a post she occupied from 2007 to 2010. If you hadn't noticed, my friend Mira has never been afraid to be the first to do anything.

Additionally, Mira has been one of our State's strongest advocates for education reform, and she currently serves on the endowment board of Kentucky Educational Television, KET. She is also an involved member of the Calvary Baptist Church and is an active philanthropist to health care and education groups.

Somehow, amidst this seemingly endless stream of extracurricular activities, Mira carves out some time for her day job. She serves as the chief financial officer for the very successful Ball Homes LLC homebuilders, which she runs with her husband, Don, and their three children—Ray Ball, Mike Ball,

and Lisa Ball Sharp. In addition to their children, Mira and Don have seven grandchildren—making for a wonderful family that is undoubtedly her biggest achievement of all.

Mira's tireless efforts to better the lives of others deserve the recognition of this body. Thus, I ask that my U.S. Senate colleagues join me in honoring Mira Ball, and congratulating her for being the first-ever recipient of the prestigious Midway College Legacy Award.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, 26 years ago Members of Congress decided to designate May as National Foster Care Month. Since then, the U.S. Congress, the Children's Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Foster Parent Association have worked together to recognize the work of foster families, social workers, faith-based and community organizations, and others who are improving the lives of foster youth across the country and to encourage all Americans to participate in efforts to serve these children throughout the year.

I have come to the floor today, alongside my esteemed colleague and co-chair on the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, to recognize the foster parents, social workers, and advocates from my home State of Louisiana and around the country who play an essential role in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States. I also want to acknowledge the leaders of the House Caucus on Foster Youth—Representative KAREN BASS, Representative TOM MARINO, Representative MICHELE BACHMANN, and Representative JIM McDERMOTT—who already have or will soon speak on the floor, as well, to commemorate National Foster Care Month.

Each day 691 new children enter the foster care system because of abuse or neglect. Each week 4,852 children find themselves on the beginning of their journey through "the system." Over 79,000 children will call this system home for more than 3 years, and more than 23,400 young adults will "age out" of the system without a safe, permanent family. Of those that age out, studies indicate that only 25 percent have a high school diploma or GED, less than 2 percent finish college, over half experience homelessness, and nearly 30 percent have been incarcerated.

As I have long said, governments do many things well, but raising children is not, and will never be, one of them. Our foster care system should be temporary—it is a temporary place where children should go to be protected and nurtured until they can be returned to their birth family, be placed with extended family, or be connected with an adoptive parent or parents. Unfortunately, all too often this is not how it happens. Forty percent of those eligi-

ble for adoption will wait over 3 years in foster care before being adopted. Even worse, 23,000 youth—25 percent of those eligible for adoption—"age out" or emancipate from the system each year. We cannot rest until our Federal and state governments are 100 percent successful at connecting these children—who have been placed under the government's care due to no fault of their own—with permanent, safe, and loving families.

It is our responsibility to find homes for the huge numbers of abandoned and orphaned children in the United States. For this reason, I created a new pilot grant in the fiscal year 14 Omnibus to enable States to initiate intensive and exhaustive child-focused recruitment programs, proven to increase adoptions out of foster care 3 to 1. The \$4 million dollars that I secured for this program will enable States to move foster youth eligible for adoption into permanent families at a much higher rate than traditional recruitment strategies. This is because these grants will provide social workers with the resources, time, and mandate to actually open up the file of youth in care and identify the names and contact information of parents, relatives, caregivers, and other significant adults in that child's life. This intense review, often called "case mining," is key in locating a caring adult able to commit to reunification, adoption or legal guardianship for foster youth.

There are many other strategies that our government can implement to increase permanency for foster children. Just last week the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, led by executive director Kathleen Strotzman, hosted a policy focused briefing to educate congressional staff about how postadoption services are cost-effective and enormously beneficial alternatives to children reentering foster care or having their adoptions dissolved. The Federal Government spends an average of \$27,236 annually for each child in care covered by Federal funding—and much more for those in group homes or residential treatment centers—compared to \$5,043 for a child receiving adoption assistance covered by Federal funding adoptions. There currently is no Federal funding stream dedicated exclusively to postadoption services. We as legislators must consider ways in which we can increase the overall resources dedicated to post-adoption.

As I have stated, it is our responsibility to invest in initiatives that are proven to be successful in finding permanent solutions for our nation's foster children. I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor S. Res. 442, "Recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system."