

an important designation for Vermont. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System recognizes and preserves rivers with remarkable scenic and recreational value. With the passage of this legislation, Vermont will join 40 other States with designated national wild and scenic rivers. This designation of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers is the capstone of more than 7 years of work, including intense study and planning by the local communities that want to protect the natural, cultural, and recreational qualities of these rivers.

This defense authorization bill is not perfect; politics as much as policy makes that the case. I am disappointed that this authorization fails to build on important progress made last year to streamline the transfer of detainees from Guantanamo Bay and move closer to finally shuttering the detention facility there. This compromise bill will maintain the status quo by continuing to prohibit the transfer of detainees to the United States for detention or trial. I am disappointed that a provision contained in the Senate Armed Services Committee version of the authorization that would have provided exceptions to this prohibition was removed during negotiations. However, I am pleased that the bill does not contain the statutory ban on detainee transfers to Yemen that also was contained in the Senate bill.

As long as the detention facility at Guantanamo remains open, it serves as a recruitment tool for terrorists, and tarnishes America's historic role as a champion of human rights. The prison facility at Guantanamo remains a tremendous waste of taxpayer dollars—costing this country billions of dollars at a time when budgets are tight and that money is needed elsewhere. Closing Guantanamo is the morally responsible thing to do; my commitment on that has not wavered.

With regard to some of the provisions included in this bill that relate to combatting the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), I expect the Department of Defense to abide by the Leahy law. These terrorists pose a threat to the United States and to our partners; they must be stopped and brought to justice. But we cannot ignore our own laws or permit the United States to be implicated, either directly or indirectly, in gross violations of human rights when we support either governments or irregular forces in the fight against ISIS.

There have been multiple reports that some in the Iraqi Army and the militias they fight alongside engage in reprehensible conduct similar to the barbaric crimes of ISIS. As a matter of law and policy, we must condemn this. I cannot—and will not—support any effort to weaken the application of the Leahy law to the Iraqi Army or to any entity it is aligned with.

As in every defense authorization bill, there are things in here that I support and things I wish were not in here.

Compromise is inherent in this process. But we cannot forsake our principles and ideals when it comes to supporting our national defense and the men and women who serve. I will support this compromise bill and remain committed to ensuring that we preserve the values that make this Nation a beacon of civil and human rights around the globe.

Madam President, I am grateful that the fiscal year 15 National Defense Authorization Act includes an important designation for Vermont. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers system recognizes and preserves rivers with remarkable scenic and recreational value. With the passage of this legislation, Vermont will join 40 other States with designated National Wild and Scenic Rivers. Designation of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers is the capstone of more than 7 years of work, including intense study and planning by the local communities who want to protect the natural, cultural and recreational qualities of these rivers.

This has not been a Federal-led initiative; instead it was an occasion for Vermont citizens to work together. The communities along the rivers contacted me in 2006 to request the initial Federal study for this designation. The decision to move ahead was made by local communities that agreed to specific goals and priorities for these two rivers. This designation was put to a vote at the communities' town meetings and was approved by every town that is included in the legislation.

National Wild and Scenic status for these rivers will help the local communities promote recreational use, while also protecting the rights and values of landowners who make their homes and livings on the banks of these rivers. I am proud that this process has been driven by the impacted communities, working to ensure that the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers will forever be enjoyed by fishermen, hunters, and paddlers and that water quality will be protected. The benefits will extend downstream as far as Lake Champlain and beyond.

Ms. MIKULSKI. 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. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 130, the short-term, 2-day continuing resolution, which was received from the House and is now at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint resolution be read three times and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the joint resolution.

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

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading, and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) was passed.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to consider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—Continued

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that at noon on Friday, December 12, tomorrow, all postcloture time on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3979 be considered expired; that it be in order, notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, for Senator COBURN to offer a motion to refer the House message; that there be 3 hours of debate, 1 hour each for Senators COBURN and REID, or their designees, and 30 minutes each for Senators MURKOWSKI and INHOFE, or their designees, prior to a vote in relation to the motion to refer; that the Coburn motion to refer be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; that if the Coburn motion to refer is not agreed to, Senator COBURN be recognized for the purposes of making a motion; that following disposition of the Coburn motion, the pending motion to concur with a further amendment be withdrawn; that the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to concur; that no motions other than the Coburn motions, motions to waive or motions to table be in order; that the vote on the motion to concur be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; finally, that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following concurrent resolutions en bloc: H. Con. Res. 121, to correct the enrollment of H.R. 3979, providing a new title to the bill; and H. Con. Res. 123, to correct the enrollment of H.R. 3979; that the concurrent resolutions be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the House message with respect to H.R. 3979, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 697, 632, 1055, 542, 637, 1051, 1057, 791, 1102; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to each vote; that upon the use or yielding back of time the Senate proceed to vote with no intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that any rollcall votes, following the first in the series, be 10 minutes in length; that if any nomination is confirmed, the motion 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 nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOHN WALSH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to take a few moments to thank a Senator who will be leaving at the end of this term: Senator JOHN WALSH of Montana.

Though only in the Senate a brief time, Senator WALSH brought his wealth of experience to the work here and fought the good fight. Serving 33 years in the Montana Army National Guard, he brought his bravery and courage into the Senate. JOHN WALSH supported the Paycheck Fairness Act and was one of the original cosponsors of the Bring Jobs Home Act. He lived up to the values he was fighting for in the military by standing for workers here.

I thank him for his service and friendship and wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY ERICKSON
AND SHEILA DWYER

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President I would like to take a moment to thank

a woman whom most Americans do not know but whose name is well-known to every employee of the United States Senate because—among other reasons—she signs our paychecks. Nancy Erickson will be leaving the Senate at the end of this session.

For the last 7 years, Nancy has served as the Secretary of the United States Senate. All told, she has worked for the Senate for 26 years.

For those who may not know, the Secretary of the Senate is this body's top appointed position. It is like being CEO of a large corporation. The Secretary oversees two dozen departments—from payroll and printing to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Nancy Erickson is the 32nd person—and the sixth woman—to hold that position. Nancy is a consummate professional who has won the respect of Senators on both sides of the aisle. She is unfailingly cheerful and unflappable.

Nancy Erickson loves the United States Senate even more than she loves the Green Bay Packers—and that is saying a lot. Nancy got the political bug early. As a fifth grader in Brandon, SD, she campaigned door-to-door for South Dakota Senator George McGovern in his 1972 Presidential campaign. She moved to Washington, DC, after college to work for the Government Accountability Office, which was then known as the General Accounting Office. After 2 years of desperate homesickness, she was ready to pack her bags and head back to South Dakota when she got a better offer.

A young South Dakota congressman with a bright future offered her a job as his scheduler. His name was Tom Daschle. Over the next 16 years Tom Daschle moved from serving as a House Member to Senator to Senate majority leader. Nancy moved up the ladder, too, eventually becoming Senator Daschle's deputy chief of staff. When Senator Daschle left the Senate in 2005, Senator REID immediately snapped Nancy up to serve as his representative to the Senate Sergeant at Arms. Two years later Senator REID became majority leader and asked Nancy to serve as the Secretary of the Senate. Nancy calls being Secretary of the Senate her "pinch me job."

Over the course of her 26-year Senate career, there have been traumatic moments. On the morning of September 11, 2001, Nancy was at her desk in the Capitol when Capitol Police rushed in and ordered that the building be evacuated immediately, fearful that the Capitol was under terrorist attack.

One month later Nancy was one of 28 people in the Senate who were exposed to anthrax when a letter carrying the deadly bacteria was opened in Senator Daschle's office. Experts estimated that the affected staffers were exposed to between 1,000 and 3,000 times the lethal dose of anthrax. Fortunately, with expert medical assistance, no one in the Senate was seriously injured in the anthrax attack.

To walk back into the Capitol the day after 9/11 took courage. To keep

coming back after living through a potentially deadly anthrax attack required not just courage but a true devotion to public service and a love of this Senate.

You can see Nancy's love of this Senate and its history in the exquisitely restored Old Senate Chamber, whose renovation occurred on Nancy's watch. You can see her love of the Senate in the ongoing restoration of the Capitol's magnificent Brumidi Corridors, a project that Nancy has championed.

You can see Nancy Erickson's reverence for the U.S. Senate in a massive portrait of one of the giants of Senate history, former Kentucky Senator Henry Clay. That painting, measuring 11 by 7 feet, was discovered a few years ago in a storage room in New York State. The paint was peeling, and there were holes in the canvas created when a high school had used it as a basketball backboard. Nancy spearheaded the effort to procure and restore that lost masterpiece. Today, the painting of the Senate's "Great Compromiser" hangs just off the Senate floor—a reminder to all of us of the noble art of principled compromise. We thank you, Nancy, for that reminder and for your many years of service to this Senate and to America.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge Sheila Dwyer, who has served as Assistant Secretary of the Senate since 2007. Majority Leader HARRY REID, who paid tribute to Sheila on the Senate floor yesterday, appointed her to this post. Sheila has done an outstanding job overseeing the departments within the Office of the Secretary and assisting in the day-to-day legislative, financial, and administrative operations of the Senate. Sheila never forgets the little touches, or as any Democratic Senator can tell you, the meals that make the U.S. Senate an enjoyable place to work.

Sheila first came to Washington, DC, in 1980 as a House page for Speaker Tip O'Neil. Immediately after graduating from Suffolk University in Boston, she returned to DC and was hired to work in New York Governor Mario Cuomo's Washington office. She went on to work for Senators Charles Robb and Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Sheila was responsible for logistics of not one—but two—Democratic national conventions. The first was in 1992 in New York City. Then at the 1996 convention in Chicago, I chaired the Illinois Delegation as a candidate for the U.S. Senate, and Sheila Dwyer once again kept the logistics for the event moving smoothly.

It has been an honor to work with Sheila for all these years, and I wish her the best as she begins a new chapter in her life.

To Nancy and to Sheila, thank you for sharing so much of your time and talent with this Senate. We will miss you both.