But nothing you predicted actually comes to pass. What do you do?

You might admit that you were wrong, and try to figure out why. But almost nobody does that; we live in an age of unacknowledged error.

Alternatively, you might insist that sinister forces are covering up the grim reality. Quite a few well-known pundits are, or at some point were, ''inflation truthers,'' claiming that the government is lying about the pace of price increases. There have also been many prominent Obamacare truthers declaring that the White House is cooking the books, that the policies are worthless, and so on.

Finally, there's a third option: You can pretend that you didn't make the predictions you did. I see that a lot when it comes to people who issued dire warnings about interest rates and inflation, and now claim that they did no such thing. Where I'm seeing it most, however, is on the health care front. Obamacare is working better than even its supporters expected—but its enemies say that the good news proves nothing, because nobody predicted anything different.

Go back to 2013, before reform went fully into effect, or early 2014, before the numbers on first-year enrollment came in. What were Obamacare's opponents predicting? The answer is, utter disaster. Americans, declared a May 2013 report from a House committee, were about to face a devastating ''rate shock,'' with premiums almost doubling on average.

And it would only get worse: At the beginning of 2014 the right's favored experts—or maybe that should be ''experts''—were warning about a ''death spiral'' in which only the sickest citizens would sign up, causing premiums to soar even higher and many people to drop out of the program.

What about the overall effect on insurance coverage? Several months into 2014 many leading Republicans—including John Boehner, the speaker of the House—were predicting that more people would lose coverage than gain it. And everyone on the right was predicting that the law would cost far more than projected, adding hundreds of billions if not trillions to budget deficits.

What actually happened? There was no rate shock: average premiums in 2014 were about 16 percent lower than projected. There is no death spiral: On average, premiums for 2015 are between 2 and 4 percent higher than in 2014, which is a much slower rate of increase than the historical norm. The number of Americans without health insurance has fallen by around 15 million, and would have fallen substantially more if so many Republican-controlled states weren't blocking the expansion of Medicaid. And the overall cost of the program is coming in well below expectations.

One more thing: You sometimes hear complaints about the alleged poor quality of the policies offered to newly insured families. But a new survey by J. D. Power, the market research company, finds that the newly enrolled are very satisfied with their coverage—more satisfied than the average person with conventional, non-Obamacare insurance.

This is what policy success looks like, and it should have the critics engaged in soul-searching about why they got it so wrong. But no.

Instead, the new line—exemplified by, but not unique to, a recent op-ed article by the hedge-fund manager Cliff Asness—is that there's nothing to see here: ''That more people would be insured was never in dispute.'' Never, I guess, except in everything ever said by anyone in a position of influence on the American right. Oh, and all the good news on costs is just a coincidence.

It's both easy and entirely appropriate to ridicule this kind of thing. But there are some serious stakes here, and they go beyond the issue of health reform, important as it is.

You see, in a polarized political environment, policy debates always involve more than just the specific issue on the table. They are also clashes of world views. Predictions of debt disaster, a debased dollar, and Obama death spirals reflect the same ideology, and the utter failure of these predictions should inspire major doubts about that ideology.

And there's also a moral issue involved. Refusing to accept responsibility for past errors is a serious character flaw in one's private life. It rises to the level of real wrongdoing when policies that affect millions of lives are at stake.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I see no one on the floor, so will the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1191 for debate only, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

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

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

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, Congress unanimously passed the International Religious Freedom Act in 1989 with a 98-to-0 vote in this body for that legislation, including 19 Senators still serving today—11 Republicans and 8 Democrats. We asserted that religious freedom ''undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.'' Yet, religious freedom today is under attack across the country.

Political activists are attacking religious freedom as the enemy of equality, claiming that laws protecting religious freedom are designed to enshrine discrimination in State law. This effort is misinformed, it is misguided, and it is misleading. It will serve only to harm religious freedom and to demonize religious people, many of whom would be allies in the effort to promote equality.

The attack on religious freedom misunderstands the history and importance of religious freedom in America. That story began more than 400 years ago, as one religious community after another came to these shores so they could freely live their faith. As far back as December 1657, residents of the community known today as Flushing, NY, signed a petition called the Flushing Remonstrance. This petition protested a ban on certain religious practices that prevented the Quakers from worshipping. The petition signers stated that they would let everyone decide for themselves how to worship.

One hundred twenty years later, the original States and the Federal Government specifically protected religious freedom in their Constitutions. Indeed, the phrase America's Founders chose for the first individual right listed in the First Amendment—the free exercise of religion—is very important. The free exercise clause is not limited to particular exercises of religion or to the exercise of religion by certain parties but instead protects the free exercise of religion itself. James Madison wrote in 1758 that exercising religion according to conviction and conscience is an inalienable right. Two hundred years later, Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg declared that ''to the Founding Fathers, freedom of religion was regarded to be preeminent among fundamental rights.''

This belief in the special importance and preeminent status of religious freedom did not end with America's founding generation. In his famous 1941 State of the Union Address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asserted that ''the right of every person to worship God in his own way'' is an essential human freedom. Just 4 years later, after the end of World War II, the United States signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This crucial document includes religious freedom as one of the inalienable rights universal to all members of the human family.

Our last several Presidents have issued annual proclamations declaring January 16 Religious Freedom Day. This date marks the anniversary of the Virginia General Assembly's adoption of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. In this year's proclamation, President Obama said that religious freedom is a fundamental liberty and defined religious freedom as the right of every person to live and practice their faith how they choose. In previous years, President Obama has called religious freedom a universal and natural human right and an essential part of human dignity. President George W. Bush similarly declared that no human freedom is more fundamental than the right to freely practice one's religious beliefs. President Clinton said that religious freedom is a fundamental human right, a core value

of our democracy, and essential to our dignity as human beings.

I want my colleagues to appreciate how robust religious freedom has historically been in our country. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that religious freedom includes ''freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest . . . religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.''

In America, religious freedom has always included freedom in both belief and behavior, in private and in public, individually and collectively. Today's attacks on religious freedom know none of this. Instead, they dismiss religious freedom as a sham, as little more than an excuse for mean-spirited people who want to discriminate. Today's opponents of religious freedom laws either do not know or do not care that religious freedom is an integral part of the origin, the identity, and the very life of our Nation.

They are also clearly misinformed about how, even in America, the reality of religious freedom has not always matched the promise of religious freedom. The truth is that government does many things that compromise, burden, and even prohibit the exercise of religion. The Flushing Remonstrance was necessary because community leaders allowed religious freedom for some but not for others. Government has even sometimes passed laws explicitly designed to limit or stamp out particular religious practices or religious communities.

More often, government undermines and restricts the exercise of religion through indirect impact. General laws that on their face do not explicitly target religion can nonetheless have a profound impact when applied to particular religious practices. Zoning ordinances may restrict where churches can meet, whether they may expand their meeting place, and what services they may offer. Religious institutions may be forced to hire individuals who do not share their faith. Regulations may prohibit individuals from wearing items required by their faith or require employees to work on their Sabbath.

Government at all levels—Federal, State, and local—is becoming ever more intrusive in virtually every facet of life. Unless government is mindful of its impact on religious practices, government will become increasingly intrusive in matters of religion as well.

The attack on religious freedom is also misinformed about how important religious liberty laws are to protecting the exercise of religion.

Prior to 1990, for more than a century the Supreme Court's interpretation of the free exercise clause had gradually moved toward broader application and stronger protection. In the 19th century, for example, the Court said that the First Amendment protected religious belief but not religious conduct, even though the First Amendment makes no such distinction. The Court subsequently adopted a more unified view of religious practice and set a standard that made it difficult for government to interfere with either belief or conduct.

In 1981, the Supreme Court made clear that government ''may justify an inroad on religious liberty by showing it is the least restrictive means of achieving some compelling state interest.'' This standard was important for two reasons. First, it reflected the general importance of religious freedom in our country. Second, it applied to both religious conduct and religious belief and protected against both direct and indirect government burdens and restrictions.

In a 1990 case entitled ''Employment Division v. Smith,'' the Supreme Court regrettably reversed course. Under the Court's new interpretation of the First Amendment, as set forth in Smith, the free exercise clause applies only when government directly burdens religion with a law targeted at religious practice. The clause provides no protection at all when government burdens religion indirectly through a generally applicable law or regulation. Before the Smith decision, it had been difficult but not impossible for government to interfere with the exercise of religion. Government had to show that a law or regulation burdening religion furthered a compelling State interest and was the least restrictive means of achieving that interest. I might add, under the Court's new Smith standard, however, government can make religious practice not only difficult but even impossible. Provided government does not specifically target religion for disfavor, it can pass all sorts of laws that interfere with worship, practice, or belief.

It would be hard to overstate the impact of Smith. In 1992, the Congressional Research Service found that as a result of Smith, ''free exercise claims have become markedly unsuccessful.'' Remember that the government has its biggest impact on religion not through direct suppression but, rather, by indirect restriction—by disregarding religious practice as something needing special attention. Under Smith, government can do exactly what the First Amendment forbids and prohibit the free exercise of religion so long as it does so through generally applicable laws rather than laws targeted at specific groups.

Congress responded to Smith by enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA. I had a lot to do with that. RFRA's standard mirrored what the Supreme Court had only a few years earlier said the First Amendment required—namely, that government may impose a substantial burden on the exercise of religion only if it is the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling government purpose.

RFRA does not automatically protect any specific exercise of religion, nor does it automatically prohibit any specific government action that burdens religion. RFRA sets a standard that requires balancing government action against religious freedom and puts a thumb on the scale in favor of religious freedom. RFRA leaves it to the courts, in individual cases based on real facts, to determine whether a particular exercise of religion or a particular governmental action is more important.

In 1997, the Supreme Court held in City of Boerne v. Flores that RFRA applies only to the Federal Government. This meant that once again religious practice was vulnerable to virtually any restriction, regulation, or prohibition by State or local government. States responded to the Flores decision just as Congress had responded to the Smith decision: They immediately began enacting State religious restoration acts that set the same standard for State and local governments that the Federal statute still imposes on the Federal Government, the Federal statute called the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. These State RFRAs differ in a few minor ways from the Federal RFRA but are identical to the Federal RFRA in the core provision that really matters—the standard that government must satisfy in order to burden religious exercise. Under all of these statutes, government action that burdens religion must be the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling government purpose.

I want my colleagues to understand two things about these religious freedom laws: First, States are enacting State-level Religious Freedom Restoration Acts for the same reason Congress did. Without such laws, every exercise of religion is vulnerable to restriction or even prohibition by government. Second, State versions of RFRA operate the same way the Federal statute does. They set a standard and then leave that standard for courts to apply in individual cases with real facts. In every case, the party claiming RFRA protection must show that government action imposes a substantial burden on his or her exercise of religion, and the government must show that this burden is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling government interest. Without this protection, government action will trump religious practice in almost every case. With this protection, government action will have to accommodate religious practice in at least some cases.

Those attacking religious freedom today are completely misinformed about why these laws are passed and how they work to protect religious freedom. They want people to believe that RFRA was passed to provide cover for discrimination masquerading as religious practice and to therefore oppose efforts to pass or strengthen State-level RFRAs. That account is complete fiction. RFRA was passed so that the fundamental inalienable right to practice religion can have at least some protection.

What would happen if we treated the free speech clause of the First Amendment the way these activists treat the

free exercise clause of the First Amendment? No one would be protected against government restrictions on speech because a few people might say things the rest of us don't like.

In addition to being misinformed about religious freedom in America and how the Religious Freedom Restoration Act protects it, the attack on religious freedom today is misguided because discrimination—not religious freedom—is the real problem.

I am sure my colleagues have heard the sound bite that RFRA legalizes discrimination. NBC News, for example, reported last year that the Arizona RFRA ''would have permitted businesses in the state to deny service to gays and lesbians for religious beliefs.''

I explained how RFRA works to make crystal clear that this claim is false. Neither the Federal Government nor any State RFRA legalizes, permits or prohibits anything. RFRA sets a standard that government must meet when its actions burden the exercise of religion. Courts apply that standard in individual cases based on real facts to decide whether the religious practice or the government action is more important.

I need to make one more important distinction before looking at another reason why this claim is false. Those attacking religious freedom today use a very broad brush when raising the specter that businesses will ''deny service.'' They apparently want us to believe that businesses everywhere are intent on turning away customers, on not doing business with certain people. That not only makes no sense, but it just plain is not true.

Instead, the controversy exists only with regard to a few businesses that supply particular goods or services for weddings. A small number of business owners apparently feel that, while they gladly serve the general public and provide goods and services to all types of customers, providing certain specific goods or services for a same-sex wedding would amount to supporting or endorsing something inconsistent with their religious beliefs. Think what you want about those business owners, I want my colleagues to know that RFRA does not protect their decision to refuse service today.

Here is what has to happen for a case pitting RFRA against a claim discrimination to exist. The particular State where the business is located must have a law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in places of public accommodation such as businesses. The State must also have not only a Religious Freedom Restoration Act but one that applies between private parties. The business would have to violate the antidiscrimination law and, if the business were sued, argue that the antidiscrimination law imposed a substantial burden on the exercise of religion. Only then would a judge decide whether—in that case based on its specific facts—the antidiscrimination law or the business owner's religious beliefs were more important.

Do you see why the claim that RFRA, by itself, legalizes discrimination is absolutely, completely false? Not only does RFRA not legalize anything, the situation in which RFRA would even be involved does not exist anywhere in America today. Right now, according to the Human Rights Campaign, 17 States have the necessary antidiscrimination law, and only 4 of those 17 have a Religious Freedom Restoration Act. And of those four, none has a RFRA that applies to lawsuits between private parties. In other words, the number of States today in which a business could look to RFRA to justify discrimination is precisely zero.

Moreover, the current controversy, misinformed and misguided as it is, has no doubt diminished the likelihood that States with antidiscrimination laws will now enact religious freedom laws. Discrimination, not religious freedom, is the real problem. Despite what the activists want everyone to believe, Americans practice religion every day in innumerable ways that have nothing whatsoever to do with anyone's sexual orientation or gender identity. In the very few situations in which religious freedom and discrimination might overlap, RFRA would actually be the way to sort out the conflict—the mechanism to balance these competing interests. Even though the exercise of religion is a fundamental and inalienable right, it is not absolute. Many courts have found that government has a compelling interest in prohibiting discrimination.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an excellent analysis of this point by David Rivkin and Professor Elizabeth Price Foley that appeared in the Wall Street Journal be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Here is the bottom line. The situation that activists want everyone to believe is sweeping the country cannot exist anywhere in America today. If the day ever comes when that situation does arise, many applying RFRA would place freedom from discrimination over freedom of religion by a wide margin.

The attack on religious freedom today is not only misinformed about religion freedom in America and how laws such as RFRA protect that freedom, it is not only misguided in presenting religious freedom rather than discrimination as the real problem and RFRA as the culprit, but it is also misleading in broadly painting religious people as mean-spirited bigots. That is wrong. That is just plain wrong.

It is also unfortunate because many Americans believe in both equality and religious freedom and could be allies in seeking to maximize both. I voted for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act last Congress after working with Senators on both sides of the aisle to strengthen its provisions protecting religious freedom. Earlier this year, the Utah State Legislature passed and Governor Gary Herbert signed a law prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing while also protecting religious freedom.

How did we go from religious freedom being a fundamental and inalienable right to religious freedom laws being attacked as un-American? How did we go from religious freedom being an essential human right that undergirds our Nation's very existence to activists calling laws that protect religious freedom dangerous and even contemptuous?

Those attacking laws that protect religious freedom would deny any legal protections for anyone to exercise religion in any way today because a few people might someday attempt to exercise their religion in a way that the courts would likely reject. This is a misinformed, misguided, and misleading campaign that will only damage religious freedom and demonize many who would work toward maximizing both equality and freedom for all Americans.

I was the prime sponsor in the Senate of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. I went to Senator Kennedy. He was a friend, and we joined on many pieces of legislation that were in the best interests of everybody in America. At first, he said: I am not joining on that bill. Then I kept talking to him about it and how important it was. Finally, he said: Yes, I am going to be a prime cosponsor on that bill. There are many other prime cosponsors on that bill.

When that bill was signed on the South Lawn of the White House by President Clinton, one of the most proud people on Earth on that signing day happened to be Ted Kennedy, who knew that he had done right, who knew that it was right to protect the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. And I know it is right. That is one reason we fought so hard for it, and it passed 97 to 3, if I recall it correctly—almost unanimously—and unanimously in the House, as far as I know.

It is time for us to wake up and realize that religious freedom is under attack in this country. It is under attack because people don't understand the Constitution and people don't give a darn about the Constitution. It is under attack because some groups think they can get ahead by attacking religious freedom. Frankly, we ought to decry that, and we all need to stand up for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which upholds the first basic law of freedom in our Bill of Rights.

I yield the floor.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Apr. 9, 2015]

GAY RIGHTS, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND THE LAW

(By David B. Rivkin, Jr. and Elizabeth Price Foley)

There is a better route to protections than the battle in Indiana.

Debates about the Indiana and Arkansas Religious Freedom Restoration Acts, or

RFRAs, have regrettably pitted religious freedom against gay rights. Critics claim the laws provide a license to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) individuals. But this criticism shouldn't be aimed at the religious-freedom laws, which don't license discrimination based on sexual orientation or anything else.

Those wanting to advance LGBT rights should focus on enacting laws that bar discrimination. If there is a legal ''license'' to discriminate based on sexual orientation, it is because few jurisdictions today provide protection against such discrimination, or because the Constitution may immunize such behavior in certain circumstances.

There is no federal law prohibiting private discrimination based on sexual orientation. An executive order by President Obama in 2014 bans such discrimination only for federal workers and contractors. About 20 states and some municipalities prohibit sexual-orientation discrimination in workplaces and public accommodations. But the majority of states still don't proscribe discrimination based on sexual orientation, though discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity or national origin is banned.

The federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act was passed by overwhelming bipartisan majorities and signed by President Clinton in 1993. It represented a backlash against the Supreme Court's 1990 decision in Employment Division v. Smith. That decision held that the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause doesn't allow a religious exemption from laws of general applicability—e.g., compulsory military service, or prohibitions on drug use or animal cruelty—even if those laws substantially burden religious exercise.

The federal RFRA law supplanted Smith, declaring that the government could substantially burden religious exercise only upon proving a ''compelling'' government interest for doing so, and using only the ''least restrictive means'' of furthering that interest. The Supreme Court, for example, recently affirmed that the federal RFRA allowed Hobby Lobby, a corporation closely held by religious owners, to refuse participation in ObamaCare's contraceptive mandate, which would have required the company to provide contraceptives that may destroy an already-fertilized egg.

Because the federal RFRA applies only to federal actions, 20 states have passed their own religious-freedom laws designed to provide the same protection against state-imposed religious burdens. Another 11 states have implemented similar protections through court decisions, based on state constitutions.

So why have the latest religious-freedom laws been so controversial? RFRA has become a political focal point for pent-up anger over the paucity of legal protections against LGBT discrimination. A specific controversy is over the application of such laws to lawsuits between private parties.

Indiana's RFRA applies ''regardless of whether the state or any other governmental entity is a party to the proceeding.'' Federal RFRA doesn't clearly apply to such private disputes, and federal courts are divided on whether it should. Arkansas adopted language identical to the federal RFRA.

Applying religious-freedom laws to private disputes has stirred fears that businesses will be able to defend discriminatory behavior when LGBT individuals sue them. This fear is greatly overblown. First, in states or localities where there is no law banning sexual-orientation discrimination, individuals and businesses are allowed to discriminate, with or without a RFRA.

Second, where it's illegal to discriminate, a religious-freedom defense requires proving that the antidiscrimination statute ''substantially burdens'' religion.

Third, even if it does, courts routinely conclude that preventing discrimination is a compelling interest, so the LGBT plaintiff wins. RFRA thus doesn't change outcomes—only laws banning sexual-orientation discrimination will.

Such laws won't eliminate all legal questions, however. Those engaged in activities with a strong expressive component—e.g., officiating at a wedding—may claim that their First Amendment free-speech or association rights trump antidiscrimination statutes. Some of these claims may prove successful.

Moreover, state and federal law allows individuals to refuse to provide certain services, such as abortions, based on moral objections. Similar conscience-based protections may eventually be demanded to accommodate moral objections to participation in same-sex weddings by the likes of wedding planners, photographers or bakers.

Americans have generally settled on the proper reach of statutes prohibiting race, gender, ethnicity or national origin-based discrimination by banning it in places of employment or public accommodation. With this consensus in mind, states and the federal government should consider statutes prohibiting in similar circumstances sexual-orientation discrimination.

Religious-freedom laws merely recognizing religious liberty—a centerpiece of liberal society—would then be more likely to become as universally accepted as they were in the 1990s.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. 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. NELSON. Mr. President, while the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee is here, I want him to know of my admiration for him for trying to work together in a bipartisan way on an especially thorny issue, this Iranian nuclear negotiation.

I read in today's paper that there are a lot of people who are trying to torpedo the chairman's good work by basically bringing up all kinds of poison pill amendments. If the chairman's conclusion is that he is going to stick with the unanimous product that came out of this committee, then I will be with him to keep that product clean so it can go forward in the bipartisan way in which the chairman brought it to the floor.

TAKATA AIRBAGS

Mr. President, I am going to speak on a different subject today. It is not as pleasant as the remarks I addressed to the chairman, and it is on a completely different subject matter. It is about the defective airbags manufactured by the Takata Corporation which are exploding in people's faces and our collective effort to get them out of cars.

Instead of saving a life, these airbags—when they explode—either maim or kill because of the defective construction. When the airbag explodes, metal is coming out of the airbag like shrapnel and hitting the occupant of the car—either the driver or the passenger.

Last November, we had a hearing in the commerce committee about these rupturing airbags and the recalls. The number of vehicles recalled due to the defective Takata airbags is going to be in the record books as one of the largest in American history.

At that hearing, we saw that instead of preventing these deaths and injuries, the opposite was happening. Interestingly, many of these incidents are happening in vehicles exposed to persistent high heat and humidity.

This Senator is from Florida, so it is, sadly, no surprise that Florida has been the epicenter of these incidents. Earlier this year, I came to the floor and reported that Takata had received unconfirmed reports of 64 injuries and 5 deaths as a result of the exploding airbags. At the time, these numbers from Takata were far greater than what had been reported. Takata recently provided an update to the committee, and I have new numbers.

According to the most recent data as of the end of January, Takata had identified 40 more alleged incidents of rupturing airbags, including 1 death. This brings the total number of alleged injuries from 64 to 105 and the total number of alleged deaths to 6. As one would expect, 17 of the 40 newly reported incidents provided by Takata to our committee occurred in Florida. That brings the total number of alleged incidents of exploding Takata airbags in Florida—just in Florida—to 35, including 1 that caused a death.

Now, these injuries have been very serious. I am not talking about a minor little nick. These injuries include facial fractures, blindness, a broken sternum, and even quadriplegia. This Senator has visited with one of his constituents—a big, strapping, healthy firefighter who will no longer be a firefighter because he does not have sight in one of his eyes. But even the new numbers I just gave do not paint the full picture.

In fact, Reuters recently reported that another Takata airbag in Florida ruptured just last month. The figures I reported earlier were as of the end of last January. The victim who was injured last month was in a 2003 Honda Civic. He had a 1½-inch piece of metal shrapnel lodged into his neck after the airbag exploded. He was airlifted to the hospital and the doctors were able to remove the shrapnel, but now he has a big scar and a constant reminder that this incident could and should have been prevented.

The death that occurred in Florida was due to shrapnel cutting the jugular vein of the victim. When the police got to that accident, instead of thinking it was a traffic accident, they looked at the driver and thought a homicide had just occurred. It didn't occur to them that shrapnel from an exploding airbag killed the driver.

Honda has informed us that they are sending their recall notices out in both English and Spanish in order to more effectively reach consumers. We appreciate what Takata has done in trying

to ramp up their production of replacement inflators. After that Honda announcement, Honda also started an ad campaign in both English and Spanish to remind owners to have their recalled airbag inflators replaced, but obviously more still needs to be done.

We need to get to the root cause of the problem, that is what we need to do, and we need to make sure we know why these defective airbag inflators are failing. It may be the inflator or it may be the propellant inside. We need to know. So, yes, we need more replacement inflators, but we need to make sure they are actually safe replacement inflators instead of potentially producing more defective inflators.

It is my understanding that Honda and others are taking steps to ensure the safety of the replacement inflators. Well, that needs to happen right now and be validated right away by an independent third party. We need to make sure we are able to prevent defects like this in the future.

I am going to stay on Takata. This Senator is going to stay on the automakers. This Senator is going to stay on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to do exactly that. But for right now, I urge anybody listening to me—if a defect is identified and you receive a recall notice, get your car into the dealership for repair just as quickly as you can. I also want folks to know that even if they have not received a notice from Takata, they should go to the Web site, safecars.gov and put in their car's VIN number to check and see if it is subject to this or any other recall. That is imperative.

We are continuing to monitor this situation. We are going through tens of thousands of pages of documents related to this defect. I will keep the Senate updated.

I am pleased to report that the Senate is very close to approving S. 304, the Motor Vehicle Safety Whistleblower Act. This bipartisan legislation, which Chairman THUNE and I authored, would provide financial incentives for whistleblowers in the automotive sector to step forward if they see a manufacturer that is hiding or failing to address a dangerous defect.

Certainly none of us needs to be reminded about the ignition switch defect coverup at General Motors. They hid that defect for a decade, and at least 87 people died because of it. This bill will hopefully help prevent such coverups in the future.

This bill, S. 304, is a small but meaningful step toward automobile safety. I hope my colleagues will urge their constituents to check on those Takata airbags by going online, and I urge my colleagues as well to clear this commonsense legislation. I certainly urge the House to do so as well.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I yield the floor to my colleague, Senator COATS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am just going to speak for a few minutes. I am happy to defer to the Senator from Tennessee, but it shouldn't take more than 2 or 3 minutes.

If the Senator is interested, this is this week's installment of my ''Waste of the Week'' speech. I come to the floor every week to point out some spending of taxpayer dollars that perhaps we should absolutely save. The cost to the taxpayers, as I will point out shortly, is in the tens of billions, if not hundreds of billions, of dollars on programs that have already been identified by government agencies as worthless, fraudulent, unnecessary, and wasteful. While we have been unable—and the Senator from Tennessee was a very pivotal part of this effort—to come to an agreement on dealing with the larger issue of saving our country from insolvency down the line, the very least we can do is to point out those areas where we are spending money that absolutely does not need to be spent and can be returned to the taxpayer. This week's waste of the week is such that I can't keep from chuckling over how this could happen, but it happens.

Everybody has heard about Ponce de Leon's search for the fountain of youth. Obviously, that hasn't happened. A recently released Social Security Inspector General's report found that 6.5 million individuals over the age of 112 still have active Social Security numbers. How can this happen? Well, it happened because in 1936 when the program started, there were some people even from the mid-1800s who were enrolled in Social Security, and they have never been taken off the rolls. Now, obviously, these people are not all receiving checks, but it opens the prospect for fraud and waste and people getting these numbers, using them, and then receiving Social Security benefits illegally.

In this inspector general's report, the Social Security Administration is faulted for poorly managing data on ''number holders who exceeded maximum reasonable life expectancies and were likely deceased.''

Well, to put it mildly, if we have 6.5 million people in America who are over the age of 112, my guess is that most of those people, if not all of those people, are deceased—not likely deceased but are, in fact, deceased.

Of those 6.5 million, the Social Security Administration inspector general has determined that nearly 3,900 numbers were run through the U.S. Government's E-Verify system for people more than a century old. The E-Verify system is used when someone applies for a job. So that means thousands of people over 100 years old are applying for these new jobs. Obviously, someone is fraudulently using the system to report a Social Security number for someone over 112 years of age who is in the E-Verify system as applying for a job.

Auditors also discovered nearly 67,000 Social Security numbers in recent years were used to report wages for people other than the cardholders themselves. The workers reported about $3 billion in earnings between 2006 and 2011, and then those earnings are used to calculate their Social Security benefits.

Obviously, this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Auditors have proposed that the Social Security Administration take action to correct death records, but the Social Security Administration says it doesn't want to divert resources away from efforts to improve payment accuracy. I suggest the Social Security Administration might want to reassess their assessment.

A gaping hole such as this undermines the confidence of the American people in our government and in the way we run this business of government in both the Social Security Administration and the Federal Government at large.

Government agencies have estimated that the Social Security Administration can reduce fraud and save at least $2 billion, likely more, if this problem is corrected.

So as I do each week, we keep adding to our gauge of savings that now are approaching very close to $50 billion, just over several weeks of pointing out waste and fraud that has been documented by nonpolitical, neutral Federal agencies. We keep adding more. We are approaching $50 billion. Our goal is $100 billion. I think we will go way past that if I keep doing this every week.

In order to help correct the problem, I have introduced legislation, along with Senator CARPER and others, which will update the Social Security system and ensure accuracy in Federal records, not just in Social Security but in other agencies as well. I am just looking at one agency. Wait until we get into some of the others.

The key provisions of our bill include allowing Federal agencies access to the complete death database, because under current law, only agencies that directly handle beneficiary payments may have access to the complete database. The act allows all appropriate Federal agencies to have access to the complete death data program for integrity purposes as well as for other needs such as public safety and health. It requires the use of death data to curb improper payments. Our legislation establishes procedures to ensure more accurate death data.

As I have said before, by simply correcting the death records, the Social Security Administration can reduce fraud and save at least $2 billion.

This is an area that is ripe for reform, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and eliminate this waste, along with the other $49 billion we have identified in just the last few weeks. We would be doing the taxpayers a great service while making

our government the efficient, effective government it needs to be, particularly in these times of lack of fiscal discipline.

I thank the Chair for the time. I also thank my colleague from Tennessee for giving me this time.

Mr. President, I know we have important legislation on the floor this week. This ''Waste of the Week'' speech is kind of tongue in cheek. We are moving on to legislation that has historic consequences for the future of America, for our own future, our children's future, and our grandchildren's future.

The debate that will take place this week, led by Senator CORKER from Tennessee regarding the Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons capability is, in my time of service here in the Senate and in Congress, I think the most consequential piece of legislative debate that I will ever enter into. It will have enormous historical consequences, and we need to get it right.

So I commend my colleague Senator CORKER for his efforts in this regard. He has moved the legislation through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with total bipartisan support, which is absolutely key to the success of our efforts and necessary to prevent a catastrophic activity taking place in Iran.

So I appreciate the time to speak, while not focusing all of my attention and effort, as I hope all of my colleagues will, to this extraordinary challenge that we have before us this week that will determine the future for country and maybe the world.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator for his continual focus on fiscal issues. I know he spent a great deal of time with a handful of folks at the White House two summers ago trying to come up with a plan to really save our Nation.

I actually was just standing up a minute ago. I was about to suggest the absence of a quorum until I saw the Senator from Indiana, so the Senator can speak as long as he wishes on these waste issues. I thank him for the kind of Senator he is and his continual efforts to save our Nation from a national security standpoint and also our greatest national security risk right now which is our inability to get our fiscal house in order.

So I thank the Senator for this, and I look forward to the debate over the next several days.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. 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. MORAN. Mr. President, this week we are going to, in my view, deal with one of the most concerning, one of the most dangerous, one of the most treacherous issues we will face—that I will face as a Member of the U.S. Senate and, certainly, has been in the short period of time I have had the honor of representing Kansans here in our Nation's Capital. It is the question of Iran. It is the question of their ability to acquire nuclear weapons.

On this question of Iran, American policymakers are approaching a number of fateful decisions—in fact, a series of decisions that I think have significant consequences. The implications of the choices that will be made by our Nation and others will determine events today, tomorrow, and well into the future, both regionally and globally. As I indicated, the consequences will be felt for decades—generations, perhaps—to come.

Such significant consequences require each step to be planted with great care and consideration. I fear that the recent American march into nuclear negotiations with Iran has been misguided, drawing our country and the global community into a dangerous position.

American foreign policy with respect to Iran has long been centered around the goal of preventing Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapon capability. Today, this policy has weathered and has been allowed to be weakened. It has become a position of delayed tolerance of a nuclear Iran. This policy deterioration was made clear in recent weeks by global affairs minds no less than former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, who wrote: ''. . . negotiations that began 12 years ago as an international effort to prevent an Iranian capability to develop a nuclear arsenal are ending with an agreement that concedes that very capability. . . . ''

The administration's stated goal of securing a 1-year nuclear development breakout period reveals a shift from firm disapproval to acquiescence. The result, in my view, is a world that is much less safe, a Middle East that is further prone to violent conflict, and an international order trending toward nuclear armaments rather than walking away from it.

Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif pointed this out last week in his writing in the New York Times:

> Nothing in international politics functions in a vacuum. Security cannot be pursued at the expense of the insecurity of others. No nation can achieve its interests without considering the interests of others.
>
> Nowhere are these dynamics more evident than in the wider Persian Gulf region.

That is the Foreign Minister of Iran speaking. Mr. Zarif's words apply to the pending nuclear question and the budding proposal to exchange sanctions relief for a temporary suspension of Iranian nuclear development. The decisions made by Iran and the P5+1 participants in these nuclear negotiations are being considered and acted upon and responded to by others in the region and others around the globe. As Iran's neighboring states are looking to increase arms purchases for use in the ongoing conflicts in their region, international concerns about a nuclear-capable Iran are not merely passive policy critiques. They are warnings worthy of our careful, determined consideration.

I would suggest and I will ask what we must ask: Does this pending accord make the world safer or more dangerous? Does it bring Iran closer to or further from nuclear capabilities? Can the world trust Iran to uphold its commitments? Will the terms of the deal be sufficiently verifiable to know if they do not?

Ultimately, we must ask if this deal would stabilize tensions in the Middle East or accelerate them. These questions are greater than any grappling things that go on between Congress and the President, between Republicans and Democrats. This cannot and should not be a politically partisan issue. It should be one of serious consideration about long-term consequences to America, its allies, and our enemies.

The nuclear accord will have serious and lasting consequences for us all. It is incumbent upon American leadership to guide these efforts in the safest possible direction. In my view, our trajectory to date has been uncertain. In response, Congress has insisted—and rightfully so—that it oversee and participate in the process, especially in any decision regarding the lifting of sanctions.

The President's efforts to ignore or sidestep the legislative branch's constitutional role in foreign policy are troublesome. Many, including me, have been asking why Congress lacks the ability to block or more forcefully respond to a potential bad deal or to do more to limit the President's ability to act unilaterally. Unfortunately, the law resulting from the previously passed sanctions legislation allows the President to waive sanctions under certain conditions—the legislation that we passed.

Let me say that again. The legislation that we passed over a period of time—and I am a Member of the banking committee involved in this legislation—allowed a President—this or other Presidents—to waive those sanctions under considerations of national security. What we regrettably discovered is that Congress provided way too much flexibility to a President too willing to ignore the concerns of the legislature, too willing to find a reason to waive the sanctions.

But there remains reason of hope that Congress will play a constructive and important part in this matter. Despite opposition from the White House, bipartisan efforts led by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator CORKER have produced legislation providing for a congressional review process. The bill had broad bipartisan support, and perhaps that makes it impervious to President Obama's initial threats of a veto.

Any increased role by Congress is welcomed, from my perspective. For too long, Congress has deferred to Executive action when it comes to foreign relations and foreign affairs—not just this Congress and this President, but many Congresses and many Presidents. In my view, Congress has failed its constitutional authority to oversee a President's foreign policy efforts.

So this increased role for Congress is welcome. And for anyone who is skeptical of the framework released by the State Department in early April or curious about what the parameters might look like in a final deal, Congress will have the ability to see, to know, and to let the American people, and, in fact, the world know what these agreements might contain.

After the presumed passage of the Iran Nuclear Review Act—the legislation we have been considering this week—if it passes and the case is that a deal is ultimately struck and an agreement is struck by the June 30 deadline between the administration, the P5+1, and Iran, Congress will have 30 days to review that agreement.

As we began late last week and early this week to consider this legislation, the point in being here at this stage is to indicate that while I wish there were more opportunities for congressional involvement in the process, what the committee has presented to us gives us the starting point, the beginning point, and the opportunity to explore fully what the administration has been negotiating in secret.

I have attended the meetings—the so-called classified briefings—and it is hard to leave those meetings with an understanding or appreciation or more knowledge of what is in the potential agreement with Iran than before I walked in the door. What will transpire this week on the Senate floor gives me and others the opportunity—and ultimately the American people—to know a lot more.

As this process has been developed and as we implement it here on the Senate floor, it is important that we use this time to carefully examine the results of any nuclear negotiations and ask ourselves this question: Is the world better off as a result of that agreement? Is peace more assured, and does humanity have a better future?

We don't have the agreement in front of us yet, but what we do this week sets the stage for that review, for that understanding, and for the ability to reject, if necessary. What that agreement contains is important. It is encouraging to me to see that the Senate—the Congress, in fact—is stepping forward to play its rightful constitutional role in foreign affairs.

I look forward to the discussion this week, but more importantly, I look forward to the passage of legislation that allows us to have a much greater say, much more significant knowledge, and a better opportunity to have understanding about a potential treacherous path that our country may be headed toward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from Kansas. I think he has articulated about as well as anybody the importance of passing the legislation on the floor.

Many of my colleagues, I think, unlike the Senator from Kansas, in some ways fail to recognize that when we put the sanctions in place that brought them to the table, in the meanwhile they were going from 164 centrifuges back in 2003 to 19,000 centrifuges today. What Congress did in a bipartisan way was put four tranches of sanctions in place to begin putting pressure on them to stop and to get them to the table. We have done that, but in each of those cases, we gave the President unilaterally the ability to waive or suspend the sanctions ad infinitum—forever.

It is something that my friend Senator KAINE from Virginia recognized in our meetings as we had the Secretary come forward and talk to us about the fact that, yes, you are going to have a vote on this. But we all recognized that was 4 to 5 to 6 years down the road after the sanctions regime had been totally alleviated.

I just want to thank the Senator for being so articulate in his comments.

The fact is that without this legislation—without this legislation passing—Congress will have zero. The President will go straight to the U.N. Security Council with the suspensions in his hands that we have already given them and implement whatever kind of deal he wants to implement.

I have had a great conversation with my friend from Virginia today. I think this bill obviously does give Congress, as the Senator from Kansas mentioned, its rightful role. But I think it also gives the President a backstop when he is negotiating so that people will understand that we are going to play that role.

So I thank the Senator very, very much for his comments and for the constructive way he is on so many of the big issues we deal with and for his cosponsorship of this very important legislation.

With that, I yield the floor. I see my friend from Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I appreciate the comments of Chairman CORKER, and I appreciate the two punch lines of the Senator from Kansas to his argument that I am strongly in support of. The first is that this is a very momentous topic, and there are many, many questions about an ultimate deal that we have to grapple with. Second, it is so much of the moment that the congressional sanctions themselves are so wrapped up in the discussion that Congress must have a role to fulfill our constitutional obligation and to actually do what we essentially set in motion by passing the congressional sanctions. We must have a role.

So to the chairman and to all who are supporting the bill, I think we have got it in a good place on the floor, and I am proud to be a strong supporter of it.

The only issue on which I would offer a slightly different take than the Senator from Kansas is this. I think by all objective standards, the negotiations to this point have produced a status quo that has been better than where we were before the negotiations. If you think back to before November 2013, Iran—although under punishing sanctions—was moving forward in a very dramatic way to build up an architecture. While the sanctions were hurting the Iranian economy, there was some argument that it was not slowing down their nuclear program. It was accelerating it because they were feeling isolated.

Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel appeared before the United Nations and gave a very famous speech in which he talked about the stockpile of uranium that was enriched to a 20-percent level. We drew a bomb and showed a level of enrichment that was getting to an extremely dangerous place. That is where we were before President Obama started these negotiations with the P5+1 in November 2013.

At the time the negotiations were started, there were some who said they were misguided or a historic mistake or a giveaway. But, by now, virtually all—even those who were skeptical at the beginning—would acknowledge that the negotiations have actually led to a status quo significantly better than before November 2013. The 20-percent enriched uranium stockpile Iran had has been rolled back to a 5-percent enrichment level. Many of the centrifuges and facilities where nuclear weapons and nuclear activities were occurring have either been disabled or in some way have been reconfigured so that they are not continuing to produce more material that would cause significant concern. Since November 2013 the international community has been able to achieve significantly greater inspections of the Iranian nuclear activity than they had before.

So while we still have significant questions about an ultimate deal and Congress's role, we have a much better handle on their program. They have rolled back that program to a significant degree, and even skeptics of the original deal acknowledge that. I do think that is important to mention.

Congress needs to fulfill its article I powers, but we also need to have the President do the diplomacy that article II allows him to do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 2 minutes.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator KAINE and Senator CORKER.

This is the second day that we have been debating the nuclear oversight bill. Members have had a chance to express their concerns. They have had a chance to put forward amendments, to file them at this particular moment. We have been working with several Members to try to see whether we can work out an orderly way for the consideration of those amendments. I want all of the Members to know we are open for business. Senator CORKER has been meeting with Members, and I have been talking to Members. We hope we can find a way to move this bill forward tomorrow for the consideration of amendments.

I would urge Members—we are not encouraging amendments because we think we took up these issues in the committee and we worked out a bipartisan bill to get this done. But please talk to us so we can try to work out in an orderly way the consideration of amendments starting tomorrow and hopefully finish the bill shortly thereafter.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DAVA J. NEWMAN TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Dava J. Newman, of Massachusetts, to be Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time allotted during quorum calls be charged to both sides.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. 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. DAINES. Mr. President, today the Senate will vote to confirm Dava Newman to be Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. I had the pleasure of meeting with Dr. Newman. She is a talented individual. She is passionate about aerospace engineering and is generating awareness of science, technology, energy, and math opportunities in Montana students.

Dr. Newman is excited to get to work and continue to make NASA competitive with other countries studying space exploration.

A graduate of C.R. Anderson Middle School and Capital High School in Helena, MT, Dr. Newman is a testament to the quality of Montana's public education. After graduating from high school, Dr. Newman attended the University of Notre Dame before pursuing graduate school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Newman is now a professor of aeronautics and astronautics.

In 2007, Time magazine highlighted Dr. Newman's work as one of the best inventions of the year. She developed a new space suit, known as the BioSuit, to increase astronauts' agility and movements, allowing astronauts to not only walk but also run and even climb mountains.

Her track record of success and nomination to NASA serve as a way to encourage young Montanans to pursue careers in space and engineering.

Dr. Newman is an incredibly accomplished Montanan who truly exemplifies our State's legacy of public service. Her passion and dedication to NASA is clear. I know she will lead with honor and is prepared for whatever challenges may lie ahead. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of Dr. Newman's nomination.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. 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. NELSON. Mr. President, in a few minutes, we are going to vote on the confirmation of Dava Newman, the nominee for Deputy Administrator of NASA. This little Agency happens to be one that I have some personal fondness for, having participated with NASA many Moons ago—29½ years ago—on the 24th flight of the space shuttle, a crew led by then-Navy Captain Robert Gibson, otherwise known as Hoot Gibson, and his second in command, the pilot of our mission, which was dubbed STS—Space Transportation System—61–C. Subsequently, all of the numbers of the space shuttles reverted to their original numbering, but there was a hiatus in there where several shuttle flights had a very complicated numbering system, and ours was one of them. The pilot of that mission was then-Marine Colonel Charlie Bolden, now-Marine General, Retired, Charlie Bolden, who is the Administrator of NASA and has been for the last 6 years. But Administrator Bolden does not have a Deputy, and he needs a Deputy Administrator. So this process has been carefully conducted, and they sifted through hundreds of names to come up with just the right person, and that is in the person of Dr. Dava Newman.

She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and two master's degrees and a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is currently a professor of aeronautics and astronautics and engineering systems at MIT. She is also the director of the Technology and Policy Program there.

Right off the bat, you can see there is no question as to her skills, her smarts, and her credentials, but she is also known for her leadership and technical expertise in aerospace engineering. She authored over 200 research publications, including the textbook ''Introduction to Aerospace Engineering and Design.''

I think that would be kind of interesting, that as a backup to Administrator Bolden, who is a five-time space shuttle astronaut, we have someone who is an expert in aerospace engineering design, particularly as we are creating the new rockets and the new spacecraft as we speak, for the goal, which is Mars in the decade of the 2030s.

During her career, she served as the principal investigator on three space flight experiments flown on board the space shuttle and on board the previous Mir Space Station. She is tremendously known for her innovative space suit designs that use mechanical counterpressure to make the space suit formfitting, lightweight, and much more flexible than previous space suits.

If you notice, when you see the astronauts outside of the International Space Station—which, by the way, blows the mind, how big it is. It is 110 yards long. From one goalpost to the other goalpost is 120 yards. That is how big the International Space Station is that is 250 miles above the Earth with six humans on board. When you watch those EVAs—extravehicular activities—when they go outside to do the repairs, well, lo and behold, Dr. Newman is the designer of their innovative space suits. She has been recognized. Back in 2007, Time magazine recognized her and her space suit work as one of the best inventions of the year. She is currently leading the development of a suit that may help astronauts overcome back problems in space. The suit is planned to be tested on the International Space Station later this year.

As we go on this dual track in our civilian space program—first the track with commercial rockets that will take our cargo and is taking our cargo to and from the International Space Station and will soon be taking Americans to and from the International Space Station, and the other track of the dual tracks is the development of this huge new rocket, much larger than the