

myself and Senator FLAKE, that would pave the way for the establishment of the Sonoran Corridor and the future Interstate 11, I-11, ensuring Arizona has the critical infrastructure it needs to develop significant international trade routes for the Western United States. These provisions would designate the Sonoran Corridor as a future interstate to connect I-19 to I-10 south of the Tucson International Airport and extend the future I-11 through the State of Nevada to I-80 and south toward Arizona's southern border.

As the population in Arizona continues to grow and innovative businesses increasingly settle in our State, we must ensure that we have the infrastructure in place to foster economic development, international trade and job creation. These two top-priority transportation projects will make Arizona a key part of an international trade route that reaches all the way to the southern border. I appreciate Chairman INHOFE's support of these important provisions, as well as Senator FLAKE, Governor Doug Ducey and leaders from across the State of Arizona for their strong partnership in advancing these designations that will connect Arizona businesses and communities to major domestic and international trade partners.

I am proud of the bipartisan effort that went into this bill. It is unfortunate that we ultimately had to pass yet another short-term highway extension today to avoid a transportation shutdown across the country. This stop-gap measure should be the last. When we return following the August break, I urge the House to take up and pass this bill and send it to the President's desk for signature.

REBUILD ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I join with my House colleague from Baltimore, Congressman ELIJAH CUMMINGS, to introduce the REBUILD Act. The people who live in our most distressed neighborhoods deserve a government on their side—one that works as hard for them as they work for their own families and communities. This bill is about rehabilitating neighborhoods, making them healthier and safer, and creating jobs today and jobs tomorrow for communities that need it most. By supporting small businesses, rebuilding infrastructure, expanding opportunity for our young people and tackling crime, we will lay the foundation for a brighter future.

The REBUILD Act is an emergency supplemental bill for fiscal year 2015 to help inner-city neighborhoods across the United States. It focuses on four key areas: physical infrastructure, meeting compelling human needs, community safety, and assistance to small business owners.

This bill provides robust funding for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development programs that will remove blight, rehabilitate aging housing

properties, including those with lead paint, and fund youth and senior centers. I especially want to highlight the Community Development Block Grant funding to help those communities most impacted by violence and civil unrest this year. That includes my hometown of Baltimore. This bill also extends the moving-to-work contracts through 2028.

For meeting compelling human needs, this bill funds U.S. Department of Labor's job training and apprenticeship programs to help dislocated workers, veterans and youth make a living wage and learn new job skills. It also funds the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy Start Initiative. This program helps moms and infants get access to primary and preventative health care to reduce infant mortality rates.

In the area of community safety, there is significant funding for targeted U.S. Department of Justice grant programs. This funding will help reduce youth violence, tackle crime hot spots controlled by gangs and rampant with gun violence, and reduce methamphetamine and heroin trafficking. There is additional funding for drug, mental health and veterans courts to break the cycle of drug use and criminal behavior.

For our small business owners and entrepreneurs, this bill provides loans, grants, training and counseling services. There also is money to help underserved businesses with Federal contracting.

Recent events like the riots in Baltimore remind us of the unmet needs of our Nation's inner city neighborhoods. We must do more. This means immediately getting to work on a sequel to the landmark Murray-Ryan budget deal to replace sequester. The impact of the status quo and deep cuts to our Federal programs on the mission to lift up these communities is unacceptable. The opportunity of the American Dream should be within every American's reach.

VETERAN HOUSING STABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, yesterday, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I introduced S. 1885, the Veteran Housing Stability Act of 2015. I would like to thank Senators SANDERS, BROWN, and HIRONO for joining me to introduce this bill, and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans and the National Alliance to End Homelessness for their support of this legislation. At a time when the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, has taken on an aggressive initiative to end homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015, much progress has been made yet there is still more progress needed.

The VA initiative has led to a 33 percent decrease in the homeless veteran population since 2010. These declining numbers are a reflection of the com-

bined efforts of VA and its Federal, State, local, tribal, and community partners as they continue aggressive efforts to decrease veteran homelessness and implement a system through which veterans who become homeless can be rapidly placed in appropriate housing situations that meet their needs. The statistics are staggering—49,000 veterans are homeless in America today, 1 in 10 of all homeless men and women—a searing failure in the greatest, strongest Nation in the world's history. It reflects a failure to keep faith that this legislation will help correct. We cannot allow another veteran to slip through the cracks. We must give communities the flexibility and tools they need to create housing systems that can maximize existing resources collaboratively in order to identify and sustain appropriate housing placements for vulnerable veterans.

The legislation would reaffirm this Nation's commitment to safe and affordable housing for veterans by improving and expanding upon VA's programs to prevent and end homelessness among veterans. VA's housing programs for homeless and at-risk veterans must modernize to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the very veterans they are intended to serve. One of the challenges many identify as causing difficulty is one that mainstream housing programs also struggle with—insufficient availability of safe, affordable, permanent housing options.

This measure will address the egregious, abhorrent problem of veteran homelessness with several common-sense, effective steps to increase housing for homeless and at-risk veterans. The Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2015 would expand access to housing by requiring VA to collaborate with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other entities to conduct more robust landlord outreach and encourage more landlords to rent to veterans.

Further, this bill would modify a VA program that provides critical savings to transitional housing providers, allowing these groups to spend limited funding to provide high-quality services rather than to retire the debt they would take on to acquire a facility in which to operate. VBA's Acquired Property Sales for Homeless Providers Program sells homes from VA's foreclosure inventory at a discount to non-profit organizations for use as transitional housing for homeless veterans. As VA continues to shift its homeless programs into an approach that meets veterans at their point of need, rather than choosing a one-size-fits-all solution, more services are being provided under the housing-first model, which pairs housing with appropriate levels of case management. This pairing allows veterans to deal with the underlying issues that caused homelessness, rather than attempting to work through them while simultaneously looking for housing. It is critical that programs that offer more than transitional housing be

allowed to benefit from this discount as well.

As VA focuses on resolving homelessness, instead of just managing it, housing stability is increasingly a focus across the continuum of programs VA offers to eligible veterans. This bill will also modify VA's Grant and Per Diem Program, its largest transitional housing program, to allow VA to incentivize grantees to increase their focus on permanent housing and housing stability in support of the transitional housing program. More specifically, this bill provides VA with much needed authority to allow transitional housing providers to utilize their facility for permanent housing, and to receive a reduced per diem payment to provide case management for participating veterans. This would allow communities that are reaching critical junctures in the fight to end homelessness to repurpose existing transitional housing capacity for more pressing needs, such as permanent housing opportunities for veterans.

As many initiatives across VA have faced performance challenges, it is paramount that we continue to examine all VA initiatives and identify metrics that can be tracked to keep the Department accountable. This legislation includes a provision that would require VA to set national performance targets for entities that receive per diem funding for transitional housing and examine them to determine whether the grantee's performance merits continued funding. Further, this bill also contains a provision that would prompt VA to utilize the data it collects to better target interventions offered by its assertive community teams engaging homeless veterans on the street. Requiring a more targeted effort focused on homeless veterans who are health care "super-utilizers" will reduce unnecessary utilization of health care and, subsequently the costs for care.

Research has indicated that housing can be an effective health care intervention when paired with appropriate services and resources. At its very simplest, homelessness among veterans is preventable when there is coordination among the many services and resources available to lift a veteran up. We cannot sit by idly and allow another veteran to slip through the cracks. We must reach out and let them know when, where, and how to get the help that they need and that they have earned.

This is not a full recitation of all the provisions within this legislation. However, I hope that I have provided an appropriate overview of the major benefits this legislation would provide.

SAFER OFFICERS AND SAFER CITIZENS ACT OF 2015

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I join Senators TIM SCOTT and LINDSEY GRAHAM in introducing the Safer Officers and Safer Citizens Act of 2015. This

critical legislation moves our Nation a step forward in rebuilding the trust gap between law enforcement and communities by creating a Federal grant program to supply local, State, and tribal law enforcement with body-worn cameras. I thank Senator SCOTT for his work on this bill and his leadership on such a critical issue.

Trust between law enforcement and communities is critical to the foundation of our democracy. It reinforces the legitimacy of the State to the people that the State serves. It assures the public that the people sworn to protect them will do so honorably or be held accountable when they don't. It builds transparency and promotes open government by shining a spotlight on police-citizen interaction so that no misconduct occurs in the dark. It ensures police officers that the community will see their side and not cast unmerited aspersions.

But recent police-citizen encounters in our Nation have created a trust deficit between law enforcement and the communities that they serve. Over the past year, troubling use of force incidents have occurred between police officers and citizens in places like Ferguson, MO, Baltimore, MD, and North Charleston, SC. These events spurred a national dialogue about the state of policing in America, and created an urgency for body-worn cameras.

When I served as mayor of New Jersey's largest city, I saw firsthand the difficulties law enforcement faced in keeping our communities safe. The overwhelming majority of police officers in the United States are decent and hardworking Americans who have dedicated their lives to a greater calling. But let us not mistake ourselves—we have a problem in our country. Over the past few years, trust has eroded between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The unfortunate actions of a few have cast a long shadow over the good work of many.

I am also concerned that systemic issues have contributed to eroding the trust between communities and police. It comes from decades of a failed War on Drugs. Minority communities are routinely subject to stop and frisk policies. People are stopped for "suspicious" activities like acting too nervous, acting too calm, dressing casually, or wearing expensive clothes or jewelry. The fact is that five times as many Whites report using drugs as African Americans, yet African Americans are sent to prison for drug crimes ten times that of whites. Of course a lack of trust will exist when our criminal justice system as a whole disproportionately targets minorities.

It is time we start rebuilding that trust. This bill is about transparency. The Safer Officer and Safer Citizens Act of 2015 would require that the Department of Justice give priority to States, localities, and tribal areas that have developed comprehensive body-worn camera policies that address such issues as privacy, data retention, and

victim protection. It would also give priority to jurisdictions that consult victim and juvenile advocacy groups, labor organizations, civic leadership, law enforcement professionals, and the defense bar. The bill requires States, localities, and tribal units to collect data on the effectiveness of body cameras.

Body-worn cameras will protect communities from police abuses of power and simultaneously protect police from false complaints. I am proud to join with Senators SCOTT and GRAHAM in introducing the Safer Officer and Safer Citizens Act of 2015, and I urge its speedy passage.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this week we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passage of landmark civil rights legislation, the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA outlawed discrimination on the basis of physical or developmental ability and sought to grant those with disabilities the same opportunities as other Americans.

In the past quarter century, this law has changed our social fabric as well as of our physical surroundings. Every newly built building or sidewalk with basic accommodations lets more and more of our fellow citizens live fuller lives as self-sufficient members of our communities.

Before there were curb cutouts, some Rhode Islanders couldn't cross the street. Before there were wheelchair lifts on public buses, some Rhode Islanders couldn't commute to work. Before there were assisted listening devices, some Rhode Islanders couldn't follow a professor's lecture or a pastor's sermon. Before there were Braille signs, some Rhode Islanders couldn't find a doctor's office or a child's classroom without assistance. Before there were accessible voting systems, some of us couldn't even exercise our most basic rights as citizens.

My colleague in Rhode Island's congressional delegation, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN, has a special perspective on this groundbreaking law. "As someone who has lived with the challenges of a disability both before and after the enactment of the ADA," he has said, "I have experienced firsthand the profound changes of this law on our society."

JIM was only sixteen when an accidental injury left him paralyzed. In an amazing example of optimism and courage, JIM went on to serve the people of our State in the Rhode Island House of Representatives and as our Secretary of State. Today he is the first quadriplegic to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. On the day he was the first person ever to preside in the House in a wheelchair, I trooped over from the Senate to watch history made.