MRSA. If using the properties of zero G may help us to develop vaccines that help us with diseases and bacteria on Earth, then that is a significant accomplishment. Those are some of the commercial activities that are taking place in space.

As we think way into the future, we could be mining other planets, and we could certainly be mining asteroids. Wouldn't it be nice if we found an asteroid that was suddenly full of diamonds. We don't even have to stretch our imagination that far. There are all kinds of elements on these asteroids.

This legislation should be cleared later on tonight and in the morning by both sides. Once it has been cleared, we can take the House bill that is down here, amend it on the Senate bill, and send it back to the House. The House has agreed with the far-reaching thought of mining on asteroids, which will be considered intellectual property so it is preserved for the commercial sector and that would be their property.

This whole commercial space business today, including launching and some of the other activities, unbelievably, is a $330 billion industry. The commercial launch industry started out on American rockets. Over the course of the last three decades, our launchers were more expensive, and so international competitors came into this—the Russians, in some cases using old Soviet rockets, and the European Space Agency launched the Ariane rocket, which they developed. Other nations also have rockets that offer fierce competition to the American rockets.

The need for this legislation to be passed at this time—by updating the Commercial Space Act—is because we are now seeing commercial enterprises that are set on a road in the NASA authorization bill of 2010 and are becoming so efficient and effective that they are bringing down the cost of launching payloads into orbit. That is also benefitting the U.S. Government, which is buying these launch services in order to get government payloads into orbit. Because of that, we are now seeing some of that international business which went to other countries starting to come back to us. Orbital Sciences has a commercial rocket, and SpaceX has a very successful program. Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos, has a rocket company called Blue Origin and is likewise getting into the commercial space business. There are many others as well.

This is an exciting time for us to be bringing a lot of this activity back to America. Therefore, at the end of the day, what does that mean? More industry, more high-tech, more research and development, more exploration, and more jobs.

So we are seeing increasingly the U.S. Air Force cooperate on their installation, the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, using government property but leased through State or local space authorities, which are then, in turn, leasing to these commercial operators. A good example that has been tremendously successful for the past several years is an Elon Musk company called SpaceX. They contracted with Space Florida, which had worked out an arrangement with the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station for launch complex 40, for that to be the SpaceX launchpad. They have been enormously successful. They have not only launched government payloads—the NASA cargo to and from the space station—but they have also launched other commercial payloads, government payloads of foreign countries, as well as government payloads of the U.S. Government.

Eventually, that commercial space company, along with the Boeing Company, will be the ones that, in just 2 years, will launch American astronauts on American rockets for the first time since the shutdown of the space shuttle back in 2011—American astronauts on American rockets to and from our international space station. Those two companies are competing for it, but it doesn't mean that just one of the two necessarily wins the competition. Both could be the providers for NASA of ways for us to get Americans on American rockets to our own international space station instead of having to rely on the Russian—very proven and very dependable—Soyuz rocket, which is the only way to get our astronauts there at the moment, until we start flying these other new rockets.

So I wanted to alert the Senate that this is happening as we speak. I hope we get all of the clearances in the Senate later tonight—if not, early in the morning—so that we can get this amended, onto the House bill. It would basically be this: ''Strike all after the enacting clause,'' put the Senate bill on, which we have already negotiated with the House, get it to the House, let them pass it, and get it to the President for signature. I wanted to bring the Senate up to date on what is happening.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

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

TRADE ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the body the message to accompany H.R. 1314.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1314) entitled ''An Act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations,'' with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to accompany H.R. 1314, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Lisa Murkowski, John Thune, Lamar Alexander, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, Orrin G. Hatch, John McCain, Thad Cochran, Thom Tillis, Michael B. Enzi, Mike Rounds, Roy Blunt, Susan M. Collins, Shelley Moore Capito.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2750

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, with a further amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, with an amendment numbered 2750.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion to concur with amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2751 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2750

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2751 to amendment No. 2750.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2752

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to refer the House message on H.R. 1314 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 2752.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to refer the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 2752.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

''This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2753

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2753 to the instructions of the motion to refer.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2754 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2753

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2754 to amendment No. 2753.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''4'' and insert ''5''.

MORNING BUSINESS

POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the unfortunate extension of the deadline for the implementation of positive train control, or PTC.

As one of the authors of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008—which established the PTC mandate—I stand here committed to ensuring that PTC is installed on all our Nation's railways as soon as possible.

Current law states railroads must fully install PTC by the end of this year. For a variety of reasons, we all know this is not feasible for all railroads. But we can't let this drag on indefinitely.

It's a matter of public safety. We must get this done.

The focus of the current debate has been on why an extension of the mandate is necessary, but I would like to take a step back and remind my colleagues why the mandate itself is necessary.

On September 12, 2008, the inattentive conductor of a Metrolink train—a commuter railroad in the Los Angeles area—missed a red light and entered a stretch of single track going the wrong way.

The train collided with a Union Pacific freight train, which completely demolished the first commuter car. The accident killed 25 and injured more than 100.

This was an absolute tragedy for my State and the country.

What is even more tragic: It was 100 percent preventable. Had PTC been installed, we would have avoided this tragedy.

The National Transportation Safety Board has been recommending the installation of PTC since an accident in Connecticut in 1969.

This technology is lifesaving. It prevents train-to-train collisions and overspeed derailments and other rail dangers.

PTC could have saved 25 lives in Chatsworth. In fact, PTC could have saved at least 288 lives and prevented more than 6,500 injuries in accidents across 36 States since 1969.

In 2008, at long last, Congress passed a law requiring PTC implementation by the end of 2015, giving railroads 7 years to comply.

It is extremely disappointing that most railroads will not meet this deadline.

It didn't have to be this way.

The passenger railroads in California took this legal and moral imperative seriously. They committed resources.

In fact, Metrolink will be the first system in the Nation to fully implement positive train control when the Federal Railroad Administration gives its final certification by the end of this year.

The Bay Area is also well ahead of the curve. Caltrain will begin operating PTC on its line between Gilroy and San Francisco by the end of the year, with final certification expected early next year.

These stories show that it can be done on time.

But the sad fact is few railroads will meet the 2015 deadline as mandated by law.

Yes, there were some unanticipated challenges and procedural hurdles that have contributed to the delay.

But more devastating were legal challenges from the industry and railroads failing to commit the necessary resources.

So here we are today, debating an extension.

Let me be very clear: the PTC extension provision the House sent over is flawed.

In my view, we need to be forcing railroads to implement this as soon as possible, and the House proposal fails to do that.

Instead, it gives all railroads a blanket extension until 2018, even those that would be done well before then.

The Secretary of Transportation can take enforcement actions against railroads that miss certain annual milestones between now and 2018, but the railroads themselves get to establish those milestones in the first place.

After the 3-year blanket extension, railroads can request an additional 2-year extension, so long as a railroad is about halfway complete with implementation.

That means they will have until 2020—12 years after Congress first mandated the technology and 50 years since the National Transportation Safety Board began calling for it.

This is effectively a 5-year extension, precisely what railroads have been lobbying for.

There are better options available.

In fact, we anticipated the need for an extension years ago and worked to find reasonable compromises.

First, in 2012, we tried to modify the mandate.

I supported a provision that passed the Senate in that year's transportation reauthorization bill.

It would have kept the deadline in 2015, but allowed the administration to grant up to three 1-year extensions to railroads on a case-by-case basis only when necessary and where railroads were working diligently.

But the railroads wanted 5 years, and the provision was dropped from the final bill.

Then earlier this year, debate began anew.

The Commerce Committee approved a bill that would provide railroads with a blanket extension of 5 to 7 years.

I thought that was reckless and unnecessarily long.

Together with several of my colleagues, we reintroduced separate legislation along the lines of the provision that passed the Senate in 2012.

This started negotiations that led to the two different provisions now included in the House and Senate transportation reauthorization bills.

These provisions are each much improved from a blanket 5- to 7-year extension, but both remain flawed.

In my view, it would be fair and reasonable for the remaining policy differences between these two provisions to be resolved during conference.