

compromise, and I must express my opposition to a few of its provisions.

One of those points of disagreement is that the bill prevents the closure of the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The reality is that, every day that it remains open, Guantanamo prison weakens our alliances, inspires our enemies, and calls into question our commitment to human rights.

Time and again, our most senior national security and military leaders have called for the closure of Guantanamo. In addition to the national security cost, every day that Guantanamo remains open, we are wasting taxpayer dollars. We are spending \$3.3 million per year for each detainee held at Guantanamo Bay—compare that with the estimated \$78,000 that it costs to hold a detainee in a Federal super maximum security prison.

Yet the conference agreement makes it even harder to transfer detainees to foreign countries, prohibits transfers to the U.S., and prohibits construction or modification of facilities in the U.S.

All of us are committed to preventing terrorist attacks. Terrorists deserve swift and sure justice and severe prison sentences.

But holding detainees at Guantanamo does not administer justice effectively. It does not serve our national security interests, and it is inconsistent with the country's history as a champion of human rights.

In order to conform to the budget agreement, the bill also includes \$1.7 billion in reductions to headquarters management personnel. Everyone in the Senate wants to cut the fat from the Pentagon, but we must make sure that these cuts are targeted toward inefficiency and waste, as opposed to recklessly eliminating our valued DOD civilian workforce.

The women and men who serve our Nation's defense outside of a uniform are our teammates in making our country secure. They process military pay; investigate fraud, waste, and abuse; oversee expensive weapons programs; and many more important functions. I am proud of each DOD civilian, especially those who work in Illinois, and I will work to make sure that the Congress supports their contributions to our country.

This is a very good agreement, these reservations notwithstanding. It is full of provisions which help our troops, reforms the way the Pentagon does business, and provides for our military families. I thank Senator MCCAIN and Senator REED for their hard work and commend the bill's passage for the 54th year in a row.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2029

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, the ranking member and I have a package of amendments that have been cleared by both sides. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 2029, the following amendments be called up, reported by number, and the Senate vote on the amendments en bloc: Moran, No. 2774; Murkowski, No. 2775; Murkowski, No. 2776; Blumenthal, No. 2779; Blumenthal, No. 2781, Toomey, No. 2785; Sullivan, No. 2786; Sullivan, No. 2787; Collins, No. 2788; Cornyn, No. 2789; Bennet, No. 2795; Durbin, No. 2794; and Boxer, No. 2798.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1356.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 91, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 301 Leg.]

YEAS—91

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Ayotte	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Perdue
Bennet	Gardner	Peters
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Hatch	Reid
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Boxer	Heitkamp	Roberts
Brown	Hirono	Rounds
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Isakson	Schumer
Cardin	Johnson	Scott
Carper	Kaine	Sessions
Casey	King	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kirk	Shelby
Coats	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Lankford	Sullivan
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Lee	Thune
Corker	Manchin	Markey
Cornyn	Markey	McCain
Cotton	McCain	Toomey
Crapo	McCaskill	Udall
Daines	McConnell	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	

NAYS—3

Merkley	Sanders	Wyden
NOT VOTING—6		
Cruz	Heller	Rubio
Graham	Paul	Vitter

The motion was agreed to.

MAKING A TECHNICAL CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 1356

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 90, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 90) directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a technical correction in the enrollment of S. 1356.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AMENDMENT NO. 2796

(Purpose: To modify the resolution)

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 2796.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN] proposes an amendment numbered 2796.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, 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 printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, amendment No. 2796, offered by the Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, is agreed to.

Under the previous order, the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 90, as amended, is agreed to.

Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. H.R. 2029.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2774, 2775, 2776, 2779, 2781, 2785, 2786, 2787, 2788, 2789, 2795, 2794, AND 2798 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2763

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the following amendments by number.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. KIRK], for others, proposes amendments numbered 2774, 2785, 2786, 2787, 2788, and 2789 to amendment No. 2763.

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Ms. MURKOWSKI, proposes amendments numbered 2775 and 2776 to amendment No. 2763.

The Senator from Montana [Mr. TESTER], for others, proposes amendments numbered 2779, 2781, 2795, 2794, and 2798 to amendment No. 2763.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2774

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to pay for the transfers or relocations of senior executives of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. _____. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by title II may be used to carry out the Home Marketing Incentive Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs or to carry out the Appraisal Value Offer Program of the Department with respect to an employee of the Department in a senior executive position (as defined in section 713(g) of title 38, United States Code).

AMENDMENT NO. 2775

(Purpose: To require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report evaluating the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the congressional veterans committees a report evaluating the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include, with respect to the implementation of such section 101, an evaluation of the following:

(1) The effect of such implementation on the reduction in the use of purchased care by the Department, including delays or denials of care and interruptions in courses and continuity of care.

(2) The ability of health care providers to meet the demand for primary, specialty, and behavioral health care under such section 101 that cannot reasonably be provided in medical facilities of the Department.

(3) The efforts of the Department to recruit health care providers to provide health care under such section 101.

(4) The accuracy of the information provided to veterans through call centers regarding the receipt of health care under such section 101.

(5) The timeliness of referrals of veterans by the Department to health care providers under such section 101.

(6) Unique issues and difficulties in the implementation of section 101 with respect to veterans residing in rural areas, the States of Alaska and Hawaii and states lacking a full service VA Hospital.

(7) With respect to rural areas: (A) an identification of the average wait times for veterans in rural areas to receive health care under such section 101, measured from when the veteran first calls the Department or contracted call center to request an appointment; (B) an assessment of utilization rates for health care provided under such section 101 in rural areas (C) an assessment of the accessibility of veterans in rural areas to

primary and specialty care at medical centers of the Department and from non-Department health care providers under such section 101; (D) an assessment of the status of any pilot programs created by the Department to provide care under such section 101; (E) an identification of the number of health care providers providing health care under such section 101 to veterans in rural areas, broken out by primary care providers, specialty and subspecialty providers, and behavioral health providers in each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(8) Recommendations for such improvements to the provision of health care under such section 101 as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

(c) In this section, the term "congressional veterans committees" means the Veterans Affairs Committees of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies of the Committees on Appropriations of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 2776

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the provision of health care to veterans in Alaska through the use of non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that supplements the report required under section 4002(c) of the Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-41) and that contains the following:

(1) A description of the changes in access, if any, of veterans in Alaska to purchased care from the Department of Veterans Affairs that have resulted from implementation of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146), including denials of care and interruptions in the course and continuity of care.

(2) An assessment of the performance of the Department in providing health care under such section 101 in Alaska, including—

(A) the performance of call center service provided to veterans;

(B) the accuracy of call center information provided to veterans and health care providers;

(C) whether health care providers are agreeing to provide health care under such section 101 in each of the major communities in Alaska;

(D) gaps in the availability of health care providers, disaggregated by primary, specialty, subspecialty, and behavioral health care;

(E) impediments to the provision of health care under such section 101; and

(F) plans to mitigate those impediments.

(3) An assessment of the status of health care provider vacancies at the VA Alaska Healthcare System as of the date of submittal of the report under this section, including impediments to filling those vacancies and plans to mitigate those impediments.

(4) A description of the manner in which the Department plans to serve the primary, specialty, and behavioral health care needs of veterans in Alaska if the plan and recommendations set forth in the report submitted under such section 4002(c) are implemented, including a description of specific

strategies to be employed by the Department to address gaps in the provision of health care to veterans and the supply and demand of health care providers for veterans, including the roles of tribal health providers and community providers in addressing those gaps.

AMENDMENT NO. 2779

(Purpose: To require that amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical and prosthetic research are used to ensure the provision of gender appropriate prosthetics and to conduct research related to toxic exposure)

On page 31, line 23, strike the period and insert "": *Provided*, That such sums are allocated to ensure the provision of gender appropriate prosthetics and to conduct research related to toxic exposure."

AMENDMENT NO. 2781

(Purpose: To require that amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical supplies and equipment are used to procure gender appropriate prosthetics)

On page 30, line 6, strike the period and insert "": *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical supplies and equipment are allocated to ensure the provision of gender appropriate prosthetics."

AMENDMENT NO. 2785

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to carry out Fast Letter 13-10 or create or maintain certain patient record-keeping systems)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title may be used—

(1) to carry out the memorandum of the Veterans Benefits Administration known as "Fast Letter 13-10", issued on May 20, 2013; or

(2) to create or maintain any patient record-keeping system other than those currently approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office in Washington, District of Columbia.

AMENDMENT NO. 2786

(Purpose: To require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report on the recruitment and retention of health care providers by the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the recruitment and retention of health care providers by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of the ratio of veterans to health care providers of the Department, disaggregated by State.

(2) An analysis of the workload of primary and specialty care providers of the Department, disaggregated by State.

(3) An assessment of initiatives carried out by the Veterans Health Administration to recruit and retain health care providers of the Department.

(4) An assessment of the extent to which the Veterans Health Administration oversees health care providers of the Department.

(5) Such recommendations for improving the recruitment and retention of health care providers of the Department as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

AMENDMENT NO. 2787

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 in rural areas)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) in rural areas.

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of average wait times for veterans in rural areas to receive health care under such section 101, measured from when the veteran first calls the Department to schedule an appointment.

(2) An assessment of utilization rates for health care provided under such section 101 in rural areas.

(3) An assessment of the accessibility of veterans in rural areas to primary and specialty care at medical centers of the Department and from non-Department health care providers under such section 101.

(4) An identification of the number of health care providers providing health care under such section 101 in each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(5) An assessment of the status of any pilot programs created by the Department to provide care under such section 101 in rural areas.

AMENDMENT NO. 2788

(Purpose: To require a report on the use of social security numbers by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the plans of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to discontinue such use)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. REPORT ON USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the use of social security numbers by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the plans of the Secretary to discontinue the unnecessary use.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A list of documents and records of the Department of Veterans Affairs that contain social security numbers.

(2) A list of all government and non-government entities and the numbers of their employees that have access to the social security numbers of veterans that are stored by the Department.

(3) A description of how the Department, other governmental entities, and persons use social security numbers they obtain from the Department, including a description of any information sharing arrangements that the Secretary may have with the heads of other governmental entities.

(4) The number of data breaches of Department of Veterans Affairs information systems that involved social security numbers that occurred during the five-year period ending on the date of the enactment of this Act that the Secretary discovered or that were reported to the Secretary, a description and status of the investigations conducted by the Secretary regarding such breaches, and a description of the plans of the Secretary to remediate such breaches.

(5) The plans of the Secretary, including a timeline, to discontinue the unnecessary use by the Department of social security numbers.

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 2789

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on wait times for medical appointments at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that includes, with respect to the South Texas Veterans Health Care System of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the following:

(1) A description of the nature and scope of any foreseeable increase in wait times for medical appointments.

(2) An assessment of whether a shortage of health care providers is the primary cause of any such increase in wait times.

(3) An identification of any other causes of any such increase in wait times.

(4) A description of any action taken by the Department to correct any such increase in wait times.

(5) An assessment of any issues relating to access to care.

(6) A plan for how the Secretary will remedy any such increase in wait times, including a detailed description of steps to be taken and a timeline for completion.

(b) In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 2795

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the impact of combat service on suicide rates and other mental health issues among members of the Armed Forces and veterans)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 2 _____. (a) Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, enter into a contract with an independent third party described in subsection (b) to carry out a study on the impact of participation in combat during service in the Armed Forces on suicides and other mental health issues among members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

(b) An independent third party described in this subsection is an independent third party that has appropriate credentials to access information in the possession of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs that is necessary to carry out the study required under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 2794

(Purpose: To modify the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical services and medical and prosthetic research)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 2 _____. (a) The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading “MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH” under the heading “VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION” is hereby increased by \$8,922,462.

(b) The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for fiscal year 2016 under the heading “MEDICAL SERVICES” under the heading “VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION” is hereby reduced by \$8,922,462.

AMENDMENT NO. 2798

(Purpose: To make available \$5,000,000 for a pilot program on awarding grants to provide furniture, household items, and other assistance to formerly homeless veterans moving into permanent housing)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. Of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for “MEDICAL SERVICES”, not more than \$5,000,000 shall be available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of awarding grants to veterans service agencies, veterans service organizations, and non-governmental organizations to provide furniture, household items, and other assistance to formerly homeless veterans who are moving into permanent housing to facilitate the settlement of such veterans in such housing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 2774, 2775, 2776, 2779, 2781, 2785, 2786, 2787, 2788, 2789, 2795, 2794, and 2798) were agreed to en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Brown amendment No. 2801 be called up and agreed to, the Kirk amendment No. 2764 be withdrawn, and the Senate vote on the Kirk amendment No. 2763, as amended; further, that following the disposition of the Kirk amendment No. 2763, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of H.R. 2029, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2801 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2763

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Brown amendment.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. TESTER], for Mr. BROWN, proposes an amendment numbered 2801 to amendment No. 2763.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and publish an action plan for improving the vocational rehabilitation services and assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EDUCATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop and publish an action plan for improving the services and assistance provided under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a) shall include each of the following:

(1) A comprehensive analysis of, and recommendations and a proposed implementation plan for remedying workload management challenges at regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including steps to reduce counselor caseloads of veterans participating in a rehabilitation program under such chapter, particularly for counselors who are assisting veterans with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder and counselors with educational and vocational counseling workloads.

(2) A comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the disproportionately low percentage of veterans with service-connected disabilities who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, who opt to participate in a rehabilitation program under such chapter relative to the percentage of such veterans who use their entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, including an analysis of barriers to timely enrollment in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title and of any barriers to a veteran enrolling in the program of that veteran's choice.

(3) Recommendations and a proposed implementation plan for encouraging more veterans with service-connected disabilities who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, to participate in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title.

(4) A national staff training program for vocational rehabilitation counselors of the Department that includes the provision of—

(A) training to assist counselors in understanding the very profound disorientation experienced by veterans with service-connected disabilities whose lives and life-plans have been upended and out of their control because of such disabilities;

(B) training to assist counselors in working in partnership with veterans on individual rehabilitation plans; and

(C) training on post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions and on moderate to severe traumatic brain injury that is designed to improve the ability of such counselors to assist veterans with these conditions, including by providing information on the broad spectrum of such conditions and the effect of such conditions on an individual's abilities and functional limitations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, amendment No. 2801 is agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2764 WITHDRAWN

Under the previous order, amendment No. 2764 is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 2763, AS AMENDED

Under the previous order, the question occurs on the substitute amendment, as amended.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, if I may have 1 minute, I urge my colleagues to vote for this Military Construction-VA appropriations bill before us.

Thank-yous are in order. I thank the chairman, Senator KIRK, and his staff, Bob Henke, D'Ann Lettieri, and Patrick Magnuson. I also thank Tina Evans and Chad Schulken. By the way, it is Chad's birthday today, so make sure you wish him a happy birthday. I also thank Michael Baine, Tony McClain, and the other staff who worked on this bill.

This bill does right by our veterans, and I am proud to have worked with our colleagues in this Chamber.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the substitute amendment, as amended.

The amendment (No. 2763), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. CRAPO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 302 Leg.]
YEAS—93

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Ayotte	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Perdue
Bennet	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Reid
Boozman	Heitkamp	Risch
Boxer	Hirono	Roberts
Brown	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Isakson	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Scott
Casey	Kirk	Sessions
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coats	Lankford	Shelby
Cochran	Leahy	Stabenow
Collins	Lee	Sullivan
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Corker	Markey	Thune
Cornyn	McCain	Tillis
Cotton	McCaskill	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Udall
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Cruz	Heller	Vitter
Gardner	Paul	
Graham	Rubio	

The bill (H.R. 2029), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

DRIVE ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the House message accompanying H.R. 22.

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

Resolved, That the House insist upon its amendment to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the bill (H.R. 22) entitled "An Act to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes," and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

COMPOUND MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to disagree to the amendment of the House, agree to the request from the House for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The bill clerk read the following:

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 disagree to the amendment of the House, agree to the request from the House for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees with respect to H.R. 22.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, Johnny Isakson, Deb Fischer, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thad Cochran, Joni Ernst, Cory Gardner, John Thune, Daniel Coats, Orrin G. Hatch, John Barrasso, James M. Inhofe, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time between 2:15 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees and that notwithstanding rule XXVIII, at 2:45 p.m. the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the compound motion to go to conference; further, that if cloture is invoked, that the Senate agree to the compound motion to go to conference and that Senator WICKER be recognized to offer a motion to instruct the conferees; that there be up to 4 minutes of debate equally divided on the motion and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate then vote in relation to the Wicker motion; that following the disposition of the Wicker motion, Senator BLUMENTHAL be recognized to offer a motion to instruct the conferees; that there be up to 4 minutes of debate equally divided on the motion and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate then vote in relation to the Blumenthal motion.