

Zak Baig, with Senator VITTER; Colin Peppard, with Senator CARPER; Adrian Deveny, with Senator MERKLEY; Emily Enderle, with Senator WHITEHOUSE; Adam Zipkin, with Senator CORY BOOKER; Michal Freedhoff, with Senator MARKEY; Jasmine Hunt, with Senator DURBIN; and Lisa Hummon-Jones, with Senator COONS.

I have mentioned the great work that Jonathan Black, a member of my staff, has done, but we have also had incredible work by my legislative director, Andrew Wallace, and all of my staff at various points. This legislation has been a heavy burden, and my staff worked hard to get this legislation completed. I truly appreciate the hard work they have done, including my chief of staff and everybody in the office.

We also had the opportunity to consult with and ask for help from the Senate legislative counsel. They worked to turn around text quickly at crucial points, and that makes all the difference in the world—to have text, get it looked at, get the changes made, and get back to the individuals who are involved.

Michelle Johnson-Weider played a key role, as did Deanna Edwards. I am sure there were others over there who also helped us out. This is not a definitive list. There were also many others.

I wish to conclude by thanking, again, our bipartisan partners. Senator VITTER and I have been working on this for years. We took it up after Senator Lautenberg passed away. Senator VITTER was on the committee as the ranking member and the chairman—and back and forth—and then Senator INHOFE took over.

I remember when we had a meeting with Senator INHOFE, and he took a real interest in this legislation. He has incredible calm, steady judgment in terms of pulling together what needs to happen to get a bill done in this sometimes hyperpartisan atmosphere. As chairman, he was always willing to listen to the people on the committee, off the committee, and pull people together to help them find common ground on this bill.

With that, we look forward to working with our House colleagues. Many of us served in the House. We served with House Members FRED UPTON, FRANK PALLONE, JOHN SHIMKUS, and Representative TONKO. These are some of the key people who will be working on this in the House, and we look forward to working with them and their staff and each other to reconcile these bills.

The House has some very good ideas in its bill. We have been a little more expansive and covered more areas, and I hope they will work with us on that. We look forward to working with them and putting the two bills together and then getting this passed early next year.

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

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

OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to say just a few words this afternoon on the vote that was taken on the Senate floor this morning. I will certainly admit that this was a difficult vote for me. This 2,200-page, \$1.8 trillion spending and tax reform bill certainly does contain provisions that I have advocated for and will continue to press for to benefit different Alaskan groups, small businesses, the energy sector, and others. However, voting in favor of such a massive and consequential piece of legislation without having the opportunity to fully understand or fully vet both its positive and negative implications for Alaska and our Nation or to offer amendments is something I could not do in good conscience.

Leader MCCONNELL, majority whip Senator CORNYN, and so many other leaders in the Senate have worked hard in terms of this process over the past year. You heard a number of Senators come to the floor to talk about what clearly has been a very productive Senate under their leadership, and I want to commend them for their leadership. I appreciate their leadership. I know that in terms of the budget they tried to get this body to the right place, meaning we actually passed a budget for the first time in many years. We passed 12 appropriations bills—again, for appropriations, the first time in many years—but as the bills came to the Senate floor, they were halted, unfortunately, blocked, filibustered. I remember debating not once, not twice, but three times when the other side filibustered the Defense appropriations bill. This Senator still does not understand what was behind all of that, still is not 100 percent sure why the appropriations and funding process was halted in this body. Then we saw the smash-up the last week when everything came together at the end of the year.

I am not sure what the motivation was to do this, but I do know this: The way in which we fund our Federal Government—in this case, 72 hours to read a 2,200-page, \$1.8 trillion, “take it or leave it” bill, negotiated by just a few Members of Congress and the White House—is a broken process, and it is not worthy of our great Nation, nor the people we represent. I also believe it is a principal reason why we have seen an explosion of trillions of dollars in debt that imperils our Nation’s fiscal stability and certainly imperils our children’s future.

Back home in Alaska, we are currently debating through a transparent, open, and contentious process how to best address our State’s significant fiscal challenges. We have big fiscal challenges just like this government does.

In my view, the Federal Government should be doing the same. The bill we voted on today and the process that produced it demonstrates that we are not.

Going forward, I certainly want to continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the leadership on both sides of the aisle to continue to work to improve this process because the people we represent deserve much better than what just transpired.

Obviously there has been a lot of talk about the omnibus bill in the last couple days on the floor, but I just wanted to say a few words. Sometimes it takes a reminder from home, a reminder from what is going on back home to ground us and to remind us of what is really important in our lives, like family and friends and life itself.

SEARCH FOR CASEY GRAHAM

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like to talk briefly about an effort that is going on in Alaska right now to try to recover one of our own, Casey Graham—an Alaskan Native, a patriot, 24 years old, the son of Steven and Lucy Graham.

He is 24 years old, the son of Steven and Lucy Graham and brother of Cheryl, Michelle, Megan, and Pauline. He is a veteran who served in the Marines and was deployed to serve his country in Afghanistan. He is a young man in the prime of his life.

Casey has been described as smart, hard-working, extremely intelligent, and a shining light for his community, his State, and his country. He lived in Anchorage but was from McGrath, AK. That is about 200 miles from Anchorage on the Upper Kuskokwim River.

About a week ago he was visiting family when he decided to do what most Alaskans do in the winter—go out on a snow machine ride. It is thought that he was on the ice on the river and hit open water. His snow machine and his helmet have been found, but not Casey.

As I speak, the community of McGrath is banding together for the recovery effort. It is a small town—only about 350 people live there—but it is a town with a huge heart. The community has dropped everything. Every day, dozens—as many as 50 Alaskans have gone out to where they think Casey was on the ice to bring him home. Remember, in Alaska it is cold right now. From December 10 when the search began until now, temperatures have ranged from about 22 degrees below zero to a high of about 16 above zero. There is a heated tent on the ice where volunteers go to warm up and eat lunch before they go back out searching. They eat moose stew mostly and, of course, a lot of salmon. The community is emptying their freezers and making sure all the volunteers are fed.

In the true spirit of Alaska, in the true spirit of Christmas, so many companies and individuals across the great

State of Alaska are donating goods, services, airline miles, freight services, food, hand and foot warmers, first-aid kits, cold-weather gear—you name it. Everybody is pitching in to help. It is something that this body and this country should be particularly proud of.

Although I am not surprised by it, Casey's marine brothers have flown in from thousands of miles away, all across the country, to help in the search. They served with him in Afghanistan, and they have now come to Alaska from Texas, Pennsylvania, California, and as far away from Alaska as New York. There are 11 now and more on the way. In the Marines, we don't leave our brothers and sisters behind, and these marines are living up to that ethos.

I am asking for the thoughts and prayers of this body and Americans—any Americans all across this country who are watching—on this effort. I am asking that we pray to bring Casey home.

Semper fi to him, his father, his sisters, and to those proud marines who are making sure he makes it home.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FEDERAL RESERVE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 289, S. 2232.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 289, S. 2232, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 proceed to Calendar No. 289, S. 2232, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the

Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, David Vitter, Shelley Moore Capito, Rand Paul, Johnny Isakson, Steve Daines, Patrick J. Toomey, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Mike Lee, David Perdue, Rob Portman.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote occur at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican leader and I are both long-time appropriators. I love the Appropriations Committee. But over time, the appropriations process has broken down.

There are differing opinions about the causes of the breakdown. Opinions typically vary depending on whether Senators serve in the majority or minority. But there is a bipartisan consensus that we can and must do better. I hope that in the coming session, both sides can work together to restore the appropriations process to what it once was—a thoroughly bipartisan process focused on governing, not a partisan process focused on scoring political points.

The need for bipartisanship should be obvious. After all, during the next session, we will continue to be a divided government. Republicans will be in charge of the legislative branch, and President Obama will continue to control the administration. Neither side can force the other to accept its preferred process or its preferred outcomes. The only way to make this work is for both sides to work together throughout the year and to make the compromises needed to get appropriations bills not just passed but signed into law.

Among other things, this means that both parties will have to be part of the decisionmaking process from the beginning, at both the committee and leadership levels. This doesn't just mean developing individual bills in a bipartisan way. It means reaching bipartisan agreements on the sequencing and packaging of legislation, so that one party's priorities are not pursued at the expense of the other's priorities.

True bipartisanship also requires both parties to resist the temptation to pursue poison pill riders that appeal to their own supporters but that are so strongly opposed by the other party that their inclusion in appropriations bills would grind the process to a halt. No doubt there will be many opportuni-

ties next year for both sides to score political points. But the appropriations process is not the place for that. And I hope Members in both parties will agree that it is more important to fund the government than to play politics.

I am convinced that if we can restore the appropriations process to one based on bipartisan cooperation at every stage, all Senators will benefit. It will give Members in both parties a meaningful opportunity for input, and it will avoid the need for invoking cloture on motions to proceed to appropriations bills. With some luck, it also will allow us to complete our work next year without a lame-duck session and without another end of year crisis. And that is something everyone should be able to agree on.

In today's polarized environment, that may seem like wishful thinking. But there is no reason we can't make it happen. We should build upon the momentum created by adoption of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which the Senate passed with a 64-to-35 vote on October 30. And the key is really quite simple—genuine bipartisan cooperation at every step of the process.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF HERMANDAD MEXICANA TRANSNACIONAL, ORG.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 10th anniversary of Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional, Org.

Since it was established in 2005, Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional has been a strong advocate for the Latino community in southern Nevada. In working to fulfill its mission of promoting family unity and community empowerment, the organization ensures that Latinos in Nevada have the legal, social, educational, and economic support they need to thrive, regardless of their immigration status.

Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional provides the Latino community with essential immigration services including assistance with navigating the immigration system to become naturalized U.S. citizens; applying for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, program; renewing work permits and legal permanent resident cards; and filing U-Visa and Violence Against Women Act petitions.

Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional has formed important partnerships with other entities to enhance the resources it provides. These resources include supportive services for victims of violence and free tax preparation services, voter registration assistance for newly naturalized U.S. citizens, and attorney consultation services for immigration cases at no cost to the client. Furthermore, Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional offers a variety of literacy and education courses for English language learners through its adult education program. These courses include elementary and middle