

paying for food or, paying for medication. They will go without heat because they cannot afford to buy fuel. The source of this issue is Social Security. Although this retirement system has benefited many Americans, it needs to be changed. Social Security often does not change with inflation, or does not change enough to account for increased prices. While prices are rising, Social Security is not keeping up. This leaves seniors to make difficult choices regarding spending. Every year, Social Security should be assessed, and changed accordingly to inflation. To pay for this, we would need to raise the Social Security tax percentage to seven percent. This would allow America to adequately pay for the needs of our elderly.

This nation is nowhere near perfect. We have many issues we must address, domestic and foreign. We cannot expect to properly address issues overseas, until we fix the home we live in. We must fix America from within. Once we do this, we will truly be able to call ourselves the greatest nation in the world.

VIVIAN HUANG, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL (SECOND PLACE)

The year of 2015 has been historic for the United States of America. We have signed a landmark agreement on climate change, enacted marriage equality, and become economically sound—marking greater economic growth rates than predicted and reaching a five percent unemployment rate. Still, we enter the year of 2016 with two pressing issues remaining on the global and the national scale: terrorism and healthcare. As we tackle these issues, we must remind ourselves that the United States of America is truly one nation, indivisible, with each citizen carrying responsibilities to support our nation's values, as well as one another.

First, following recent acts of terror around the world, it is top-priority for the United States to defeat the threat of ISIS. Enough is enough. Rest assured that rather than sending our troops to combat zones in Iraq and Syria, we will take an active role in helping our European allies lead the battle. America must provide rigorous train-and-assist programs for Kurdish forces, exert a tight grip on ISIS-controlled territory, cut off supply lines, and implore the Gulf States to combat terrorism. Furthermore, previous experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed that merely destroying one source of terrorism will not suffice. To ultimately render counterterrorism and military action unnecessary in Iraq and Syria, we plan on developing political, economic, and educational reforms that will effectively respond to complex sectarian and ethnic divisions in the region.

Let's make it clear that the United States is not declaring a war against religion, but rather against the violence of extremism. As human beings, it is our responsibility to help the innocent Syrian families fleeing ISIS and Assad's brutal regime. Now is not the time to turn our backs, but to provide humanitarian aid and shelter, even though it requires extreme vigilance. Additionally, every American must confront the problem of bigotry, which only becomes exploited by ISIS for its own recruitment. We all have the duty to stand up against discriminatory rhetoric and hostile actions. We all have the duty to uphold the country's values by supporting each other—our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow community members—with tolerance and respect.

Second, an important issue on the domestic front continues to be healthcare. Physical and mental wellness is a fundamental need for the American people. Over the past year, the Affordable Care Act has improved access to this basic human right for the un-

insured. However, there is more to accomplish in 2016. Until completely comprehensive universal healthcare—namely, a single-payer system—is set into place, Medicaid must be expanded in 20 remaining states and community health clinics must be placed in underserved locations.

The Department of Health and Human Services must address the chief drivers of healthcare costs: hospital expenditures, physician and clinical services, and skyrocketing drug prices escalate the national health spending. To target this broad problem, a single-payer healthcare system will minimize unnecessary spending by requiring hospitals to operate on government-approved standardized billing procedures. Hence, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies will not be able to overcharge patients and run extortionate monopolies on essential medications.

Indeed, American citizens' rugged bravery, wise judgment, and drive for excellence have made this country great. But we can always progress forward, as long we stand united. Therefore, we will tackle the urgent issues of terrorism and healthcare not only with confidence, but also with the ambition to remain one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RYAN RACICOT, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL (THIRD PLACE)

The most pressing and immediate danger of today's society is the rapidly changing climate. The scientific community agrees virtually unanimously, that climate change is a very real and imminent concern. Continuation down the current path at this pace will eventually result in the ultimate demise of the human race.

This issue is not the United States' to tackle alone. In order to fully reverse the effects of climate change, it will take a worldwide collaborative effort unlike anything the world has ever faced before. The United States' role going forward is to set an example for other first world countries. The United Nations' conference this year in Paris was a step in the right direction. But the United States needs to agree to a binding commitment to reduce emissions. Without a whole-hearted promise to abide to these reductions, the United States will not be taken seriously on this issue.

The United States government cannot expect corporations to make eco-friendly movements unprovoked, it is simply not worth the financial burden. The federal government needs to incentivize eco-friendly waste management for businesses, by making eco-friendly business more profitable than environmentally irresponsible business. As it stands now, no company has motivation to protect the environment. Doing so only hurts production and makes them less competitive. To reverse this trend, the federal government needs to enforce pre-existing environmental laws and spend more on environmental saving measures.

To convert all factories to updated standards for emissions, a large amount of money will be needed initially, but over time, a system in which clean energy is valued more than profit will result in a much more sustainable economy. Companies who destroy the environment and experience greater profit as a result will be forced to pay for their own pollution management systems. Greatly increasing taxes on environmentally irresponsible corporations will make clean energy more fiscally appealing than polluting means of energy. This is not stealing money from the American people or a redistribution of wealth. This is using money made by multi-billion dollar companies at the expense of the environment to help fix the problem they themselves helped to cre-

ate. Also, by taking the charge on creating environmentally friendly products and machinery, the potential for the United States to make a profit is huge. By incentivizing other countries to go eco-friendly, and selling the materials and means to do so creates jobs and income, which boosts the U.S. economy, all without destroying the environment.

Unlike many other issues troubling the state of Vermont, the nation, and the world, climate change affects every single person. Regardless of race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, education or political affiliation, climate change affects all, especially the most disadvantaged. Because of this, it is everyone's personal responsibility to do their part in saving the planet. One cannot stand idle and expect other people do all of the dirty work. Helping to save the earth is not about how you can benefit, it is about how you can help the greater cause. We can no longer allow large corporations to prioritize making a profit over responsible waste management. The short-term profits for the rich are vastly outweighed by the long-term environmental consequences felt by all.●

#### TRIBUTE TO TERESA THOMPSON

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Teresa Thompson, an intern in my Rapid City, SD, office for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past few months.

Teresa is a graduate of Sturgis High School in Sturgis, SD. Currently, she is attending Black Hills State University where she is majoring in history. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her experience while also raising her two children, Ben and Rachel.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Teresa Thompson for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE VETO OF S.J. RES. 22, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF "WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES" UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT, RECEIVED ON JANUARY 19, 2016—PM 37

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk:

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 22, a resolution that would nullify a rule issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the

Department of the Army to clarify the jurisdictional boundaries of the Clean Water Act. The rule, which is a product of extensive public involvement and years of work, is critical to our efforts to protect the Nation's waters and keep them clean; is responsive to calls for rulemaking from the Congress, industry, and community stakeholders; and is consistent with decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

We must protect the waters that are vital for the health of our communities and the success of our businesses, agriculture, and energy development. As I have noted before, too many of our waters have been left vulnerable. Pollution from upstream sources ends up in the rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal waters near which most Americans live and on which they depend for their drinking water, recreation, and economic development. Clarifying the scope of the Clean Water Act helps to protect these resources and safeguard public health. Because this resolution seeks to block the progress represented by this rule and deny businesses and communities the regulatory certainty and clarity needed to invest in projects that rely on clean water, I cannot support it. I am therefore vetoing this resolution.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 19, 2016.

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

S.J. Res. 29. Joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its associated forces.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4129. A communication from the Administrator, Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grants" (RIN0575-AD02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4130. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting proposed legislation entitled "Military Justice Act of 2016"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4131. A communication from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Energy, Installations, and Environment), Department of Defense, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4132. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant

to law, the report of a rule entitled "Removal of Transferred OTS Regulations Regarding Management Official Interlocks and Amendments to FDIC's Rules and Regulations" (RIN3064-AE20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4133. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Members of Federal Home Loan Banks" (RIN2590-AA39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4134. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Suspension of Community Eligibility" ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA-2015-0001)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4135. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Suspension of Community Eligibility" ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA-2015-0001)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4136. A communication from the Regulatory Liaison, Office of Natural Resources Revenue, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Allocation and Disbursement of Royalties, Rentals, and Bonuses—Oil and Gas, Offshore" (RIN1012-AA11) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4137. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Refrigerated Bottled or Canned Beverage Vending Machines" ((RIN1904-AD00) (Docket No. EERE-2013-BT-STD-0022)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4138. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports entitled "Report to the Congress: 2015 Compact Impact Analysis" and "Impact of the Compacts of Free Association on Guam FY (Fiscal Year) 2004 through FY 2014"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4139. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Charleston Harbor Post-45 project in Charleston, South Carolina; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4140. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Leon Creek Watershed, San Antonio, Texas; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4141. A communication from the Chief of the Branch of Recovery and State Grants,

Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of the Modoc Sucker from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife" (RIN1018-AY78) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4142. A communication from the Chief of the Foreign Species Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing Two Lion Subspecies" (RIN1018-BA29) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4143. A communication from the Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of *Frankenia johnstonii* (Johnston's frankenia) From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Plants" (RIN1018-AH53) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4144. A communication from the Chief of the Aquatic Invasive Species Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Injurious Wildlife Species; Listing Salamanders Due to Risk of Salamander Chytrid Fungus" (RIN1018-BA77) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4145. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revenue Procedure: Update of CC: International No-Rule Revenue Procedure 2015-7" (Rev. Proc. 2016-7) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4146. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revenue Procedure 2016-5" (Rev. Proc. 2016-5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4147. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revenue Procedure 2016-3" (Rev. Proc. 2016-3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4148. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to the Employee Plans Determination Letter Program Regarding Cycle A Elections, Determination Letter Expiration Dates, and Extension of Deadlines for Certain Defined Contribution Pre-Approved Plans" (Notice 2016-03) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.