

Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lebanese Republic.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the nominations and ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thomas-Greenfield, Leslie, Etim, Mosbacher, Fisher, Parekh, Riley, Stewart, Matthews, Escobari, Dandekar, Sterling, Keiderling-Franz, Schwartz, Elder, and Richard nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

#### TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3934, 3918, 3905, 3926, 3961, AND 3941 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3896

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to report that due to a lot of hard work on both sides of the aisle by Senators and their staffs, the leaders, and particularly my colleague Senator REED of Rhode Island, we have another group of amendments we are able to clear tonight.

I therefore ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and reported by number: amendment No. 3934, offered by Senator KING; amendment No. 3918, offered by Senator RUBIO; amendment No. 3905, offered by Senator HELLER; amendment No. 3926, offered by Senator RUBIO; amendment No. 3961, offered by Senator MANCHIN; and amendment No. 3941, offered by Senator BOOKER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments en bloc by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS], for others, proposes amendments numbered 3934,

3918, 3905, 3926, 3961, and 3941 en bloc to amendment No. 3896.

The amendments are as follows:

##### AMENDMENT NO. 3934

(Purpose: To authorize the use of funds to carry out a matching program with the Department of Education to identify veterans who are unemployable due to a service-connected disability and who are also borrowers of Federal student loans in order to streamline and expedite the process through which such veterans may discharge their Federal student loans)

On page 223, line 9, after "interoperability:" insert the following: "Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, \$300,000 shall be available to carry out a matching program with the Department of Education to identify veterans who are unemployable due to a service-connected disability and who are also borrowers of Federal student loans in order to streamline and expedite the process through which such veterans may discharge their Federal student loans."

##### AMENDMENT NO. 3918

(Purpose: To shorten the time given to a property owner to respond to a violation of a contract and the time given to the Secretary to develop a Compliance, Disposition, and Enforcement Plan)

On page 152, strike lines 1 through 13 and insert the following:

(1) The Secretary shall notify the owner and provide an opportunity for response within 15 days of UPCS inspection results. If the violations remain, the Secretary shall develop a Compliance, Disposition and Enforcement Plan within 30 days of the UPCS inspection results and must provide the owner with a Notice of Default with a specified timetable, determined by the Secretary, for correcting all deficiencies. The Secretary must also provide a copy of the Notice of Default to the tenants, the local government, any mortgagees, and any contract administrator. If the owner's appeal results in a UPCS score of 60 or above, the Secretary may withdraw the Notice of Default.

##### AMENDMENT NO. 3905

(Purpose: To prohibit funds from being used to provide housing assistance benefits to individuals convicted of certain criminal offenses)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ None of the funds made available under this Act shall be used to provide housing assistance benefits for an individual who is convicted of—

- (1) aggravated sexual abuse under section 2241 of title 18, United States Code;
- (2) murder under section 1111 of title 18, United States Code; or
- (3) any other Federal or State offense involving—

(A) severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined in paragraphs (9) and (10), respectively, of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102); or

(B) child pornography, as defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code.

##### AMENDMENT NO. 3926

(Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of Real Estate Assessment Center physical inspections)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ (a) Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall prepare a report, and post the report on the public website of the Department of

Housing and Urban Development (in this section referred to as the "Department"), regarding Real Estate Assessment Center (in this section referred to as "REAC") inspections of all properties assisted, insured, or both, under a program of the Department, which shall include—

(1) the percentage of all inspected properties that received a REAC-inspected score of less than 65 within the last 48 months;

(2) the number of properties in which the most recent REAC-inspected score represented a decline relative to the previous REAC score;

(3) a list of the 10 metropolitan statistical areas with the lowest average REAC-inspected scores for all inspected properties; and

(4) a list of the 10 States with the lowest average REAC-inspected scores for all inspected properties.

(b) The Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare a report, and post the report on the public website of the Government Accountability Office, regarding areas in which REAC inspections of all properties assisted, insured, or both, under a program of the Department should be reformed and improved.

##### AMENDMENT NO. 3961

(Purpose: To allow airports to use airport improvement program funds to repair damage to runway safety areas caused by natural disasters)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ (a) Subchapter I of chapter 471, as amended by this subtitle, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

##### "§ 47144. Use of funds for repairs for runway safety repairs

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation may make project grants under this subchapter to an airport described in subsection (b) from funds under section 47114 apportioned to that airport or funds available for discretionary grants to that airport under section 47115 to conduct airport development to repair the runway safety area of the airport damaged as a result of a natural disaster in order to maintain compliance with the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration relating to runway safety areas, without regard to whether construction of the runway safety area damaged was carried out using amounts the airport received under this subchapter.

"(b) AIRPORTS DESCRIBED.—An airport is described in this subsection if—

- "(1) the airport is a public-use airport;
- "(2) the airport is listed in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems of the Federal Aviation Administration;
- "(3) the runway safety area of the airport was damaged as a result of a natural disaster;

"(4) the airport was denied funding under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 4121 et seq.) with respect to the disaster;

"(5) the operator of the airport has exhausted all legal remedies, including legal action against any parties (or insurers thereof) whose action or inaction may have contributed to the need for the repair of the runway safety area;

"(6) there is still a demonstrated need for the runway safety area to accommodate current or imminent aeronautical demand; and

"(7) the cost of repairing or replacing the runway safety area is reasonable in relation to the anticipated operational benefit of repairing the runway safety area, as determined by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration."

(b) The analysis for chapter 471, as amended by this subtitle, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 47143 the following:

“47144. Use of funds for repairs for runway safety repairs.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3941

(Purpose: To slightly modify the scope of projects eligible for railroad safety grants)

On page 50 of division A, strike line 7 and all that follows through “Code:” on line 10, and insert the following: “up to \$25,000,000 shall be available to carry out section 24407(c)(1) of title 49, United States Code; and not less than \$25,000,000 shall be available to carry out paragraphs (2), (5), (6), (7) and (10) of section 24407(c) of such title:”.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now vote on these amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question occurs on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3934, 3918, 3905, 3926, 3961, and 3941) were agreed to en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3914, 3938, 3948, 3954, AND 3971  
TO AMENDMENT NO. 3896

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and reported by number: No. 3914, by Senator TESTER; No. 3938, by me; No. 3948, by Senator HELLER; No. 3954, by Senator HEITKAMP; and No. 3971, by Senator BENNET.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. KIRK], for himself and others, proposes amendments numbered 3914, 3938, 3948, 3954, and 3971 en bloc to amendment No. 3896.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3914

(Purpose: To require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report evaluating force structure and military construction requirements in Europe)

At the appropriate place in title I of division B, 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 defense committees a report evaluating the extent to which the Department of Defense has developed a comprehensive force structure plan, including military construction requirements, to meet emerging security threats in Europe.

(b) The report required under subsection (a) shall include an assessment of the extent to which the Department of Defense has—

(1) identified the near-term and long-term United States military force requirements in Europe in support of the European Reassurance Initiative;

(2) evaluated the posture, force structure, and military construction options for meeting projected force requirements;

(3) evaluated the long-term costs associated with the posture, force structure, and military construction requirements; and

(4) developed a Future Years Defense Program for force structure costs associated with the European Reassurance Initiative.

(c) The report shall also include any other matters related to security threats in Europe that the Comptroller General determines are appropriate, and recommendations as warranted for improvements to the Department's planning and analysis methodology.

AMENDMENT NO. 3938

(Purpose: To make a technical correction to section 132 of title I of division J of Public Law 114-113)

At the appropriate place in title I of division B, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. (a) Of the amounts appropriated by section 132 of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016 (division J of Public Law 114-113; 129 Stat. 2683), \$30,000,000 is hereby rescinded.

(b) Notwithstanding section 123 of this title, for an additional amount for fiscal year 2016 for “Military Construction, Army” in this title, \$30,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, is provided for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code.

(c) This section shall become effective immediately upon enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 3948

(Purpose: To modify the contents of the quarterly report on disability compensation claims)

On page 245, lines 23 through 24, strike “and (7) the number and results of Quality Review Team audits” and insert “(7) the number and results of Quality Review Team audits; (8) the number of claims completed by each Regional Office based on the Regional Office being the station of jurisdiction; and (9) the number of claims completed by each Regional Office based on the Regional Office being the station of origin”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3954

(Purpose: To require coordination within the Department of Veterans Affairs to meet the readjustment and psychological counseling needs of veterans in rural and highly rural communities)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the Readjustment Counseling Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs coordinates directly with the Office of Rural Health of the Department on efforts to expand the capacity of Vet Centers (as defined in section 1712A(h) of title 38, United States Code) in order to ensure that the readjustment and psychological counseling needs of veterans in rural and highly rural communities are met.

(b) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report detailing the number of Vet Centers (as so defined) operated by the Department and a strategic plan to increase the capacity of such Vet Centers to address unmet readjustment and psychological counseling needs of veterans in rural and highly rural communities.

AMENDMENT NO. 3971

(Purpose: To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training to compete on the United States Olympic Team)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. MONTHLY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS COMPETING ON OLYMPIC TEAMS.

Section 322(d)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “allowance to a veteran” and inserting the following: “allowance to—“(A) a veteran”;

(2) in subparagraph (A), as designated by paragraph (1), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) a veteran with a service-connected disability rated as 30 percent or greater by the Department who is selected by the United States Olympic Committee for the United States Olympic Team for any month in which the veteran is competing in any event sanctioned by the National Governing Bodies of the United States Olympic Sports.”.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now vote on these amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KIRK. I know of no further debate on these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question occurs on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3914, 3938, 3948, 3954, and 3971) were agreed to en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

62ND ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 62 years ago today, the Supreme Court issued its decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which struck down laws permitting racially segregated schools in 17 States and the District of Columbia.

The Court overturned Plessy v. Ferguson, the notorious 1896 decision that found racially segregated schools could be, “separate but equal.” The Court unanimously held that laws requiring racial segregation in schools violate the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment and recognized that equal access to education is a fundamental civil right. In the Brown v. Board opinion, Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote, “in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no