(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 114–13; 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

place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.''

As I have said before, this historic decision was the most important Supreme Court decision of the 20th century—and perhaps of all time. Shortly after the decision, the New York Times published an editorial that stated: ''The Supreme Court's historic decision in the school desegregation cases brings the United States back into the mainstream of its own best traditions. Segregation is a hangover of slavery, and its ugliest manifestation has been in the schools.''

While the Brown decision was a historic victory for equality, this anniversary is bittersweet. We have made great progress in the last 62 years, but there is much work that remains to be done to create ''the more perfect union'' that our Constitution promises. Significant racial disparities persist in our schools, as well as our economy and our criminal justice system.

Just last week, following a five-decade legal battle, a Federal district court judge ordered a school district in Mississippi to desegregate. In her opinion, Judge Debra Brown wrote that: ''[the school district's] delay in desegregation has deprived generations of students of the constitutionally-guaranteed right of an integrated education. Although no court order can right these wrongs, it is the duty of the District to ensure that not one more student suffers under this burden.''

It is shocking to consider that, six decades after the Brown decision, there is still resistance to the Court's mandate to desegregate our schools.

We also continue to see efforts to make it more difficult for African Americans and other minorities to exercise the most fundamental constitutional right, the right to vote. Three years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke at the Lincoln Memorial during a prayer pilgrimage to Washington.

In a speech entitled ''Give Us the Ballot,'' Dr. King described the, ''noble and sublime decision'' in Brown, as well as the massive resistance to enforcing the decision. Dr. King noted that: ''many states have risen up in open defiance. The legislative halls of the South ring loud with such words as 'interposition' and 'nullification.' But even more, all types of conniving methods are still being used to prevent [African-Americans] from becoming registered voters. The denial of this sacred right is a tragic betrayal of the highest mandates of our democratic tradition.''

Dr. King knew that there was a vital connection between desegregation and the right to vote. Without Federal voting protections, African Americans would not have a voice in government to ensure that the Supreme Court's decision in Brown was fully implemented. He went on to say, ''our most urgent request to the President of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote. . . . Give us the ballot.''

Eight years later, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law. For years, this landmark legislation was recognized as a great achievement. It was repeatedly reauthorized by large, bipartisan majorities in Congress. However, 3 years ago, in Shelby County v. Holder, the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. In a divided 5–4 vote, the Court struck down the provision that required certain jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to preclear changes to their voting laws with the Department of Justice.

Since the decision, States like Texas, North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi have put in place restrictive state voting laws, which all too often have a disproportionate impact on lower-income and minority voters.

Sixty-two years after the Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. Board of Education, it is clear there is much more work to do. We should remember Dr. King's words in 1957. We should restore the law he implored Congress to enact. It is time to bring the bipartisan Voting Rights Advancement Act to the floor and ensure that the Federal Government is once again able to fully protect the fundamental right to vote.

The Supreme Court of the United States stands just across the street from here. On the front of the Court four words are engraved: ''Equal Justice Under Law.'' Those words are a promise and a challenge to all of us. On this day, the anniversary of one of the Court's greatest triumphs, let us rededicate ourselves to ensuring that those four words—''Equal Justice Under Law''—ring true for this generation and future generations of Americans.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today is the 62nd anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which reaffirmed our Nation's commitment to justice and equality by ending racial segregation in our public schools. The unanimous Court overruled one of its worst precedents in Plessy v. Ferguson and held that ''in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.''

For generations, the Brown v. Board decision has been viewed as a turning point in the effort to eradicate the shameful legacy of Jim Crow and racial segregation. On this anniversary, we are reminded of the significance of a strong and independent Supreme Court, as set forth in our Constitution. Americans respect the Court as our guardian of the Constitution and the rule of law. Each generation of Americans since the Nation's founding has worked to bend the arc of the moral universe further toward justice, seeking to fulfill the Constitution's stated purpose of forming ''a more perfect Union.'' In Brown v. Board, the Court's unanimous decision reflected that we are a nation of laws and that equal justice under law has meaning.

Unfortunately, while we commemorate this momentous Supreme Court decision today, we find the Supreme Court today weakened by Senate Republicans' current obstruction. It is an undisputable fact that the Republicans' refusal to consider Chief Judge Merrick Garland's nomination means that the Supreme Court will be without a full nine justices for more than one of its terms. The Republican argument articulated in February that they should delay all consideration because it is an election year has no precedent and is unprincipled. It shows contempt for the Court as an institution and as an independent and coequal branch of government.

The result of Republicans' sustained obstruction is that the Court is taking on fewer cases, and even in the cases it does hear, it has repeatedly been unable to definitively resolve the issue before it. A May 1 article by Robert Barnes in the Washington Post notes that the number of cases that the Justices have accepted has fallen, and the experts in that article attribute this to the Court being down one member. As one expert noted in the article, ''there seem to be a number of 'defensive denials,' meaning neither side of the ideologically split court wants to take some cases because of uncertainty about how it will turn out, or whether the court will be able to reach a decision.''

Another harmful effect of this Republican obstruction is that the Court has been contorting itself to avoid 4–4 splits by leaving the key questions of cases undecided. Just yesterday, in two different cases, the Court was unable to make a final decision on the merits. In both cases, the appellate courts are split on the law, and the Supreme Court was unable to live up to its name. One of the cases, Zubik v. Burwell, involved religiously affiliated employers' objections to their employees' health insurance coverage for contraception. The Court had already taken the unusual step of ordering supplemental briefing in the case, seemingly to avoid a 4–4 split. Even with the extra briefing, the Court was still unable to make a decision. Instead, it sent the issue back to the lower courts expressing ''no view on the merits of the cases.'' In the second case, Spokeo v. Robbins, the question at issue was Congress's ability to statutorily create rights that confer standing for plaintiffs to sue when those rights are violated. The case involves important privacy questions about Americans' power to take action when incorrect information is posted about them online. The Court, however, failed to reach the key question at issue. The effect is that the current split among the Circuit Courts of Appeals remains unresolved. As yesterday's New York Times editorial