

after it is transferred to the housing authorities.

I want to stress that this designation is no small matter. In other words, Federal money is going to be considered Federal money when it gets to the local housing authority, and no games can be played with it as are being played with it now.

U.S. taxpayers spend about \$4.5 billion every year to help low-income Americans put a roof over their heads. We can be proud that we do so much for people in need. We should not let any of that money specifically for people of need be wasted or spent to feather the nests of local public housing authority bureaucrats.

I wish to take a few minutes to explain why the appropriations language that I championed and is in this legislation is so sorely needed. Some local housing authorities have devoted these limited funds, which are meant to help low-income people find affordable housing, to high salaries and even for perks for the people who run housing authorities around the country. I will just use three examples, but there are dozens of examples that can be given.

At the Atlanta Housing Authority, at least 22 employees earned between \$150,000 and \$303,000 per year.

The former executive director of the Raleigh Housing Authority in North Carolina received about \$280,000 in salary and benefits plus 30 vacation days.

The executive director of the Tampa Housing Authority is paid over \$214,000 per year, and the housing authority spends over \$100,000 per year on travel and conferences.

After I called attention to these wasteful practices a few years ago, HUD limited the executive salary paid by local housing authorities. That is good news, right? Well, it didn't work out that way, even after the salaries were capped at level IV of the Executive Schedule pay scale, which today amounts to about \$160,000 a year. As I say, it didn't turn out to be good news. Unfortunately, as it did turn out, this compensation cap had little impact in limiting housing authority salaries.

I will explain how this works. HUD provides over \$350 million in operating fees annually to local housing authorities. Right now, these fees are considered income earned by the housing authorities for managing programs instead of considering them as what they are—grants given by the Federal Government. That is where the Federal money gets mixed up with local money and the Federal money isn't followed by HUD. That is why they get away with the waste of taxpayers' money.

Despite their source, when these fees reach housing authorities, they are no longer considered Federal funds. I say that a second time for emphasis. Once these funds lose Federal designation, housing authorities then can use the tax dollars as they see fit—and they do. Then, when they use it as they see fit, HUD is not required to conduct oversight of how the money is spent. Be-

lieve me; HUD hasn't done much oversight.

This means that many employees of housing authorities can continue to earn annual salaries well in excess of the \$160,000 without technically violating the Federal salary cap. You can see the games that are being played to let these local housing people get these massive high salaries and fringe benefits and waste taxpayers' money that should be spent helping low-income people get safe housing. Sadly, these salaries exceed limits that were imposed by the Federal Government to ensure the money we appropriate goes to low-income families in the greatest need of our assistance.

After I began publicly voicing my complaints about this practice, the Office of Management and Budget in December 2013 issued a government-wide guidance that should have—should have—put a stop to it, but it didn't. But let me tell you what the guidance called for. So-called fees for service would then be designated as program income so the Federal funding would retain its Federal designation after it is transferred into housing authority business accounts. Making sure it kept its Federal designation meant it had to be subject to HUD oversight. HUD initially agreed to fully implement the OMB guidance, but they did not.

Later, the Department quietly—very quietly—requested a waiver that, if that waiver was granted, would have allowed housing authorities to sidestep the new OMB rule and then continue to avoid commonsense oversight because, with that waiver, the Federal dollars would not have Federal designation. They would be considered local money and could be spent any way people wanted to spend it.

I might never have learned of this HUD effort to get around this OMB rule but for the very good work of the HUD inspector general. After I learned from the inspector general's staff that HUD was requesting a waiver of the OMB guidance, I sent a letter to OMB expressing my concerns. But as so often happens with bureaucrats in this town, I didn't hear from OMB until I attempted to include amendment language addressing the fee designation in the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill before Thanksgiving of last year, when the issue was on the floor of the Senate. As we all know, that bill was pulled from the floor. But neither the inspector general nor I were ready to give up, and that is why we are here today.

Just recently, I received good news that reinforces my belief that congressional oversight works. HUD has finally agreed to implement its inspector general's recommendations requiring that funding provided by the taxpayers to public housing authorities will keep its Federal designation. In other words, HUD will be responsible for making sure that Federal funding is used as intended, and that is very clear. It is why we have public hous-

ing—to provide safe, affordable housing for those in need and, consequently, then, not to use that Federal money to pay exorbitant executive salaries.

My concern now is the timeframe for implementation and ensuring that HUD does not request another waiver.

HUD expects the final rule to be completed by December 2017, more than 1½ years from now. That is a very long time to finalize regulations. I hope HUD isn't delaying the process in the hope that either the inspector general or this Senator will give up. I can assure you that will not happen. We need to ensure that this reform is implemented by including language in this appropriations bill to not just keep salaries in check but also to ensure that HUD exercises oversight authority over how these funds are used and that more money is actually used for the poor.

I hope HUD uses that oversight authority to combat waste, such as in the following three examples: The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles misused over \$3.9 million in operating funds for salary, travel, bonuses, and legal settlements. The Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority in Canton, OH, misused \$4 million in operating and capital funds to build a commercial development, and an additional \$2 million was misused for salaries and benefits. The Hickory, NC, housing authority paid over \$500,000 in operating funds to a maintenance company owned by the brother of a board member—a clear conflict of interest.

It is also vital that Congress be aware of any effort by HUD to once again avoid implementing this rule the way they tried to get around the OMB rule I just talked about. For that reason, the report language I requested requires HUD to notify both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees quarterly during fiscal year 2017 if they request any waiver from implementing these provisions.

I encourage my colleagues to support this effort to ensure that HUD implements these much needed changes and does its part to provide better oversight of our scarce Federal funding.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

POLICE ACT OF 2016

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am delighted to be here on the floor with the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the ranking member, our colleague from Vermont, whom I have worked with on so many issues, to ask unanimous consent to take up a bill that I talked about a little earlier this morning called the POLICE Act. This bill uses existing funding to support local law enforcement but specifically to make sure funding is available for active-shooter training.

For example, in San Marcos, TX, at Texas State University, they have trained 80,000 local law enforcement officials in active-shooter training. The

time I remember most poignantly when this was put to good use and saved lives was at Fort Hood, TX, when MAJ Nidal Hasan stood up and killed I think about 13 people and then wounded about 30 more. There were two law enforcement officials who crashed the site, put themselves in harm's way, but thanks to the great training they had, they were able to disable Major Hasan before he was able to do any more damage. So this is very important training.

We want to make sure there are funds available—using existing funding streams but available for active-shooter training wherever it might be provided around the country.

Mr. President, as I mentioned earlier today, this week is National Police Week—a time to honor those men and women who have fallen in the line of duty.

One way we can better support our Nation's law enforcement officers is by helping them get the training they need to keep themselves and the communities they protect safe.

The POLICE Act is a bill that would do exactly that.

This bipartisan legislation would allow existing grant money available for police training to be used for active shooter training—a commonsense way to put these funds to good use in a way that does not and will not spend additional Federal money.

Right now, current law will not allow local police departments and first responders to use a substantial amount of grant funding through the Justice Department for this kind of critical training. Our bill would change that.

With all the threats they face every day on the job, we have an obligation to equip as many officers as possible with the skills and training they need to respond to an active shooter situation.

I would like to thank Senator LEAHY for working with me on this legislation. I also would like to thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his effort in getting this bill passed out of committee last week. I express my gratitude to Senator GRASSLEY and Senator LEAHY.

At this time, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 464, S. 2840.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2840) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds for active shooter training, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 2840) was passed, as follows:

S. 2840

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Our Lives by Initiating COPS Expansion Act of 2016” or the “POLICE Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZED USE OF COPS FUNDS.

Section 1701(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (16), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (17) as paragraph (18);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (16) the following:

“(17) to participate in nationally recognized active shooter training programs that offer scenario-based, integrated response courses designed to counter active shooter threats or acts of terrorism against individuals or facilities; and”;

(4) in paragraph (18), as redesignated, by striking “(16)” and inserting “(17)”.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CORNYN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I had a chance to speak on this earlier. I would defer to my colleague, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, or Senator LEAHY from Vermont, my principal cosponsor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week is National Police Week, and many of us have paused to thank our Nation's law enforcement officers for their important work. But it is not enough for us to simply pay tribute to these men and women. We must also provide them with the training and the resources they need to remain safe while they protect our communities.

That is why I pushed for years to enact legislation to reauthorize the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program, which President Obama signed into law on Monday. I authored this legislation with Senator GRAHAM because every single law enforcement officer deserves to be protected by a lifesaving vest. Since its inception in 1998, this program has provided more than 1.2 million vests to more than 13,000 law enforcement agencies. The reauthorization signed into law this week ensures that hundreds of thousands more officers will be similarly protected. I have personally met with officers who were saved by vests purchased through this program. They will confirm that these vests are worth every penny.

Today the Senate passed the Protecting Our Lives by Initiating COPS Expansion Act, or the POLICE Act.

This legislation will provide law enforcement officers with training to handle active shooter situations. The bill is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National District Attorneys Association, Major County Sheriffs Association, and the Sergeants Benevolent Association. I was proud to join Senator CORNYN as the lead Democratic sponsor of this legislation.

I thank Senator CORNYN for this. We have worked together on many law enforcement things over the years, and I think both Senator CORNYN and I have tried to demonstrate that law enforcement should not be a partisan matter, and we have done this in a bipartisan fashion.

So many officers have heroically responded to active shooter situations. This week the President bestowed upon several officers the Medal of Valor for their response to active shooters, including three California officers who confronted a gunman during a rampage at a community college that left five people dead in 2013; a New York officer who arrested, at a crowded hospital, a gunman who already had killed another officer; and a New York sheriff's deputy who confronted and subdued a gunman who had wounded others and posed a threat to students at a nearby school.

But I think we cannot rely on heroism alone. Senator CORNYN mentioned the training that helped end an active-shooter incident in Texas. Unfortunately, active-shooter incidents have become all too common, occurring in shopping malls and schools, the workplace, anywhere people gather. No State is immune, including my own State of Vermont. All of our Nation's officers should receive training on how to handle such situations so they can respond effectively to protect the public and to protect themselves. The POLICE Act will help make such training available.

However, the burden of protecting the public from active shooters should not fall solely on the shoulders of our law enforcement officers. Congress must do more to prevent active shooter situations. That means preventing criminals and those who seek to cause harm from acquiring firearms in the first place. That is why the Senate should pass the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act that I sponsored with Senator COLLINS, which would provide law enforcement the tools they need to investigate and deter straw purchasers and gun traffickers. Congress must not become so numb to tragedy after tragedy that we fail to fulfill our duty to legislate, even when the issue involves firearms.

As I said, Senator CORNYN and I have made it very clear that supporting our Nation's law enforcement officers in reducing gun violence is not a partisan issue. While we are making progress, much more remains to be done. I stand ready to work with anyone—Republican or Democrat—on commonsense

ways to keep our law enforcement officers and communities safe.

I applaud the Senate for passing this, I urge the House to quickly pass it, and I know the President will sign it.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in 1867, when the naturalist John Muir first walked into the Cumberland Mountains, he wrote: "The scenery is far grander than any I ever before beheld. . . . Such an ocean of wooded, waving, swelling mountain beauty and grandeur is not to be described." In January, Apex Clean Energy announced that it would spoil that mountain beauty by building twenty-three 45-story wind turbines in Cumberland County.

I can still recall walking into Grassy Cove in Cumberland County one spectacular day in 1978 during my campaign for Governor. I had not seen a prettier site. Over the last few decades, pleasant weather and natural beauty have attracted thousands of retirees from Tennessee and across America to the Cumberland Plateau.

The proposed Crab Orchard Wind project would be built less than 10 miles from Cumberland Mountain State Park, where for half a century Tennesseans and tourists have camped, fished, and canoed alongside herons and belted kingfishers and around Byrd Lake. It will be less than 5 miles from the scenic Ozone Falls State Natural Area, where the 110-foot waterfall is so picturesque, it was filmed as scenery in the movie "Jungle Book."

So here are my 10 questions for the citizens of Cumberland County and the people of Tennessee:

How big are these wind turbines?

I have a picture somewhere; maybe it will show up in the next few minutes. Each one is over two times as tall as the skyboxes at the University of Tennessee football stadium, three times as tall as Ozone Falls, and taller than the Statue of Liberty. The blades on each one are as long as a football field. Their blinking lights can be seen for 20 miles. They are not your grandma's windmills.

Question No. 2: Will they disturb the neighborhood?

Here is what a New York Times review of the documentary "Windfall" said about New York residents debating such turbines:

Turbines are huge . . . with blades weighing seven tons and spinning at 150 miles an hour. They can fall over or send parts flying; struck by lightning, say, they can catch fire . . . and can generate a disorienting strobe effect in sunlight. Giant flickering shadows can tarnish a sunset's glow on a landscape.

Question No. 3: How much electricity can the project produce?

A puny amount—71 megawatts. But that is only when the wind is blowing, which in Tennessee is only 18.4 percent of the time, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Question No. 4: Does TVA need this electricity?

The answer is no. Last year TVA said there is "no immediate need for new base load plants after Watts Bar Unit 2 comes online." That is a nuclear reactor. And just last week TVA put up for sale its unfinished Bellefonte nuclear plant.

Question No. 5: Do we need wind power's carbon-free electricity to help with climate change?

No, we don't. Nuclear power is a more reliable option. Nuclear produces over 60 percent of our country's carbon-free electricity, which is available 92 percent of the time. Wind produces 15 percent of our country's carbon-free electricity, but the wind often blows at night when electricity is not needed.

Question No. 6: How many wind turbines would it take to equal one nuclear reactor?

To equal the production of the new Watts Bar reactor, you would have to run three rows of these huge wind turbines along I-40 from Memphis to Knoxville. And don't forget the transmission lines. Four reactors, each occupying roughly 1 square mile, would equal the production of a row of 45-story wind turbines strung the entire length of the 2,178-mile Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. Relying on wind power to produce electricity when nuclear reactors are available is the energy equivalent of going to war in sailboats when a nuclear navy is available.

Question No. 7: Can you easily store large amounts of wind power and use it later when you need it? The answer is no.

Question No. 8: So even if you build wind turbines, do you still need nuclear, coal, or gas plants for the 80 percent of the time when the wind isn't blowing in Tennessee? The answer is yes.

Question No. 9: Then why would anyone want to build wind power that TVA doesn't need?

Because billions of dollars of wasteful Federal taxpayer subsidies allow wind producers in some markets to give away wind power and still make a profit.

The 10th question: Who is going to guarantee that these giant wind turbines get taken down when they wear out in 20 years and after the subsidies go away?

Good question. The picture that was just put up—and I have another slide as well—is what Palm Springs, CA, looks like after it has been littered with these massive wind turbines. My question for the people of Tennessee is, Do you want Cumberland County and Tennessee to look like that? That is the question we need to ask ourselves.

Many communities where wind projects have been proposed have tried

to stop them before they go up because once the wind turbines and new transmission lines are built, it is hard to take them down. For example, watch the documentary "Windfall" that I mentioned earlier.

In October, the residents of Irasburg, VT, voted 274 to 9 against a plan to install a pair of 500-foot turbines on a ridge line visible from their neighborhood.

In New York, three counties opposed 500- to 600-foot wind turbines next to Lake Ontario. People in the town of Yates voted unanimously to oppose the project in order to "preserve their rural landscape." Take a look, and you can see why.

In Kent County, MD, the same company that is trying to put turbines in Cumberland County—Apex Clean Energy—tried to put down twenty-five to thirty-five 500-foot turbines a quarter to a half mile apart across thousands of acres of farmland where the air serves as a route for migratory geese.

According to the Baltimore Sun, Stephen S. Hershey, Jr., a local State legislator, had introduced a bill that would give county officials the right to veto any large-scale wind project in their jurisdiction. Hershey said he put the bill in after learning that the turbines would be nearly 500 feet tall and spread across an area of thousands of acres. He called that a "massive" footprint "in a relatively rural and bucolic area."

William Pickrum, president of the Board of County Commissioners, wrote the Senate committee that the project "will certainly have a negative effect" on farming, boating, and tourism in the county and hurt property values. The legislation had the support of local conservation groups and of Washington College in Chestertown. The school's interim president, Jack S. Griswold, warned in a letter to school staff and supporters that the turbines would "despoil this scenic landscape."

I mentioned a little earlier how big these wind turbines are. These are not your grandma's windmills. I happen to know, even though the Presiding Officer is from North Carolina, he was born in Tennessee and knows a little bit about the football stadium in Knoxville.

This is one wind turbine, when placed in Neyland Stadium in Knoxville, which will hold 102,000 people. The turbine is over twice as tall as the skyboxes. Its blades go the whole length of the football field. Its blinking lights can be seen for 20 miles. These are not your grandma's windmills.

As a U.S. Senator, I voted to save our mountaintops from destructive mining techniques. I am just as eager to protect mountaintops from unsightly wind turbines. I have voted for Federal clean air legislation and supported TVA's plan to build carbon-free nuclear reactors, phase out its older, dirtier coal plants, and put pollution control equipment on the remaining coal plants. Already the air is cleaner and our view of the mountains is better.