

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, May 18, 2016, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills:

S. 1492. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services, on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, to convey certain Federal property located in the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

S. 1523. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2143. An act to provide for the authority for the successors and assigns of the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company to maintain and operate a toll bridge across the Rio Grande near Rio Grande City, Texas, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN, from the Committee on Armed Services, without amendment:

S. 2943. An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114-255).

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment:

S. 1724. A bill to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114-256).

By Mr. COCHRAN, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled "Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals For Fiscal Year 2017" (Rept. No. 114-257).

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

H.R. 3114. A bill to provide funds to the Army Corps of Engineers to hire veterans and members of the Armed Forces to assist the Corps with curation and historic preservation activities, and for other purposes.

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with amendments:

S. 2754. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 300 Fannin Street in Shreveport, Louisiana, as the "Tom Stagg Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE for the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

*Jane Toshiko Nishida, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed sub-

ject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 2943. An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Armed Services; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2944. A bill to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefit program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2945. A bill to promote effective registered apprenticeships, for skills, credentials, and employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 2946. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to include certain Federal positions within the definition of law enforcement officer for retirement purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 2947. A bill to establish requirements regarding quality dates and safety dates in food labeling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2948. A bill to plan, develop, and make recommendations to increase access to sexual assault examinations for survivors by holding hospitals accountable and supporting the providers that serve them; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 2949. A bill to amend and reauthorize the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 1990; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2950. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to receive, process, and pay certain claims relating to the Gold King Mine spill; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2951. A bill to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to impose penalties and provide for the recovery of removal costs and damages in connection with certain discharges of oil from foreign offshore units, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. Res. 469. A resolution commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal moment in the journey of Ireland to independence; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. Res. 470. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Portland Cement Association, the national organization for the cement manufacturing and concrete industry; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. Res. 471. A resolution designating the week of May 15 through May 21, 2016, as "National Public Works Week"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 366

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 461

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 461, a bill to provide for alternative financing arrangements for the provision of certain services and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure at land border ports of entry, and for other purposes.

S. 590

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 590, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act to combat campus sexual violence, and for other purposes.

S. 1082

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1082, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes.

S. 1139

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1139, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to provide for same day registration.

S. 1176

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1176, a bill to amend the

Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the system of public financing for Presidential elections, and for other purposes.

S. 1428

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1428, a bill to amend the USEC Privatization Act to require the Secretary of Energy to issue a long-term Federal excess uranium inventory management plan, and for other purposes.

S. 1479

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1479, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to grants, and for other purposes.

S. 1883

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1883, a bill to maximize discovery, and accelerate development and availability, of promising childhood cancer treatments, and for other purposes.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance.

S. 2100

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2100, a bill to prohibit the sale or distribution of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 21.

S. 2279

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2279, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to increase efficiency in the recruitment and hiring by the Department of Veterans Affairs of health care workers that are undergoing separation from the Armed Forces, to create uniform credentialing standards for certain health care professionals of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 2465

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2465, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15 Rochester Street in Bergen, New York, as the Barry G. Miller Post Office.

S. 2483

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2483, a bill to prohibit States from carrying out more than

one Congressional redistricting after a decennial census and apportionment, to require States to conduct such redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes.

S. 2531

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2531, a bill to authorize State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2531, *supra*.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2551, a bill to help prevent acts of genocide and mass atrocities, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States civilian capacities to prevent and mitigate such crises.

S. 2577

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2577, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA and other forensic evidence samples to improve and expand the forensic science testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of forensic evidence, to provide post-conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to support accreditation efforts of forensic science laboratories and medical examiner offices, to address training and equipment needs, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 2584

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2584, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 2641

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2641, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, in relation to requiring adrenoleukodystrophy screening of newborns.

S. 2707

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from

New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPRITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2707, a bill to require the Secretary of Labor to nullify the proposed rule regarding defining and delimiting the exemptions for executive, administrative, professional, outside sales, and computer employees, to require the Secretary of Labor to conduct a full and complete economic analysis with improved economic data on small businesses, non-profit employers, Medicare or Medicaid dependent health care providers, and small governmental jurisdictions, and all other employers, and minimize the impact on such employers, before promulgating any substantially similar rule, and to provide a rule of construction regarding the salary threshold exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and for other purposes.

S. 2725

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2725, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the ballistic missile program of Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 2750

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2750, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 2779

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2779, a bill to reauthorize the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and for other purposes.

S. 2785

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2785, a bill to protect Native children and promote public safety in Indian country.

S. 2840

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2840, a bill 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.

S. 2854

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2854, a bill to reauthorize the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007.

S. 2912

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from

Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2912, a bill to authorize the use of unapproved medical products by patients diagnosed with a terminal illness in accordance with State law, and for other purposes.

S. 2921

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2921, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve health care and benefits for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2933

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2933, a bill to prohibit certain health care providers from providing non-Department health care services to veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2934

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2934, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale.

S. 2938

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2938, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to reestablish the Royalty Policy Committee in order to further a more consultative process with key Federal, State, tribal, environmental, and energy stakeholders, and for other purposes.

S. 2941

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2941, a bill to require a study on women and lung cancer, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 35

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 35, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should continue to exercise its veto in the United Nations Security Council on resolutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

S. RES. 459

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 459, a resolution recognizing the importance of cancer research and the vital contributions of scientists, clinicians, cancer survivors,

and other patient advocates across the United States who are dedicated to finding a cure for cancer, and designating May 2016, as "National Cancer Research Month".

S. RES. 466

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 466, a resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system.

AMENDMENT NO. 3923

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3923 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3925

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3925 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3927

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3927 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3933

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3933 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3934

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3934 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3935

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from California

(Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3935 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3941

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3941 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3944

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3944 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3948

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3948 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3951

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3951 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3957

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3957 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3970

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3970 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3981

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska

(Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3981 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3998

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3998 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4002

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4002 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2944. A bill to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefit program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a bill I am introducing along with Senator GRASSLEY called the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act.

When our first responders make the decision to join a police department or a fire department or an EMT squad, they do so knowing they might encounter hazards on the job that threaten their lives or even end their lives. These men and women work in some of the highest pressure and most dangerous environments—shootouts, fires, natural disasters, terror attacks.

Think about your own communities back home. When disaster strikes, when there is an emergency, who shows up first, speeding to the scene and ready to help? It is our police officers, it is our firefighters, and it is our EMT workers. Our public safety officers know that death or serious injury is a real risk in their jobs, but they show up to work anyway, ready to help and willing to sacrifice, if that is what it takes to keep their communities safe.

When first responders die as a result of their work, we all have the responsibility to help take care of their surviving family members. In 1984, more than three decades ago, Congress did the right thing and created a program called the Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program to help these families.

Whenever a tragedy struck and a first responder was killed on the job or passed away because of their job, these grieving families could take a little bit of comfort in knowing they would have the financial support they needed with this program. They knew they would have help from this program, transitioning to a life without their loved one.

In recent years, the families applying to the program have faced confusing and inconsistent requirements. They have faced long delays in receiving compensation. Before, when a loved one died on the job, the family would get compensation from this program without any serious delay. But now the burden to claim these funds and then retrieve them has been placed on the families—the same families this program is supposed to be helping.

As a result, hundreds of families who are already grieving now have to dig through public records themselves. They have to endure an exhausting paper chase with no guidance. And they have to go far beyond a reasonable doubt to prove to the Justice Department that their loved one did, in fact, serve as a first responder and sacrificed his or her life for this job.

Last fall, USA Today reported that of the more than 900 cases they reviewed, the average wait for a decision by the program about compensation was more than 1 year. For some families, it was 2 years, and for some, the wait was 3 years. This even includes our first responders who worked at Ground Zero. Think about the unnecessary stress these delays have placed on our families who lost loved ones.

We know we must fix this program. We must fix this program. These families of our fallen public safety officers are not getting the compensation they deserve, that their loved ones have earned, in the timely manner they need.

This bill—Senator GRASSLEY's and mine—is a bipartisan bill that fixes this problem. The Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act would make this compensation program more transparent and more efficient, and it would make sure it works.

The bill would require the program to report publicly the status of every claim so that families can know if and why their compensation is being delayed. It would give weight to the findings and records of Federal agencies, State agencies, and local agencies about the cause of the public safety officer's death so that families don't have to reproduce records that already exist. And this bill would reduce the wait for our families to receive the compensation they deserve and desperately need.

I thank my colleague Senator GRASSLEY for his strong leadership and his amazing advocacy, and I urge all my colleagues here to support this bill. Let's fix the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. Let's take care of these families—the families of our pub-

lic safety officers—and let's do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New York for working together on this very important issue to get justice for some of our police officers and their families who have been burdened by too much red-tape. She and I have worked together on so many things, and I appreciate this one as well.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation designating this week as National Police Week. As part of that tradition, tens of thousands of law enforcement officers have gathered in our Nation's Capital to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to the service of this Nation.

I rise to join these officers in thanking the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our communities. We must never take their sacrifice for granted, and we need to appreciate that their surviving families have suffered real loss.

In recognition of this truth, Congress passed the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act in 1976. The goal of the law was to provide death benefits to survivors of officers who die in the line of duty. Over the years, the law has been amended to provide disability and education benefits and to expand the pool of officers who are eligible for these benefits.

Looking at the 40-year history of this law, the overall intent of Congress is very clear: Families of fallen officers deserve a fair and timely consideration of their application for these benefits, and the word "timely" is what isn't being carried out right now.

If we were in these officers' shoes, we would like to see an answer—either yes or no—not years of limbo and lingering uncertainty. Unfortunately, that is precisely what too many families have had to endure since at least 2003, all because bureaucrats in the Justice Department failed to do their job and do it on time.

Three weeks ago, I chaired a Judiciary Committee hearing to examine this problem on the lack of timeliness. What we found was troubling. The Justice Department has a goal of processing these claims within 1 year of filing. However, according to the most recent data, the Justice Department is failing to meet its own 1-year deadline in 61 percent of the 693 pending death benefit claims. Those are 423 families who have been waiting for more than 1 year. That rate is unacceptable for a program designed to support families of fallen officers.

Somehow, the delays have gone from bad to worse. The failure rate was 27 percent for claims that were filed between 2008 and 2013. So it is very difficult to understand how that could happen.

For 13 years and counting, since 2003, the delays have persisted despite a 2004