

served and law enforcement gets the support needed to conduct their investigation.

It is not enough to simply offer help after these heinous attacks take place. Congress must do more to prevent these acts of terrorism altogether. There are things we can do, and some of them are really easy. Right now, as we speak, there is a loophole in our law that allows potential FBI terror suspects to legally purchase guns and explosives. Stop and think about that for just a moment. A person with suspected ties to terrorism can walk into a store now and buy all of the explosives, all the guns, and all the ammunition they want.

In Nevada, a man who has been so charitable has set up a camp for children every summer. It costs him lots of money. It is in a beautiful part of the mountain area right outside of Las Vegas. We have, within 10 minutes of Las Vegas, a 12,000-foot mountain. At the foot of those mountains, he has a beautiful camp.

Here is what they are doing now. You can go to a gun store in Las Vegas, and you can buy explosives. They put them up in the trees. We don't have that many trees in Nevada. They will put explosives up in a tree, and they shoot at it, and it blows up. It blows up the tree and anything around it. That is for sport.

Anyone can walk into a gun store and buy explosives. It doesn't matter who it is. You can also be a terrorist and do the same thing. Again, I ask everyone to think about that. A person with suspected ties to terrorism can walk into a store now and buy all of the explosives they want. They can buy all the guns they want.

The so-called terror gap is outrageous and terribly reckless. How can something like this go unaddressed in modern-day America?

Democrats have tried repeatedly for the past year to close that loophole, but we have been prevented from doing that by the Republicans. We can argue from now on about whether this bill could have prevented this weekend's attacks, but one thing is for sure: It could prevent the next attack.

But we know this loophole shouldn't exist. We know terror suspects shouldn't be given a free pass to buy all the guns and all the explosives they want, and we know the American people want this loophole closed. Eighty-five percent of the people in Indiana, in Nevada, in Kentucky—85 percent of the people in America—support legislation keeping explosives and guns out of the hands of suspected terrorists. If you can't fly, why should you be able to buy a gun? If you can't fly, why should you be able to buy explosives? The only reason the FBI terror suspects are allowed to buy guns and explosives is simply because of Republican opposition. That is the reason.

This state of affairs defies belief. It is hard to believe that in America today an FBI terror suspect who cannot fly

on an airplane can walk into a gun store in Las Vegas, New York City, or anyplace and legally purchase explosives and assault weapons. But it is true because Republicans refuse to close the terror gap loophole.

In the aftermath of these attacks, our constituents are looking for us to help. They want to feel safe. They want to be safe. We can help provide that safety by closing the terror loophole, but Democrats can't do it alone. We need help from the Republicans.

Mr. President, I see no one seeking recognition, so I ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 516, H.R. 5325, a bill making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we have a bit of good news because earlier today the CDC, or the Centers for Disease Control, announced that it had lifted its travel advisory to not go into a section north of downtown Miami called Wynwood. It is the neighborhood where the first locally transmitted Zika virus was found. So the fact that they said today that this area is no longer considered an area of active transmission is certainly good news, not only for those who live there but for those businesses that are dependent on those who are planning to visit there. That is just one area of Florida.

There are now 835 active cases of Zika-infected people in the State of Florida. If you compare that to the number for the total United States, talking about infections, in 49 of the 50 States, it is 3,132. If you add our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico and the territories, fellow American citizens, 17,315 are infected with the Zika virus. In Florida, 86 pregnant women are infected with the Zika virus. The total in the Nation is 731. In Puerto Rico—pri-

marily there, although bringing in all the territories, it is 1,156. Combining Puerto Rico, the territories, and the United States, we are talking about close to 2,000 pregnant women infected with the Zika virus.

We know that the CDC has said that there is anywhere from a 1-percent to 12-percent chance—if a woman is infected in the first trimester of pregnancy, there is a 1- to 12-percent chance that her baby will be born with defects. If you do the math on the nearly 2,000 pregnant women, we are talking about a substantial number of birth defects, including the possibility of what we have heard about and seen—microcephaly, babies with a deformed brain and shrunken head. In Puerto Rico they already had one live birth of microcephaly and they had one who did not live after birth.

We can expect to see huge numbers coming on down the line. That is all the more reason for us—since we started our request for funding last spring—to get at this by doing a Zika vaccine. It is now ready to go into the FDA first trials. A vaccine is at least 2 years away, but we have to get started, and that costs money.

The administration has been robbing Peter to pay Paul, finding every little pot of money that it can borrow from since last spring in order to try to fund the preventive measures of a vaccine, mosquito control, and all the attendant health expenditures through our health care centers that are sponsored and paid for by the government, and particularly for the very poor. As a matter of fact, the government raided the Ebola fund of \$576 million to advance it to Zika. Well, we need to pay back all of those funds that were raided, and that is incumbent upon us now here at the last minute before we adjourn to go home to campaign before the election. You know, those words are suddenly similar to the words we used in early July, trying to get that done before the summer recess for the political conventions. Yet we did not.

The good news is that it looks as though there is now an agreement on Zika. As a result, we can come up with a funding bill to keep the government open until we can pass a permanent funding bill for this fiscal year starting October 1. We will pass a temporary one until sometime in early December. That will give us a chance to try to do the permanent one. In the meantime, the government has to stay open. We have to fund the functions of government, including national security and the U.S. Department of Defense.

So one would think that this bill would be all done, but, unrelated to Zika, there are other issues that are threatening the funding bill. At the end of the day, we will get it done. Some of the issues are over as arcane a subject as who is going to administer the issuance of domain names on the Internet. There seems to be some controversy over that. As a result, we are here at the last minute, at the last

hour, having to act on a funding bill, and now we have issues that are now all wound around the axle again.

I want to say very positively that I appreciate the progress that is being made on the Zika funding. It is not as if we haven't tried this before. Last May we had a bill that passed in a bipartisan fashion for \$1.1 billion that did not have the attached political riders. It passed in the Senate by 89 votes out of 100 Senators. Then, of course, the bill in the House of Representatives got all wound up with all kinds of political messaging. I want to state very positively that I am very happy that it seems as if those issues have been put aside and there has been an agreement reached. Now let's get through the rest of this on the funding bill and go ahead and execute our responsibilities that we have to the United States of America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

TRIBUTE TO EMOGENE STEGALL

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to praise the work of a local elected official in Florida who has admirably served as supervisor of elections in Lake County, FL. This is an elected position in which she has now served for 44 years, and she is going to retire from her position as the chief elections officer after this upcoming election in November. That is an incredible tenure of public service, and Emogene Stegall should be commended for being the longtime supervisor of elections.

"Emogene" is a name that is almost synonymous with "Lake County" because she has been an elected official for nearly half a century. What is so special about her is not only how many years she has held the office but how she embodied the details and the ideals of public service.

Since she was first elected in 1972, a lot has changed about the way elections are conducted, but through all of those decades, the same fundamental principles have guided Emogene Stegall's work: a dedication to treating all voters fairly without any regard for party affiliation and safeguarding taxpayer dollars—no partisan politics, no attention-grabbing headlines, just humble public service.

Before being elected supervisor, Emogene had already worked 14 years as the supervisor's deputy, starting in 1958. At that time there were only about 17,000 registered voters in Lake County and a handful of voting machines. Most of it was done by paper ballot. Her office used typewriters and carbon paper to function, and voting results were announced on the radio.

Fast-forward to today. Emogene has been reelected many times over since winning her first election in 1972, and the number of registered voters in the county has gone from 17,000 to over 200,000. Now the supervisor's office is filled with computers, and computer programs tally the votes on election day before publishing them on the

Internet so the voters receive almost instant results.

Even with all these changes, Emogene is still there, opening her office to constituents of all political stripes and working long hours to make sure election day runs smoothly and that all citizens in Lake County can exercise their constitutional right to vote. Her principled approach to fulfilling her responsibilities explains why she has continued to be reelected to her post time and time again even though she is a registered Democrat in a county that shifted to Republican control long ago.

The changes Emogene has witnessed run deeper than the office equipment and the party politics. When she was first elected, Lake County, along with much of the South of the United States, was still suffering from the scourge of Jim Crowe. African Americans in particular were often denied the right to vote. Even after the civil rights legislation was passed in the 1960s, the country still needed public servants to implement the law without prejudice in order to usher in change and combat racism. Emogene's steadfast commitment to ensuring the people's right to vote helped achieve that transformation and in a way brings our Nation closer to realizing the ideal of equality that we have reached and have tried to reach since our founding.

It is also notable that Emogene Stegall served as the first woman elected official and community leader at a time when women's educational and professional opportunities were much more limited than today.

After so many decades of public service, Emogene will oversee her last election day this November. But her legacy for being a committed and tireless public servant will continue to be remembered. She has used her position to benefit the community she was elected to serve. She never was elected, nor used it, for herself or her own interests.

Emogene Stegall is an example for all of us in public service. So I am honored to share her story and acknowledge her accomplishments on this occasion today on the floor of the Senate as Emogene Stegall will conduct and is preparing for her last election as Supervisor of Elections.

What a great public service. What a great public servant whom we can honor today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

JUSTICE AGAINST SPONSORS OF TERRORISM ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the weekend, we were reminded once again of the threat that terrorism poses to our communities all across this coun-

try. I know we are all grateful the explosions that occurred in New Jersey and Manhattan and the knife attack in Minnesota did not hurt more people.

I am thankful for the authorities, the law enforcement officials, the emergency medical officials and others who have responded so heroically. I am grateful there has already been a suspect detained in the New York and New Jersey incident before he could attempt additional attacks.

This is just another reminder, as if we needed more reminders, of the importance of remaining vigilant to the threat of terrorism in the United States. Our values and our way of life seem to be under near constant attack, certainly under constant threat. We have a responsibility to do everything we can within our power to support and protect those affected by the evil of terrorism within our borders.

Last week, the Senate sent a piece of legislation, an important piece of legislation from my perspective, called the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act to President Obama for his signature. He has until Friday to act on it.

I want to clarify for my colleagues exactly what is contained in this legislation because I have heard from some stories that make me think they are being misled by some but also maybe there is just some confusion I can help clear up. This legislation, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, or sometimes called the 9/11 families bill, makes some narrow amendments to a longstanding Federal statute, the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, and the anti-terrorism act. What it does provide is for Americans to be able to seek recourse in a court of law from governments or people who sponsor terrorist attacks on American soil.

You would think that would not be particularly controversial. Put another way, this bill does not allow a lawsuit to proceed against a foreign nation unless they are alleged to have been behind a terror attack on American soil. As I said, this is pretty straightforward, which is why it passed the Senate and the House unanimously.

I want to be clear what the bill does and does not do. First of all, the legislation does not single out any particular country for some kind of unfair treatment. It stands for the simple proposition that Americans should have recourse against those involved in terrorist attacks on our homeland, just as they do against others who commit other wrongs.

I have had some of my colleagues say: Yes, but perception is reality. Well, misperception is not reality. The fact is, there is no country mentioned in the legislation, this extension of existing law. To the extent it singles out anybody, it only singles out countries, without naming any, that fund terrorists who commit terrorism on our soil.

Some have suggested this could hurt our relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in particular. This bill has nothing to do, on its face, with our

strong partnership with Saudi Arabia, which is based on mutual interests. The reality is, the nuclear deal struck by President Obama involving the country of Iran has done far more to damage our relationship with our allies in the Middle East, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It has caused many of our allies, not just the Saudis but others in the Middle East, to question whether we are a reliable ally in the areas where we do share a common interest.

We know many of our Gulf State allies, including the Saudis, believe the President has not done enough to achieve his own stated goal of defeating the terrorist army of ISIS, which threatens Saudi Arabia from Iraq, just across its northern border. Quite to the contrary, we know President Obama ignored the advice of his own military advisers and unwisely withdrew all combat forces from Iraq in a precipitous way before that country was ready and able to defend itself, only to see ISIS rush in and fill the vacuum left after the departure of American leadership and ground forces.

The bottom line is that this legislation should not upset our relationships with any country with which we share common interests, including the Saudis. They should not take passage of this legislation as a reason to somehow question our commitment to an alliance based on shared values or shared interests.

This bill targets those who fund terrorist activity against us—plain and simple. I should also add that all this bill does is to give victims an opportunity to have their case heard in court. It doesn't decide the merits of the case. It simply gives them an avenue for justice.

Second, I want to debunk this idea that somehow the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act will suddenly result in lawsuits being filed against Americans by foreign governments. The reality is this already happens. We have an entire office at the Justice Department—the Office of Foreign Litigation—that defends the United States in foreign courts.

As its Web site explains, that litigation includes “litigation arising from U.S. agency or military activities in foreign countries,” which is one reason why, before we pulled out all of our troops from Iraq, President Obama and his administration should have done a better job pursuing a status of forces agreement with the country of Iraq. But because they did not negotiate that, they decided to pull out, and we have reaped the whirlwind as a result.

While likely a minority, there are cases, in fact, brought abroad that implicate our own overseas activity. For example, in 2010, CBS News reported on a case in Pakistan in which the CIA was sued for an alleged drone strike. This is a matter of public record that CBS News reported. The point is that today foreign governments allow suits against the United States from time to

time, and they are defended based on international law and based on the merits of the case. That is because of their legal systems and domestic politics. Our laws are simply not consulted as a determining factor. Why would a foreign country apply American law or precedent or procedure?

But let me also make clear: The Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act makes only modest changes to current foreign sovereign immunity laws—laws that have already been passed by the U.S. Congress—and it has been written in a narrow manner to prevent such suits should any reciprocal law be passed.

Finally, I remind my colleagues that this legislation was crafted and created through consensus. Before the Senate passed it several months ago, my colleagues and I took great care to address concerns from Members on both sides of the aisle, as you would expect. Working with other Members, we made changes to the legislation they requested so we could keep support for this legislation and support for the families of victims strong. It then unanimously passed the Senate in May.

Over in the House, it passed without dissent. I have to say that it is hard to find any piece of legislation that can pass unanimously in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. It just doesn't happen very often.

But even with so much bipartisan, bicameral support, President Obama still says he intends to veto the legislation. As I have said before, that is his prerogative, but I hope he does so soon so that Congress has the opportunity to vote to override his veto. Once he does veto it, I hope Congress will quickly act.

I have been reminded of a passage in Henry Kissinger's book called “World Order,” where he talks about how the West, in particular, often views the world as an orderly rules-based system. Of course, the problem with that is reality. The world does not all acknowledge a rules-based system, no matter who imagines it. Other countries will take actions based on what they perceive to advance their own interests, not because they just want to follow a certain set of rules that somebody else wrote up. That will remain true for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia even after the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act becomes law. That is why our relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will continue, because they have been fighting terrorism on their own soil and we know that we share other interests as well.

But at the end of the day, we need to do what is right for the American people, just as other countries would do right for their own citizens. We should not change our domestic laws because of our concerns about other countries perhaps being offended or because they have other interests other than what we are trying to vindicate here, which are the rights of the families who lost loved ones on 9/11 due to a terrorist at-

tack on American soil. They should have the opportunity to make their case if they can, and nothing in this judges the merits of the case or makes any conclusion about whether they will be successful or not. But, certainly, they represent part of the American people who we work for, and they are entitled to get access to the courts for the purpose of making the case if they can.

This bill sends a clear signal to every country that the United States is not afraid to stand and ensure that our countrymen and countrywomen have the ability to pursue justice here in our courts. That is nonnegotiable.

I hope the President will act quickly. The President can string this out into next week if he wants, but he has already said he is going to veto it. So why put the families through any more delay, anguish, and uncertainty? The President should go ahead and veto the legislation. Then the Senate and the House of Representatives should take up a veto override vote. I am confident of what the outcome of that would be, based on the unanimous consent to the bill in the Senate and the unanimous vote in the House of Representatives.

Madam President, I don't see any other Senator interested in speaking.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 5985

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5985; further, that there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motion on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325 ripen at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, September 20.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## RECOGNIZING THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, I rise to recognize the U.S. Air Force on the occasion of its 69th birthday.

On September 18, 1947, President Truman signed the National Security Act, which established the U.S. Air Force as an independent service equal to the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy. The mission of the U.S. Air Force is to fly, fight, and win in airspace and cyberspace, and Colorado is proud to call itself home to units that play a vital role in executing all aspects of the Air Force mission.

Although it is the youngest of the armed services, the Air Force has accomplished a tremendous amount—a tremendous amount—in those 69 years. With a combined force strength of more than 660,000 Active, Reserve, National Guard, and civilian personnel within the U.S. Air Force, it is a force to be reckoned with. The U.S. Air Force's ability to maintain air superiority is evidenced by the fact that the last time an American ground troop was killed by ordnance delivered from an enemy aircraft was in 1953.

On any given day, there are more than 21,000 Air Force personnel deployed to 179 worldwide locations, 16,000 airmen deployed to the CENTCOM area of operations, and more than 1,000 airmen working directly with partner nations. While American airmen serve all over the world, there are thousands of airmen in my State of Colorado protecting our Nation's interests.

Colorado is home to five major Air Force installations that include Buckley Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, Peterson Air Force Base, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, and the United States Air Force Academy.

Buckley Air Force Base is home to the 460th Space Wing and has air operations, space-based missile warning capabilities, space surveillance operations, space communications operations, and support functions. If North Korea, Iran, or any adversary fires a missile at the U.S. homeland, Buckley would be the first to see it. Buckley is also one of 18 bases nationwide being considered by the Air Force to host the next-generation F-35 jet, and it is my firm belief it fully merits that designation as well.

Peterson Air Force Base, named after 1st Lt. Edward J. Peterson, a Colorado native, has been in operation since 1926. Over its 90-plus years, Peterson Air Force Base has served a variety of operational and training missions and is currently home to the 21st Space Wing and Air Force Space Command as well. Peterson is also home to the U.S. Northern Command—NORTHCOM—and the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD. NORAD-NORTHCOM is responsible for protecting the U.S. homeland from the myriad of threats we face in today's complex global security environment. On a day like today, when we reflect on what happened in Minnesota, when we

reflect on what happened in New Jersey, and when we reflect on what happened in New York, we know that efforts to protect our homeland are critically important.

In a recent letter to the President, several colleagues and I expressed grave concerns about the rapid advancement of North Korea's nuclear ballistic missile program. That regime represents a grave threat to global peace and stability and is a direct threat to the U.S. homeland—and that is what our bases in Colorado are responsible for. While we in Congress urge the President to take actions to counter the North Korean threat, the American people rely on the hard-working men and women at NORAD-NORTHCOM to protect us from this rogue regime.

Just down the road from Peterson Air Force Base is Schriever Air Force Base, which is home to the 50th Space Wing of the Air Force Space Command. Schriever provides command and control for over 170 Department of Defense warning, navigational, and communications satellites. The global positioning satellite, or GPS, is operated by the 2nd Space Operations Squadron at Schriever. If you successfully use your Google Maps today, it is because of the good work by the satellite operators at Schriever.

Schriever is home to the Joint Interagency Space Operations Center, or JICSpOC. Established in 2015, the JICSpOC consolidates efforts between the DOD, U.S. Strategic Command, and the intelligence community to create unity of effort and facilitate U.S. information-sharing across the national security space enterprise. JICSpOC will enhance U.S. space operations, contribute to operational command and control within the Department of Defense, and improve the Nation's ability to protect and defend critical infrastructure in an increasingly contested space environment.

Since 1966, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force, stationed in Colorado Springs, has been a synergistic hub for tracking security threats worldwide and serves as an essential component to the defense of North America and global security. Cheyenne Mountain is an engineering marvel that provides an electromagnetic pulse-hardened facility to protect our Nation's most vital interests. Many of the people around the country may know Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station as the site of Matthew Broderick in the movie "WarGames."

Last but not least of the major Air Force installations in Colorado is the U.S. Air Force Academy. Since the 1955 swearing-in of its first class of cadets, the Air Force Academy has been developing leaders of character to lead the world's best Air Force. The Air Force Academy educates, trains, and inspires men and women to become officers of character, motivated to lead the U.S. Air Force in service to our Nation.

In addition to celebrating the Air Force's 69th birthday, I would also like

to recognize that this year, 2016, is the 40th anniversary of women cadets enrolling in the U.S. Air Force Academy. Just as the Air Force leads the way as the preeminent global air power, the Air Force Academy has been leading the way with the integration of women cadets into the Cadet Wing.

In 1972, the Air Force Academy issued Operational Plan 36-72, which laid the groundwork for the arrival of its first 156 female cadets in the summer of 1976. In the proceeding 40 years, women cadets and graduates have made extraordinary contributions to both the academy and to the Air Force. These contributions are exemplified by women such as Michelle Johnson, who in 1980 became the first woman cadet wing commander, which is the highest ranking cadet in the academy, and then in 1981 she became the first woman cadet to become a Rhodes scholar. In 2013, Lt. Gen. Michelle Johnson became the first female superintendent of any military service academy when she became the superintendent of the U.S. Air Force Academy. Heather Wilson was the first female veteran to serve in Congress. Lt. Gen. Susan J. Helms was the first woman graduate of the Air Force Academy to go into space. Lieutenant Roslyn Schulte became the first female graduate killed by enemy action in 2009. These women and countless others are why the State of Colorado is proud, honored, and humbled to host the U.S. Air Force Academy.

On behalf of all Coloradans and a grateful nation, I wish the U.S. Air Force a happy 69th birthday. Aim high, fly, fight, and win.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold.

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPIRING AUTHORITIES ACT OF 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 5985, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5985) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.