

countless heartbreaking stories from Illinois coal miners and their families about the fear and uncertainty they were facing if they lose their health benefits. While this bill does not provide relief for the miners' failing pension fund, they can find comfort in knowing they will have health care for life.

As vice chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I am particularly proud of the bipartisan work that was done in the subcommittee to provide critical equipment and training for our troops, as well as funds to continue the fight against terrorist threats like ISIL. I want to thank Chairman THAD COCHRAN and his staff for working with my staff and me on a bipartisan basis to finalize this section of the bill.

The bill provides a pay raise for military and civilian personnel, including those in Illinois. It continues the subcommittee's track record of providing 5 percent real growth in lifesaving medical research and makes critical boosts in broader science and technology research.

It also provides important defense funding with particular impact in Illinois. It supports well-paying manufacturing jobs by adding \$110 million to extend the Humvee production line at Rock Island Arsenal and \$979 million to extend the F-18 production line in St. Louis for downstate Illinois. It also provides \$140 million to stabilize rates at all three Army arsenals. Finally, it adds \$9.9 million not requested in the budget to ensure National Guard cyber protection teams in Illinois and across the country are fully funded.

The omnibus bill does not include any funding for a wall on our southern border. Mexico will not pay for a border wall as the President promised during last year's campaign, and it is absurd to suggest that the American people should now be stuck with the bill. Texas Republican Congressman WILL HURD, whose district covers 800 miles of the southwest border, has described the wall as "the most expensive and least effective way to secure the border." Senate Democrats on the Homeland Security Committee estimate this wall will cost nearly \$70 billion to build and \$150 million a year to maintain. Even the Trump administration acknowledges the wall will cost \$21.6 billion, not including maintenance.

While the Trump administration demanded \$3 billion in additional funding for immigration enforcement, congressional Democrats succeeded in cutting this amount in half. I am pleased that the omnibus does not include any funding for President Trump's plan to triple the number of immigration agents. This unnecessary and prohibitively expensive goal would help the administration target 8 million undocumented immigrants who are now priorities for deportation under Trump administration policy. This ignores the reality that the vast majority of undocumented immigrants in our country are

law-abiding individuals who make important economic contributions and have deep roots in our country.

Democrats also successfully resisted a rider that would have deprived communities around the country—including Chicago in my home State of Illinois—of billions of dollars in critical Federal funding if they refuse to take part in the Trump administration's mass deportation scheme.

The bill also includes important new oversight measures for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, detention operations. While some additional detention funding may have been needed to address the surge in border crossings at the end of 2016, it appears that a reduction in ICE's detention budget will be appropriate in fiscal year 2018, given the sharp decline in border crossings this year.

I am disappointed that the bill includes a problematic rider that circumvents regular legislative order to permit the Trump administration to potentially double the number of foreign guest workers who could be admitted to the United States under the H-2B visa program without needed safeguards. I have long advocated for reform of the H-2B program, which in its current form harms both American and foreign workers. We should not increase the size of the H-2B program unless and until the program is reformed to protect workers from exploitation. I am particularly concerned that this rider gives the Trump administration the authority to determine how many additional H-2B visas will be issued since President Trump owns companies that have sought to import more than 900 H-2B guest workers, including 64 in fiscal year 2017 alone, while turning away hundreds of American workers. I will be closely monitoring the administration's implementation of this provision, which only permits additional visas to be issued if the Secretary of Homeland Security, after consultation with the Secretary of Labor, determines that the needs of American businesses cannot be met by qualified American workers.

While not perfect, this bill exemplifies what Congress can do if it puts politics aside to work together and come to a bipartisan consensus for the good of the American people. I support the passage of this Omnibus appropriations bill. While we now face a much shortened timeline to complete the appropriations process for the next fiscal year, I am hopeful that the bipartisan cooperation exemplified by this bill will continue.●

GOVERNMENT FUNDING LEGISLATION

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, while not perfect, this bill includes important provisions that will benefit Florida, strengthen our national security, increase resources for our national defense and the fight against ISIS, and give our military men and women the largest pay raise in 6 years.

Given the threats our Nation faces from the likes of North Korea and radical Islamic terrorists, a government shutdown would send exactly the wrong message to the world at a time when it is counting on America to lead.

I am pleased to see this bill funds the Department of Defense to levels authorized by Congress and includes increases for ship building, operations and maintenance, and military readiness. It also incorporates the fiscal year 2017 Intelligence Authorization Act, IAA, that provides essential guidance and authorities for our intelligence community. This year's IAA requires the President to establish an interagency committee to counter Russia's active measures against the U.S., maintains resources for our intelligence community's counterterrorism capabilities, and requires the Director of National Intelligence to complete declassification reviews of terrorist activities of each individual who has been transferred or released from the U.S. detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

This bill will ensure Florida can continue combatting the Zika virus and the opioid epidemic that is devastating so many families in our communities. I am committed to continuing to fight against Zika and have begun working with the Senate Appropriations Committee to establish an emergency health fund to provide funds for infectious outbreaks, like Zika.

This appropriations bill will also support Everglades restoration and improvements to the Herbert Hoover Dike and our State's ports. Florida's citrus growers will get the help they need to counter the terrible greening that is hurting their crops.

The bill also includes my legislation to protect public housing residents and reform HUD's broken inspection process. I saw firsthand the appalling conditions at Eureka Gardens in Jacksonville, Windsor Cove Apartments in Orlando, and Stonybrook Apartments in Riviera Beach, so I am glad this bill will help ensure the people at these properties finally see real changes for the better.

These provisions make the bill worthy of my support, but as I have said before, we cannot continue to run our country in this way, with one temporary bill after another. Republicans and Democrats in Congress must work together with the Trump administration to restore fiscal sanity, set a long-term budget, and address our Nation's unsustainable and growing debt.

TURKEY

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, today I wish to express my concerns about the outcome of the April 16 constitutional referendum in Turkey, when more than 50 million Turkish citizens voted on constitutional amendments to convert Turkey's parliamentary government into a Presidential system.

Turkey is a longstanding friend of the United States and a NATO ally.

Our bilateral partnership dates back to the Cold War when Turkey served as an important bulwark against the creeping influence of the Soviet Union. Time has not diminished Turkey's geostrategic importance. Today Ankara finds itself at the intersection of several critical challenges: the instability in Syria and Iraq, the threat of ISIS and other extremist groups, and the refugee crisis spawned by this regional upheaval.

The United States relies on Turkey and other regional partners to help coordinate and strengthen our collective response. I was deeply troubled when renegade military units attempted to overthrow Turkey's democratically elected government last July. Turkey's strength is rooted in the democratic legitimacy of its government—a pillar of stability targeted by the reckless and criminal coup attempt.

As chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, or U.S. Helsinki Commission, I take very seriously the political commitments made by the 57 participating states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE. These commitments, held by both the United States and Turkey, represent the foundation of security and cooperation in the OSCE region. They include an indispensable focus on human rights, rule of law, and democratic institutions.

In the OSCE's founding document, the Helsinki Final Act, participating states affirm "the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms" and consider respect for these to be an "essential factor" for international peace and security. This vision is consistent with long-established U.S. foreign policy promoting human rights and democracy as cornerstones of a safer, more stable international order.

With these principles in mind, the United States must pay urgent attention to the current situation in Turkey and the danger it poses to Turkish and regional stability. Eroding respect for fundamental freedoms, rule of law, and democratic institutions in Turkey has proceeded at an alarming pace. The government's planned "executive presidency" will further decrease government accountability.

Since the attempted coup more than 9 months ago, Turkey has operated under a state of emergency that gives the government sweeping authority to curtail rights and silence opponents. Certain extraordinary measures may have been justified in the immediate aftermath to restore order, investigate events, and bring perpetrators to justice, but the government's actions have stretched far beyond these legitimate aims. The ongoing purge has touched every institution of government, sector of society, corner of the country, and shade of opposition—military or civilian, Turk or Kurd, religious or secular, nationalist or leftist, political or non-political.

An atmosphere of fear and uncertainty has settled over Turkish society

as more than 100,000 people have been detained or arrested. Tens of thousands have been fired from their jobs, had their professional licenses revoked, and had their names released on public lists without any recognizable due process. The government removed and replaced thousands of judges and prosecutors within hours of the coup's defeat, compromising the independence of the judiciary at a moment when an impartial justice system had become more important than ever.

The government has also closed more than 150 media outlets. Upwards of 80 journalists are behind bars. The offices of the country's oldest newspaper were raided, and the paper's editor-in-chief and other staff were arrested. The media environment was already under extraordinary pressure before the coup. Last spring, the government seized control of the country's highest circulation paper. Self-censorship is now widely practiced to avoid provoking the government's ire.

Additionally, state of emergency decrees have given regional governors the ability to curtail freedom of assembly rights, harming the ability of civil society organizations to organize rallies concerning the referendum. Since July, the government has detained more than a dozen opposition parliamentarians. Many more continue to face criminal charges for political statements they made before the coup attempt.

It is difficult to overstate the chilling effect these measures have had on political debate in Turkey; yet these are the circumstances under which Turks voted on April 16. These major constitutional changes passed with a slim majority of 51 percent. The OSCE's international observation mission stated in its preliminary conclusions that the vote "took place on an unlevel playing field" and that "fundamental freedoms essential to a genuinely democratic process were curtailed."

Under the revised constitution, the once largely ceremonial position of President will convert into an "executive presidency" and the position of Prime Minister will be abolished. The President will be elected along with the national assembly every 5 years and has the ability to dissolve the assembly and call new elections at will. The President will also appoint a larger proportion—nearly half—of the country's supreme judicial council. In a report on these new constitutional provisions, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe concluded that the amendments are a "step backwards" and pose "dangers of degeneration . . . towards an authoritarian and personal regime."

Turkey is undergoing a disturbing transformation, and I am concerned these changes could undermine the strength of our partnership. President Erdogan's government has dramatically repressed dissent, purged opponents from every sector of government

and society, and is now poised to consolidate power further under his self-described "executive presidency."

In the short term, the Turkish Government should act swiftly and transparently to investigate credible claims of voting irregularities in the referendum, as well as the legality of a surprise electoral board decision to admit an unknown number of ballots that should be deemed invalid under existing rules. Public trust in the outcome of such a consequential vote is of utmost importance. Sadly, until now, the government has responded to these challenges with dismissiveness and suppression. In the past week, dozens of activists have been detained for participating in protests against the election results.

Furthermore, the government should lift the state of emergency, stop all forms of repression against the free press, release all imprisoned journalists and political activists, and urgently restore public confidence in the judiciary. Only then can it credibly and independently adjudicate the tens of thousands of cases caught up in the government's months-long dragnet operations.

A country where disagreements are suppressed rather than debated is less secure. A country where institutions are subordinated to personalities is less stable. A country where criticism is conflated with sedition is less democratic. Unless President Erdogan moves urgently to reverse these trends, I fear our partnership will inevitably become more transactional and less strategic. It will become more difficult to justify long-term investment in our relationship with Turkey if the future of the country becomes synonymous with the fortunes of one party or one individual.

The United States and Turkey need a solid foundation for enduring cooperation to tackle regional instability, terrorism, migration, and other challenges. The future of this partnership is difficult to imagine in the midst of a prolonged state of emergency, wide-scale purges, and weakened democratic institutions.

WASTE MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CAREER DAY

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would like to recognize Thursday, May 4, as Waste Management National Career Day and share with you the importance of hiring and promoting women in non-traditional female positions as drivers and technicians. I believe it is important that we support and encourage women to pursue these career opportunities that have been historically populated by men.

Women comprise only 2 percent of current drivers and technicians. Waste Management National Career Day will provide an opportunity to share stories of women who have held these positions successfully and moved up into management.