

received more than \$330 million in EPA grants.

The scientists who receive vast sums of money from the very agencies they are advising certainly constitute a conflict of interest and, at a minimum, give an appearance of a lack of impartiality. As such, I welcome the news that Administrator Pruitt will be seeking to limit this worrisome practice.

I have laid out only a few of the many great things the EPA is doing right now and what Administrator Pruitt is doing. I got to know him a long time ago. In fact, I flew him around the State in my airplane back when he ran for the first statewide office. He is a guy who is a tiger and who is doing the right thing. I am very proud of what they are doing.

After this morning, the EPA is now advancing five EPA nominees for the EPA general counsel and for the Offices of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Air and Radiation, Water, and Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. Each of these nominees is needed for the issues I have talked about and for the many others that are on the Agency's plate.

Scott Pruitt has been working on so much of the President's conservative agenda alone, and he needs help to run these policies. I call on my colleagues and the leadership to prioritize these nominations. You cannot get this stuff done unless you have help. We have never seen a time when we have gotten this far into an administration and have had this large of a number of people who have not been confirmed.

Mr. President, I do want to mention one other thing because, for some reason, the Democrats have decided they are going to run out the whole 30 hours on the confirmation of a guy named Scott Palk. I have to say, Scott Palk has been doing a great job. In fact, on the vote that just took place on him, he received 79 votes in the U.S. Senate. Yet, just to be obstructionists, they are still demanding 30 hours.

Scott Palk is an experienced prosecutor with a decade of service. He was the assistant district attorney for Cleveland County in my State of Oklahoma and spent 9 years as an assistant U.S. attorney in the criminal division of the Western District of Oklahoma. He has a reputation for honesty, integrity, and a commitment to fairly applying the law. Mr. Palk will serve Oklahoma with distinction as a principled jurist who will uphold the Constitution.

He is going to be confirmed. We know he is going to be confirmed because he already received 79 votes. There is no reason to delay it, other than to hold people here and be obstructionists. I would urge my friends on the other side of the aisle to go ahead and confirm the guy. He is going to do a great job.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have remarks that I wish to make, but I will yield at this time in order for the Republican leader to be recognized after which I will seek recognition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Illinois.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 250, on the motion to invoke cloture on Scott L. Palk, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma. Had I been present, I would have voted nay. •

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss the vote in the Senate last night to overturn the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's rule regarding forced arbitration that would protect consumers and make sure they get their day in court when financial institutions violate the law. The floor schedule did not allow me to give these remarks before the vote, so I am giving them today. This rule would have restored the ability of servicemembers, veterans, and other consumers to join together and seek relief through class action lawsuits. I opposed this rule repeal.

In 2010, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act included a provision instructing the CFPB to study mandatory arbitration and write a rule based on what they found. After several years of careful study, the CFPB released a 728-page report in 2015. This year, the CFPB finalized its arbitration rule mandating that consumer financial product contracts no longer include language barring class actions.

This rule was an important step forward in protecting consumers from the fine print arbitration clauses included in all sorts of contracts, including con-

tracts for credit cards, debit cards, prepaid bank cards, payday loans, and even cell phones. The 2015 CFPB report found that 93 percent of consumers whose credit cards included forced arbitration clauses did not know that they could not sue their credit card companies.

The CFPB rule enhanced protections for consumers in the military. That is why the American Legion, the Nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, which represents 2 million veterans, and the Military Coalition, which represents 5.5 million current and former servicemembers and their families, supported the protections provided under this rule.

I have cosponsored the Military Consumer Protection Act led by Senator REED, which would put the enforcement of the Servicemember Civil Relief Act under the CFPB so that the agency responsible for protecting servicemembers and their families is also able to enforce those protections.

Our servicemembers and veterans face challenges that are different from civilian consumers, especially during deployment. We need to make sure that they have all the protections they earn through their service. That is why I voted against H.J. Res. 111, the resolution of disapproval with respect to the CFPB arbitration rule, and I will continue to fight for our servicemembers, veterans, and consumers to get the protections they deserve.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD LINCOLN

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, throughout our Nation's history, young Americans have left the comfort and security of home in order to preserve our freedom and to extend the blessings of freedom to others. We set aside Veterans Day to express our gratitude.

One such veteran is Mr. Richard Lincoln of Wayne, ME. Although the story of his service in Italy during World War II is extraordinary, the virtues of courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty it demonstrates describe the character of American patriots in all places and at all times.

Now 91 years of age, Mr. Lincoln entered the U.S. Army in 1943 when he was just 17. He served with the legendary 88th Infantry Division, the first all-draftee division to serve in combat during the war. The 88th, known as the Fighting Blue Devils, proved that with rigorous training, able leadership, and unflagging determination, peace-loving Americans could stand up to a battle-hardened, militaristic enemy.

The 88th played a key role at the Battle of Anzio, the long, costly, and critically important amphibious landing on the Italian coast in January of 1944 that eventually led to the liberation of Rome. Mr. Lincoln served as a first scout, an extremely dangerous assignment in a forward position under constant fire, to locate enemy artillery positions. When the Allies liberated Rome on June 4, 1944, the all-draftee

88th was the first division to enter the city. It was Mr. Lincoln's 18th birthday. He later was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroism during that grueling campaign.

Victory came at a steep price. Between the Battle of Anzio and the German surrender in May of 1945, the Fighting Blue Devils spent 344 days in combat, with nearly 3,000 killed and more than 9,200 wounded.

After returning home, Mr. Lincoln raised a family, served his community, and never forgot his comrades. Until he suffered a stroke that hampered his mobility, he marched in 58 consecutive Memorial Day parades in his hometown. He never rode in a ceremonial car; he always marched.

In a speech to the Association of the U.S. Army on October 9, Defense Secretary James Mattis discussed the serious current threats to peace and security facing our Nation and the world. He told the story of Richard Lincoln to underscore his point that Americans are always willing and able to meet any challenge.

On October 14, family and friends gathered around Mr. Lincoln at the Maine Veterans' Home in Augusta, where he was presented with a personal letter from Secretary Mattis and a book on the Battle of Anzio, inscribed by both Secretary Mattis and former Defense Secretary William Cohen, Maine's former Senator.

Secretary Mattis's handwritten note to Mr. Lincoln includes these words: "You have the respect and affection of today's military. You and your brothers-in-arms are the pride of our country." I am honored to join Secretary Mattis and all grateful Americans in thanking Mr. Richard Lincoln and all of the men and women who serve our country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT OWEN LAWLER

• Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a living example of an American hero. MSG Owen Lawler has spent a lifetime in service, committing nearly three decades to defending U.S. national security at home and abroad.

Owen began his military service as an infantryman with the Iowa National Guard in 1990 and attended basic training at Fort Benning in Georgia. He entered Active service in 1993 and served in the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea, among other roles. In 1999, Owen was selected for special forces training, and in 2001 he was assigned 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Campbell in Kentucky. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, Owen participated in the invasion of Afghanistan and went on to serve four more tours in Iraq. In 2009, Owen was assigned to the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, where he served as a team sergeant for a special forces A-team. During his assignment as the

senior sergeant on a special forces detachment, Owen led his team on three tours to Afghanistan until being seriously wounded. In 2013, Owen was selected to serve as first sergeant for the headquarters company of the advanced skills training battalion at Fort Bragg. After an extremely admirable career serving his country, Owen will retire on October 30, 2017.

Owen received multiple awards during his 27 years with the Armed Forces, including the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and Korea Service Medal.

I ask my colleagues to join me as I proudly recognize the service and the sacrifice of MSG Owen Lawler, a dear friend, patriot, and American hero. •

REMEMBERING MARJORIE "MARGE" COUNSILMAN

• Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I am saddened to report the recent passing of Marjorie Counsilman, a treasured member of the Bloomington and Indiana University community. Mrs. Counsilman passed away on August 17, 2017, at the age of 93. I join her family and friends in mourning the passing of a beloved Hoosier, who was a dedicated mother and mentor to countless Indiana swimmers.

Mrs. Counsilman, or "Marge," as she was affectionately known by her colleagues, friends, and family, helped lead IU's swim team to a string of national and Big Ten titles. Marge was the wife of the late IU swimming coach, James "Doc" Counsilman, who led the Hoosiers to six consecutive NCAA championship victories, 23 Big Ten titles, 52 broken world records, 154 American records, and 106 individual NCAA records. In 2013, Marge and Doc were inaugurated into the Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame. Trophies aside, Marge was best known for her compassion towards her fellow coaches, customers at her family-owned restaurant in Bloomington, and the countless young swimmers she encountered over her decades of service. Her impression on the sport stretches well beyond the swimming lanes of Indiana. In 2004, she was honored by the International Swimming Hall of Fame as a "Grande Dame" for her leadership and influence.

In 2012, Mrs. Counsilman received the Bill Orwig Award, which recognizes exceptional contributions made by non-alumnus to IU's athletic program. Marge was constantly hosting team dinners, running swim meets, and keeping the official records. Throughout her husband Doc's 33 years at IU, Marge acted as a substitute mother for all the collegiate swimmers, either providing help with assignments or offering her famous lasagna and pecan pie.

In her memory, I would ask that we take a moment to reflect on her exemplary life and model of service. It is a privilege to honor Marjorie Counsilman, and I want to offer my condolences to her two daughters, Cathy Counsilman and Jill Morris, and to the many friends and family members she leaves behind. We will continue to honor her legacy and generous spirit. •

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:28 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 732. An act to limit donations made pursuant to settlement agreements to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2142. An act to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3101. An act to enhance cybersecurity information sharing and coordination at ports in the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3898. An act to impose secondary sanctions with respect to North Korea, strengthen international efforts to improve sanctions enforcement, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3972. An act to clarify that family offices and family clients are accredited investors, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 4:43 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill and joint resolution:

S. 504. An act to permanently authorize the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Travel Card Program.

H.J. Res. 111. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Arbitration Agreements".

The enrolled bill and joint resolution were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2266. An act making additional supplemental appropriations for disaster relief requirements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH). •

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 732. An act to limit donations made pursuant to settlement agreements to which