

all the other Gulf States, and then to the west coast of the United States, California all the way up to the State of Washington? It is more games.

People in Maryland, people in Massachusetts, people in the Carolinas are really upset. They ask: Why don't you eliminate the drilling that you are proposing off my State? What about out in California and Oregon and the State of Washington?

The administration and Secretary Zinke shouldn't be playing politics with an issue that is so important to all of our futures, especially so to Florida's future.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 371—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE VALUE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Mr. FLAKE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 371

Whereas the United States and Mexico share a nearly 2,000-mile long border that spans 4 States of the United States and 6 Mexican states;

Whereas for more than a century the United States and Mexico have maintained and fostered diplomatic ties that in 2017 allow for close cooperation and collaboration on efforts to strengthen security measures along the border, combat drug trafficking and illegal immigration, and facilitate cross-border trade;

Whereas the United States and Mexico have enjoyed economic ties for more than a century that culminated with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, which opened the Mexican market to the United States and Canada, creating the largest single free trade area in the world;

Whereas before the North American Free Trade Agreement was in effect, in 1993, United States trade in goods with Mexico was worth approximately \$82,000,000,000, and in 2016, United States trade in goods with Mexico was worth approximately \$525,000,000,000;

Whereas the United States has invested approximately \$1,800,000,000 in the Mérida Initiative, which focuses on the disruption of organized criminal groups, institutionalizing the rule of law, creating a 21st-century border, and building resilient communities;

Whereas cooperation between the United States and Mexico to fight drug trafficking and organized crime has grown significantly since the implementation of the Mérida Initiative and security cooperation has intensified since 2008 as trade between the United States and Mexico has boomed;

Whereas the United States intelligence community has worked effectively with its counterparts in Mexico to assist in the arrest of top criminals and drug traffickers, notably Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán who was extradited to the United States by Mexico in 2017;

Whereas Mexico has assisted the United States in extraditing criminals and fugitives of United States law captured in Mexico and such cooperation has increased substantially, with 12 extraditions in 2000 and 79 in 2016;

Whereas Mexico has been an important partner in stanching the flow of illegal migrants from Central America bound for the United States, by deporting hundreds of thousands from Mexico before they reach the United States border;

Whereas Mexico is second to only Canada in energy trade with the United States, provides crude oil to the United States, and imports rapidly growing volumes of both petroleum products and natural gas from the United States;

Whereas recent changes to Mexico's Constitution allow for further cooperation between the United States and Mexico to develop North American energy resources to the benefit of both countries;

Whereas, in 2015, the largest share of business and tourist travelers to the United States were from Mexico;

Whereas the number of United States citizens living in Mexico has steadily increased and exceeded 1,000,000 in 2017, making United States citizens in Mexico the world's largest United States expatriate community;

Whereas Mexico is an active participant in international affairs through its membership in the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and hosted the G-20 Leaders' Summit in 2012;

Whereas the United States and Mexico maintain a robust education exchange program called the United States-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research that strengthens student mobility between the United States and Mexico, aiming to send 100,000 Mexican students to the United States and 50,000 United States students to Mexico by 2018;

Whereas the Mexico-United States Entrepreneurship and Innovation Council is a bilateral initiative comprised of public and private sector representatives designing new initiatives alongside public policies to enhance regional competitiveness that strengthens the high-impact entrepreneurship system in North America;

Whereas the North American Free Trade Agreement was negotiated 25 years before the date of agreement to this resolution, prior to the advancement of new technologies and economies, such as the E-commerce sector, that are not addressed in the Agreement's chapters; and

Whereas approximately 80 percent of Mexico's exports go to the United States and 47 percent of Mexico's imports come from the United States, making the United States Mexico's most significant trading partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) values the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico and the many benefits derived from cooperation on security, combatting transnational crime, energy, economic engagement, and cultural engagement;

(2) recognizes that implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, and the resulting increase in trade, has provided a platform on which cooperation with Mexico on so many levels has been possible;

(3) recognizes that Mexico is an essential partner for the United States in regional security and encourages the President to continue to strengthen ties between the United States and Mexico to help advance United States regional interests;

(4) understands that the relationship between the United States and Mexico is strengthened by interaction between people from the United States and Mexico and economic interaction;

(5) encourages United States drug enforcement agencies to continue developing strong cooperative measures with Mexico since efforts to stem the drug trade into the United

States depend on Mexico's cooperation because, among other matters, more than 90 percent of heroin in the United States comes from Mexico;

(6) stresses the importance of the North American Free Trade Agreement to the United States economy and to the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico; and

(7) encourages the President to work toward modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement in a way that strengthens the Agreement so that it can continue to provide benefits to the peoples of the United States and Mexico and the important bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have 2 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "America's Water Infrastructure Needs and Challenges."

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Kurt D. Engelhardt, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Barry W. Ashe, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, Howard C. Nielson, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah, and James R. Sweeney II, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Summer Lockerbie and Stephen Popick, fellows in my office, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of this session of the Congress.

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

REQUIRING THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES TO CONDUCT A STUDY AND SUBMIT A REPORT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 282, S. 875.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 875) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study and submit a report on filing requirements under the Universal Service Fund programs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. STUDY AND REPORT ON FILING REQUIREMENTS UNDER UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAMS.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section—

(1) the term “Administrative Procedure Act” means subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) the term “Commission” means the Federal Communications Commission;

(3) the term “covered carrier” means an eligible telecommunications carrier or service provider that receives universal service support under sections 214(e) and 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 214(e) and 254) for the provision of service under a Universal Service Fund program; and

(4) the term “Universal Service Fund program” means each program of the Commission set forth under part 54 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto, including—

(A) the Connect America Fund set forth under subpart D of that part;

(B) the Lifeline program set forth under subpart E of that part;

(C) the E-Rate program set forth under subpart F of that part;

(D) the Rural Health Care program set forth under subpart G of that part;

(E) the Remote Areas Fund set forth under subpart J of that part;

(F) the Connect America Fund Broadband Loop Support program set forth under subpart K of that part;

(G) the Mobility Fund set forth under subpart L of that part; and

(H) the High Cost Loop Support for Rate-of-Return Carriers program set forth under subpart M of that part.

(b) **STUDY AND REPORT.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study and submit to the Commission, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report, which shall include—

(1) an analysis of the filing requirements for covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program, including any filings re-

quired by the Universal Service Administrative Company;

(2) an analysis of the financial impact of those filing requirements on covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program; and

(3) recommendations, if any, on how to consolidate redundant filing requirements for covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program.

(c) **RULEMAKING.**—

(1) **NEW OR ONGOING RULEMAKING.**—Except as provided in paragraph (3), not later than 60 days after the date on which the report is submitted under subsection (b), the Commission shall—

(A)(i) initiate a rulemaking to consolidate redundant filing requirements for covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program; and

(ii) incorporate into the rulemaking under clause (i), and as part of that rulemaking seek comment on, the recommendations described in subsection (b)(3), if any, except to the extent that doing so would violate the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act; or

(B) incorporate into an ongoing rulemaking relating to consolidating redundant filing requirements of the Commission, and as part of that rulemaking seek comment on, the recommendations described in subsection (b)(3), if any, except to the extent that doing so would violate the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act.

(2) **WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE.**—In a rulemaking in which the Commission is required under paragraph (1) to seek comment on the recommendations described in subsection (b)(3), if any, the Commission shall also seek comment on and consider whether the benefit of each recommendation is outweighed by any potential increased risk of waste, fraud, and abuse in the Universal Service Fund program affected by the recommendation.

(3) **PREVIOUS RULEMAKING.**—Paragraph (1) shall not apply if, on or before the date on which the report is submitted under subsection (b), the Commission completes a rulemaking to consolidate redundant filing requirements for covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 875), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**ORDERS FOR THURSDAY,
JANUARY 11, 2018**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Thursday, January 11; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Brown nomination.

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

**ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:42 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 11, 2018, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PAUL C. NEY, JR., OF TENNESSEE, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VICE JENNIFER M. O'CONNOR.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

HOLLY W. GREAVES, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE BARBARA J. BENNETT, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 10, 2018:

THE JUDICIARY

THOMAS LEE ROBINSON PARKER, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE.