

one is a World War II veteran. They instilled in me this importance of duty, hard work, the virtue of service, and the merits of servant leadership. They believed in these values and embodied them in their lives, as so many veterans do.

This weekend, as we pay thanks to the many men and women who were laid to rest under the flag they died defending, we should all take a moment to remember and thank all veterans as well—past and present—whose service also has made our way of life possible.

The men and women of our United States military represent the best in all of us, and they deserve the best from all of us.

#### VA MISSION BILL

Today, Mr. President, the Senate will vote on what is called the VA MISSION Act, which is a bipartisan bill that will reform the Veterans Choice Program. I have heard my colleagues speak about this legislation on the floor this morning and this afternoon, and I agree with them that this is a positive step forward. It will expand private care options and provide veterans in Ohio and around the country with more choices and fewer barriers to ensure they will have the best healthcare possible.

By the way, the bill has passed the House of Representatives already. It passed last week, and it received more than 370 votes. That is unusual around this place. That was out of 435, so it was a strong majority. I look forward to its passing the Senate with a sweeping bipartisan majority as well so it can be signed into law as soon as possible and begin to help the veterans I represent in Ohio and around the country.

We had another positive development for veterans last week when the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed a bipartisan bill I introduced with Senator BROWN that would designate the spectacular new Veterans Memorial and Museum, in Columbus, OH, which is scheduled to open later this year in the fall, as the National Veterans Memorial and Museum. It will be a spectacular structure. More importantly, it will have terrific exhibits on the inside to allow for future generations to know about the selfless sacrifices that have been made by so many men and women of the Armed Forces.

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus will be one important way we will commemorate not only brave Ohioans but all American veterans. This legislation will have been voted on by both Houses and will be signed into law by the President, I hope, very soon. In fact, I would love to get this bill through this body before Memorial Day as a way to pay tribute to our veterans again.

It is not something we are asking the taxpayers to support. This National Veterans Memorial and Museum is being supported by \$75 million that has been raised in the private sector. There is a philanthropist in the Columbus

area named Les Wexner, who has taken the lead on this issue, but it has involved a lot of the businesses in the Greater Columbus area as well as individuals from all around the country who have stepped forward to say we need to have a National Veterans Memorial and Museum and that Columbus, OH, is the right place for it.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation as we hotline it in the U.S. Senate and try to get it done even before Memorial Day.

On this Memorial Day, as we remember those who have sacrificed their lives for our country, let us also remember why they offered to lay down their lives. Why? It is that this Nation under God is worth fighting for. We are eternally grateful for their sacrifices and for the service of all military members—those in the past, those in the present, and those who will step forward to protect us and serve our great country.

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

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to confirm Brian Montgomery as Federal Housing Commissioner. The Federal Housing Administration or FHA plays an important role in today's housing finance market, promoting homeownership and ensuring access to affordable mortgage credit for millions of Americans.

When FHA operates in a safe, viable manner, it can help many deserving people gain a foothold in our housing market who otherwise would not have been able to do so. FHA also plays a countercyclical role in the mortgage marketplace, providing market liquidity in times when traditional sources of home financing dry up, as they did a decade ago.

Since 1934, the FHA has insured mortgages for more than 40 million families. Today, the FHA is the largest mortgage insurer in the world. It is also the primary facilitator of reverse mortgages and supports a nationwide network of housing counseling agencies. Yet for nearly 4 years it has not had a Senate-confirmed leader.

Fortunately, the time has finally come to fill this vacancy. I know Brian Montgomery will do a terrific job. Brian Montgomery is an ideal candidate to take up the mantle because he has done it before.

Mr. Montgomery provided steadfast leadership at the helm of FHA between 2005 and 2009, under Presidents Bush and Obama, during one of the most trying times the housing markets had ever seen.

His nearly unanimous support from housing stakeholders speaks to this

strong track record of experience and expertise. Once confirmed, Mr. Montgomery can hit the ground running, moving FHA forward in pursuit of its continuing mission.

I look forward to continued conversations with him on opportunities to improve America's housing finance system, which continues to be urgently needed. I also look forward to working with him on how we can make HUD programs more effective and more efficient, with better stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Thirteen years ago, this body confirmed Mr. Montgomery on a voice vote to serve as FHA Commissioner. I ask my colleagues to once again confirm him to this critical role.

Thank you.

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

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

#### VA MISSION BILL

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I come briefly to the floor to encourage all Members of the Senate to vote for the VA MISSION bill. It is long overdue, a lot of hard work went into it, and it had a great vote on cloture of 91 to 4.

I am sure we will have an outstanding vote today because it is a vote for our veterans, for the promises we made to them for better quality healthcare and a better VA. It would not have happened if it were not for a lot of people, but one of the most key persons in making sure this bipartisan bill passes with the overwhelming margin it deserves is JON TESTER, my ranking member on the committee. We worked together hand in hand for about 3 years. We had enough pitfalls to want to quit many times but never did because we knew the ultimate goal was to meet our veterans' needs.

Today, when we adopt this bill, and later on this month when it is signed, it will be because of the hard work of a lot of people but none more important than JON TESTER from Montana.

I thank my ranking member for encouraging everyone to vote for the bill, and I thank the Presiding Officer at this time.

I yield to the ranking member.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator ISAKSON, for the leadership he has shown from the get-go. From the moment he took the gavel in the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, he has been wanting to work together in a bipartisan way, put aside our differences, and get things done.

This VA MISSION Act had a great vote yesterday, and people might say:

Well, gee, this is just another one of those slam-dunk bills. It is not. We would not be here today if it wasn't for Chairman ISAKSON and the great work he has done on this bill.

I also thank the entire Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. I thank the leadership of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. I thank the 38 veterans service organizations that offered their support for this bill. I said many times during the hearings, we will take our cues from the veterans. This is exactly what the entire Senate, hopefully, will do in a minute or two with this bill, is take our cues from the people who serve this country in the military. This is a big win for them. They are also going to put a lot of pressure on the VA to deliver for them, but, nonetheless, this is one of those rare times when the Senate and House have done their job and done it in a bipartisan way, worked together, and worked for the benefit of the veterans of this country.

I also thank my staff, Tony McClain, Dahlia Melendrez, and Jon Coen for their great work.

In a brief review, what this bill does is scrap the Choice Program and all the community care programs and puts them into one program where the veteran and the doctor control where to seek care, whether it is within the VA or the private sector. It strengthens the VA and helps build capacity in the VA in two ways, with a loan repayment program for our employees, and it incentivizes medical residencies within the VA. It also improves rural healthcare in States where I come from in Montana by deploying mobile health teams and by expanding telehealth.

Finally, this bill expands the caregiver program to veterans of all eras—something Senator MURRAY has worked on for years and years. I was there when Senator MURRAY came up to the chairman of the committee on a previous bill and said to Chairman ISAKSON: We really need this caregiver bill in. Chairman ISAKSON said: We are not going to forget about you, Patty. We are going to make sure this is taken care of. He lived up to his promise to her, and he lived up to those veterans who have a family member who takes care of them at home, where people don't even know what is going on. They don't even know what is happening. Sometimes these folks have to quit their job to take care of a veteran at home who needs help. So the caregiver program is a very important part of this bill.

It happened because we worked together. When I go home to Montana people ask: How come you guys can't work together? We kind of broke the mold a little bit, and we worked together in a bipartisan way. We put aside politics, and we did what was right for our country and our veterans.

Hopefully, we will get a strong vote out of this bill when it is brought up for passage, and we can get it to the President for his signature.

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

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Montgomery nomination?

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 74, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 105 Ex.]

YEAS—74

Alexander	Graham	Murphy
Baldwin	Grassley	Nelson
Barrasso	Hassan	Paul
Bennet	Hatch	Perdue
Blunt	Heitkamp	Peters
Booker	Heller	Portman
Boozman	Hoeven	Risch
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Roberts
Capito	Inhofe	Rounds
Cardin	Isakson	Rubio
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Cassidy	Jones	Schatz
Collins	Kaine	Scott
Coons	Kennedy	Shelby
Corker	King	Smith
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Tester
Crapo	Leahy	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Manchin	Toomey
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Enzi	McConnell	Warner
Ernst	Menendez	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young
Gardner	Murkowski	

NAYS—23

Blumenthal	Harris	Schumer
Brown	Heinrich	Shaheen
Cantwell	Hirono	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Reed	Wyden
Gillibrand	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—3

Duckworth	Flake	McCain
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

VETERANS CEMETERY BENEFIT  
CORRECTION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and the clerk will report the House message to accompany S. 2372.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 2372, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with McConnell amendment No. 2246 (to the House amendment to the bill), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2247 (to amendment No. 2246), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The Senator from Texas.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT  
NO. 2246

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I move to table the motion to concur with amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to S. 2372 with further amendment.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes in the series be 10 minutes in length.

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

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to S. 2372.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 106 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Alexander	Blunt	Cantwell
Baldwin	Booker	Capito
Barrasso	Boozman	Cardin
Bennet	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Burr	Casey