

These are just a few examples from my State. The reality is that this legislation supplies needed support to communities all across our country.

Energy matters to all Americans. Water infrastructure matters to all Americans. I urge everyone to join me in supporting this bill.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. On another matter, Madam President, yesterday Gallup reported that the percentage of Americans who are satisfied with the way things are going in our country is as high as it has been since 2005. That is a nearly 13-year high. It is no wonder, with an ongoing economic expansion creating jobs across the Nation and our unemployment rate at its lowest level since the year 2000. Consumers are confident. Manufacturers are confident. Small businesses are optimistic.

As I have said many times, Washington doesn't deserve all the credit for this. The government does not create prosperity. American workers and job creators do. But public policy does set the stage. Bad policy can make job creation, wage growth, and capital investment much more difficult. Good policy can make these things easier. Take the historic tax reform that Republicans passed just last year.

In addition to immediate tax relief for middle-class families and small businesses, we also sought to improve our long-term foundation by making America a more attractive place to start a business, expand a business, and invest for the future. That is why tax reform allowed for full and immediate expensing of capital investments and made corporate rates more competitive. We are starting to see signs that businesses, large and small, are taking notice.

A few weeks ago, the Wall Street Journal reported that "U.S. companies are ramping up spending on their businesses at the fastest pace in years." One recent analysis projected that the S&P 500 businesses' spending on new factories, equipment, and other capital investments in the first quarter of 2018 would be nearly 25 percent more than they spent in the first quarter of just last year.

What about small business? Just a few weeks ago, a leading industry survey showed 62 percent of owners reporting recent capital outlays, on the heels of the most positive sales trends since 1995.

Major, business-changing equipment is being purchased. Ribbons are being cut on new facilities. The long-term foundations for a stronger economy are literally being poured. Republicans are proud that we helped make this happen. We are getting Washington out of the way so American prosperity can take flight.

ORDER FOR PRINTING—H.R. 5515

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 5515, as amended, be printed as passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The bill, H.R. 5515, as amended, as passed by the Senate is printed in today's RECORD under Morning Business.)

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

ENERGY AND WATER, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 5895, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5895) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Shelby amendment No. 2910, in the nature of a substitute.

Alexander amendment No. 2911 (to amendment No. 2910), to make a technical correction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

FORCED FAMILY SEPARATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, Members of both parties—and I believe the vast majority of Americans—remain concerned about the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy, which has resulted in thousands of families being separated at the border. Anyone who has seen the photos, heard the audio of small children, alone and afraid, crying out for their parents, cannot help but feel horror and disgust about what is going on. That is not America. That is not the America we know and love and the generations before us have known and loved.

Clearly, no one should be allowed into this country who doesn't meet the

legal requirements, but we have an adjudication process that in the past did not require the separation of parents from their children. The Trump administration has decided, of its own will and volition, to take a crueler, more callous, and indeed more expensive and time-consuming approach.

A bipartisan group of former U.S. attorneys wrote yesterday that "the Zero Tolerance policy is a radical departure from previous Justice Department policy, and that it is dangerous, expensive, and inconsistent with the values of the institution in which we served."

Yet President Trump acts as if his hands are tied, as if it is not up to him, as if somehow Congress and Democrats are to blame for a policy his administration instituted, defended, and many members of the administration continue to defend—most recently the Homeland Security Secretary.

The truth is that the Trump administration announced this new zero tolerance policy at the border in April. Even they hadn't done it before that, so they weren't required. The Trump administration decided to criminally prosecute every single illegal border case, instead of simply deporting them. That is what changed—Donald Trump, of his own volition, changing the policy into a much crueler one. He was supported by his whole administration—by much of his administration.

Chief of Staff Kelly called the policy "a tough deterrent." Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielson has defended the policy, as have Attorney General Sessions, White House Advisor Stephen Miller, and several other members of the administration.

Last night on FOX News, Attorney General Sessions characterized the family separation policy as a deterrent. When President Trump tweets "CHANGE THE LAWS" and that his policy is the result of a law that "Democrats forced . . . upon our nation," he is ignoring reality; he is contradicting his own administration. As commentator after commentator—Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative—has said: President Trump is simply not telling the truth, and in a cowardly way.

No law—no law—requires the separation of families at the border. That is just not true.

At the Republican convention, President Trump said about the problems of the Nation that "I alone can fix it." In the case of family separation, it is actually true.

Mr. President, you alone can fix it.

The President alone can fix this with a flick of a pen.

Mr. President, you should fix it. If you don't want to change this cruel policy, at least admit it is your decision. Blaming others falsely is cheap, easy, and dishonest—a cheap way out, unbecoming of any President.

President Trump, if you are truly ashamed of what is happening at the border, get your team together and undo this policy. If you don't want to

change the policy, you need to take responsibility and own up to it.

ZTE

Madam President, on ZTE, last night, the Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act, fulfilling its annual duty to authorize funding for our Nation's military and update our national security policy. As a part of the bill, a bipartisan amendment to reinstate sanctions against Chinese telecom giant ZTE passed as well.

Although many have probably not heard of ZTE, Americans of all stripes should be cheering this news because in the views of many experts, if we allow ZTE into this country, China and its government will use our phones to spy on each of us, our companies, with their great technology, and our military. That is why so many people are against ZTE being allowed into this country. In my view, the same would be true of Huawei, the other big Chinese telecom company.

ZTE, backed by China's Government, has flouted U.S. sanctions and lied about it. The FCC, the FBI, and the Pentagon have all issued stern warnings about the national risk posed by ZTE's technology. Allowing the sale of ZTE technology in the United States could allow China to spy on every American's private information, on American businesses, and even on our military. It is a security risk.

Why is President Trump, in a simple call with President Xi, just letting it continue? Fines don't matter at all to this giant company. They will still pose the same security risk before and after they pay a fine.

When the Trump administration reached a sweetheart deal with ZTE to go easy on them, folks in Congress from both parties were shaking their heads in disbelief. China is the single most significant threat to American jobs and American intellectual property—the lifeblood of our economy. ZTE represents that threat. There is no good reason to take it easy on them.

It is important that Members of both parties—some of the most conservative Members of this body, some of the most liberal Members of this body, and everyone in between—have stood up and said that we shouldn't be forgiving ZTE. It is now vital that our House colleagues keep this bipartisan provision in the national defense bill as it heads toward a conference. They should not let the pressure of President Trump, who simply doesn't know how to negotiate—President Xi flatters him, and he gives in on something vital to national security. They should not let President Trump pressure them into reducing American security, both economic and defense. They should not let President Trump pressure them into allowing ZTE to spy on every one of us, which they could very well do.

Before moving on, I want to take a moment to thank Senators COTTON and RUBIO for working with Senator VAN HOLLEN and me and the rest of us on this issue. My friends on the other side

of the aisle—it is harder for them to oppose the President than it is for us—had the courage of their convictions not only to speak out but also to support this legislation, despite the opposition of their party's President.

It is rare, indeed, when SCHUMER, VAN HOLLEN, RUBIO, and COTTON issue a joint statement, but on this issue, we all agree. It is an issue that transcends party and concerns the vital national security interests of this great United States of America. I am very glad that for the sake of the country, we were able to come together and pass this amendment.

HEALTHCARE

Madam President, on healthcare, today, we expect the Trump administration to issue a new rule that would expand junk insurance plans that don't cover critical conditions and are far from comprehensive health coverage. These plans may not include coverage for maternity care, may not include coverage for mental health treatment, may not include coverage for emergency services, newborn care, prescription drugs. Worse still, these plans weaken protections for Americans with preexisting conditions. Finalizing this rule is simply the latest act of sabotage of our healthcare system by the Trump administration and a back door to expanding junk insurance plans, which benefit the insurance industry but hurt the average American.

That is why more than 95 percent of the healthcare groups that filed comments about this proposed rule were opposed to it. No single group that represents physicians, patients, hospitals, or nurses is supportive. Not one. You are always going to find people who can make a fast buck putting together a healthcare plan that does very little for people as they collect money from them. Our responsibility is to not allow that. In this Congress, we had done that. President Trump is undoing it.

The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress should work with Democrats in a bipartisan way to make healthcare more affordable instead of taking actions that jack up costs on middle-class families and those who are sick and need healthcare the most.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, just 3 months ago, Congress passed and the President signed a \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending package for the year 2018. No one had time to read it, much less an opportunity to amend it on the floor. The President vowed that never again would he sign such a measure. Collectively, we lamented the absence of process and the excess of partisanship that had led to that point once again. The collapse of regular order had become the new normal, despite our usual resolutions to revive it.

I am pleased to report today that the Senate Appropriations Committee has charted a different course in the months since the 2018 omnibus became

law. In April of this year, I began working with Vice Chairman LEAHY and our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee to put into motion an aggressive schedule to mark up all 12 appropriations bills before the July 4 recess. Thus far, the committee has passed seven of these bills. This week, the committee will mark up three additional bills, and in the final week of June, we will consider the remaining two. At the moment, we are right on schedule.

What has been truly remarkable, however, is not the speed of the 2019 appropriations process but the bipartisanship that has given it new life. All seven of the bills passed by the committee thus far have garnered overwhelming bipartisan support. Most of them, in fact, have been approved unanimously. This is no small accomplishment in today's partisan political environment.

At this point, I pause to recognize Vice Chairman LEAHY's significant contributions to this effort. Senator LEAHY and I have known each other for many decades now. In fact, our combined years on the Appropriations Committee exceed the ages of many of our colleagues.

On this basis, we came together at the outset of the process and determined that only by uniting would appropriations bills make it to the Senate floor and beyond. He and I made a deal, the essence of which POLITICO succinctly summarized in the headline of a recent article, entitled: "Poison pills banished from Senate spending bills." That is what we hope.

As part of this deal, Vice Chairman LEAHY and I agreed to reject not only partisan riders—our own too—but also new authorizations in the 2019 appropriations bills. We resolved that Senators on both sides who would be looking to authorize new law in appropriations bills would be referred to the appropriate authorizing committees. As the appropriations process has unfolded, I have honored this deal, Vice Chairman LEAHY has honored this deal, and our subcommittee chairmen and ranking members have honored this deal. The results speak for themselves.

Last week, for example, the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill passed unanimously out of committee. One would have to go back nearly 10 years to find the last time the Interior bill garnered such strong bipartisan support.

I recognize that today we are still early in the game and that many contentious issues lie ahead, but I believe we have established a framework for success in returning to regular order. It is now time to translate this success to the Senate floor. Members of the Appropriations Committee, including the Presiding Officer, through their discipline and adhering to this framework, have demonstrated that their perennial calls for a return to regular order have not been hollow. We will begin today to discover whether the

full Senate is equally sincere in its resolve.

The package before the Senate combines three fiscal year 2019 measures that have been recently approved by the Appropriations Committee: the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, and the Legislative Branch appropriations bill.

The Energy and Water Development bill provides \$43.7 billion in discretionary funding—a \$566 million increase over the 2018-enacted level. The bill addresses critical national security needs concerning nuclear energy, while it also improves our water infrastructure and invests in basic science and energy research for this Nation.

Senators ALEXANDER and FEINSTEIN, the chairman and ranking member of the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, have crafted, I believe, a balanced, bipartisan bill that passed the full committee by a 30-to-1 margin.

The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies bill—the second bill—provides \$97.1 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$5.1 billion above the 2018-enacted level. This bill supports investments that will ensure maximum readiness and warfighting capability for our troops, while it also provides funding for needed improvements and innovations at the VA.

Senators BOOZMAN and SCHATZ, the chairman and ranking member of the MILCON, VA, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, wrote a strong bill that received unanimous support of the full committee.

Finally, the Senate's Legislative Branch bill provides \$3.3 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$68 million above the 2018-enacted level. This bill, the third bill, makes important investments in the safety and security of those who are working in Congress and those citizens who are guests, visiting our Capitol. Chairman DAINES and Ranking Member MURPHY, of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, also drafted a strongly bipartisan bill that garnered the unanimous support of the full Appropriations Committee.

I thank Chairmen ALEXANDER, BOOZMAN, and DAINES and Ranking Members FEINSTEIN, SCHATZ, and MURPHY this morning for their continued hard work and leadership on these bills.

As we move to the consideration of these bills today on the floor, I urge all Members to submit any amendments they have as soon as possible. Vice Chairman LEAHY and I are committed to having an open amendment process, as are each of the subcommittee chairmen and ranking members, who will be managing their respective parts of these legislative packages. Just as they worked diligently to accommodate as many Members' requests as possible during the committee process, they intend to accommodate as many amendments as they can on the floor.

To recap for the benefit of the Members, we are not interested in poison

pill riders, and we are not considering new authorizations of law, but we are interested in discussing substantive amendments that are germane to this package. This is the path, I believe, that leads us back to regular order. It is my hope that we will not be led astray, down the path of delay and partisanship, which would result in yet another omnibus. That is no way to fund the government.

Let's debate and dispose and do our job on behalf of the American people. Let's demonstrate to the American people that our collective call for a return to regular order was not just for show. Let's complete our work on this package in a timely manner so we can move on to the considerable work that lies ahead.

I take this moment to thank all Senators for their input and their cooperation in this process thus far.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I appreciate the comments from my friend, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. As many know, Chairman SHELBY and I have been friends for decades. We have traveled to different parts of the world and tried to promote the U.S. agenda. We have worked very closely together. That is why we are opening debate on the first set of appropriations bills for fiscal year 2019. The minibus before us contains the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, and the Legislative Branch appropriations bill. These bills have strong bipartisan support.

On each subcommittee, I compliment the chairs and ranking members, who worked very closely together and set aside partisan labels to get these bills before the full committee so that Senator SHELBY and I could then bring them up for votes in the full committee. So far, we have reported from the committee 7 of the 12 annual appropriations bills, each with overwhelming bipartisan support—I almost want to reemphasize that: each with overwhelming bipartisan support—at a time when it is as though nothing can be done in a bipartisan way. I think we have set the example of the way the Senate was, should be and can be.

As one who has been in this body for almost 44 years, I like to see the Senate work the way it should. In fact, we are going to mark up three of the five remaining bills this week. The chairman and I are committed to making the appropriations process work again. So far, in committee, it has. In that respect, I thank, again, my good friend Senator SHELBY for his leadership and bipartisan cooperation, which has helped us achieve these results so far.

Our best chance for restoring regular order and avoiding the need to do an omnibus spending bill at the end of the year is to abide by the bipartisan-bicameral budget agreement and avoid

poison pill riders from the left or the right. The bill before us does just that.

The chairman and I—and we are the ones who have to spend the time on the floor—want a real debate of the spending measure. Members should come to the floor, offer amendments, and debate them. Yet, if we are going to succeed in moving this bill through the Senate, Members on both sides of the aisle need to show restraint as we did when we marked up these bills in committee and refrain from offering controversial legislative matters or other poison pills as amendments. Offer those on authorizing bills, where they should be, and debate them there.

The appropriations bills that make up the minibus before us contain funding for important programs and make a real difference in people's lives, certainly in the lives of those in every Senator's State—in Vermont and across the Nation. We should not derail this process because of unrelated policy riders. If we do this—if both sides of the aisle can show restraint—we will take a very important step in getting this process back on track and putting the Senate back to where it should be.

Let's talk about the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill. It dedicates considerable resources to the support and care of our veterans, including \$2 billion to address the maintenance backlog at our VA hospitals and clinics. We agreed to that in the bipartisan budget deal, and we have it in this bill. It also has critical funding for medical care and research, hospital and clinic construction, and disability and pension programs.

The Energy and Water Development bill invests in our country's water infrastructure and energy programs. It also provides funding to support our rural communities and farmers, which will benefit not just Vermont but the rest of the Nation. All of us have rural areas in our States, and this will benefit them. I am pleased that the bill supports much needed repairs and improvements in our environmental infrastructure and in our energy infrastructure and that it strengthens innovative ways to deliver these critical assets.

From a parochial point of view, I know it makes Vermont more resilient to the change in climate and violent weather events. All one has to do is look at the map. It makes every State more resilient, which is what we need. Once again, the bill includes strong funding for the weatherization program and, of course, helps families in Vermont, the Northeast, and northern States across the country. Families in Vermont can struggle with high home heating prices during the cold winter months, when it is not unusual to have days or a week during which it is below zero.

The bill wisely rejects several of the administration's budget proposals by making real investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. That is going to accelerate diversified

and sustainable energy production in every part of our country and support American innovation in the private sector as well as the many world-class research institutions across the country. I want to see American innovation being supported. This bill will create and sustain American jobs.

The Legislative Branch bill provides funding for the Senate at large, as well as to cover the House of Representatives, the Library of Congress, the Copyright Office, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Capitol Police. In addition, it supports the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office, which are essential to our oversight functions. I support this package of bills that came from the committee, and I urge other Members to do the same.

Let me just mention one issue briefly that relates to veterans' healthcare. The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill has one serious problem, and Chairman SHELBY and I are committed to fixing it. The bill does not provide money to cover the costs that are associated with the VA Choice Program, which was transferred to the discretionary side of the budget under the VA MISSION Act. It will become part of a new consolidated community care program to be funded in this bill. Unfortunately, the MISSION Act provides funding for this program only through May of 2019, leaving the balance unaddressed. To cover the shortfall, we are going to need an estimated \$1.6 billion more in fiscal year 2019 and an additional \$8.6 billion in fiscal year 2020 and \$9.5 billion in fiscal year 2021.

These costs were not accounted for when we negotiated the budget caps in the bipartisan budget deal, so the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee were unable to address the shortfall within their allocation without cutting funding for other important programs. We do our veterans no favors if we promise care but then not back it up and say: Oh, by the way, we are not going to pay for it. Senator SHELBY and I are working to find a solution to provide the flexibility needed to make sure, having made this promise to our veterans, we can carry out the promise. We hope to offer an amendment later this week to address this issue.

In conclusion, I look forward to the debate on the appropriations bill before us, and I ask Senators—all 100 of us—to work with us to restore the appropriations process. We can only achieve success if we return to regular order and pledge to work together. To give an example that Chairman SHELBY and I have set, the 31 members of the Senate Appropriations Committee voted overwhelmingly on both sides of the aisle for these bills. So I thank the chairman, and I also thank the subcommittee chairs and ranking members because they worked like mad, and they got it done.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I am pleased to present the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 2019. This is a bipartisan bill that funds the critical infrastructure for our Nation's servicemembers and their families and takes care of America's 20 million veterans.

As in years past, this subcommittee crafted the bill in a truly open and bipartisan and collegial way. The subcommittee took into account the requests and preferences of all Members on both sides of the aisle and balanced it with the administration's budget submission. Within this framework, we have created a thoughtful and responsible path forward for both Departments and our related agencies.

A lot of time and energy have gone into putting this legislation together, and I thank Senator SCHATZ and his staff for working so hard to address the needs of our servicemembers and veterans.

This bill provides \$97.1 billion in discretionary spending, which is \$5.1 billion over last year's level. Within that, the Department of Veterans Affairs is provided a new record level of resources at \$86.4 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$5 billion over last year's level and \$1.1 billion over the President's request. These resources will provide healthcare and other important benefits earned by U.S. servicemembers.

This bill provides \$78.3 billion to support medical treatment and healthcare, including \$8.6 billion for mental health, including funds to prevent veteran suicide; \$861 million for the caregivers program; \$400 million for opioid misuse prevention and treatment; and \$270 million for rural health initiatives.

The bill also includes funds to prevent veterans' homelessness, invest in innovative medical research, eliminate the claims backlog, provide for State extended-care facility construction, and support the Board of Veterans Appeals' efforts to address the growing appellate backlog.

The bill provides \$10.3 billion to support military construction and family housing needs—a \$228 million increase over last year's level. This will fund a total of 169 military construction projects that restore warfighter readiness and increase the lethality of our installations. These projects support beddown of new platforms, such as the F-35 and KC-46, and provide investments that support nuclear deterrence and air superiority. Pier replacements and dry dock improvements will add capability and enhance mission readiness. Improvements to airfields, ranges, and maintenance and training facilities will contribute to current and future force readiness.

This bill provides resources to improve the quality of life for servicemembers and their families. It provides \$1.6 billion to provide homes and related housing services to servicemembers and their families living on instal-

lations around the world, \$388 million to improve schools, and \$366 million for hospitals and medical clinics.

We were also able to address \$498 million worth of construction priorities identified in the services' unfunded priority lists, which will allow the services to fund their highest priority unfunded projects.

The bill contains \$921 million for overseas contingency operations and the European Deterrence Initiative to improve infrastructure and facilities throughout the European theater to help our allies deter further Russian aggression and address threats from the Middle East and North Africa.

In summary, this is a good bill. It was reported out of committee without a single dissenting vote, and I hope we will have unanimous support when we vote on the final package. I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

I thank Senators SHELBY and LEAHY for their support in putting this bill together. Again, I thank Senator SCHATZ and his staff for working with us in such a bipartisan and cooperative manner. Of course, I thank all of my staff for all their efforts and the hard work it takes to put something of this magnitude together.

With that, Madam President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I am pleased to join my colleague from Arkansas, the chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee in presenting this bill for consideration before the full Senate. I thank him for his work to create a fair and bipartisan bill. I also thank the Appropriations Committee chairman and vice chairman for their leadership and commitment to an orderly process to bring these bills and all the appropriations bills to the floor. This is the first set of appropriations bills before the Senate this year. We are making good progress, and in the next few days, we are going to set the tone for the rest of our work this year on appropriations.

This bill builds on the progress we made in the omnibus by providing critical funding to support our veterans, servicemembers, and their families. It also funds military construction projects that are needed to continue our work to address years of budgetary risk-taking that have led to neglected facilities tied to military readiness.

In total, the bill provides the VA with nearly \$5 billion more than last year's bill and adds more than \$200 million for military construction.

I am particularly pleased that we were able to fund \$500 million worth of unfunded military construction requirements. While increased funding must continue to be requested and sustained in future years, this funding makes progress to restore military readiness across the joint force, including, importantly, for the Army and Air National Guard that have served as an

operational reserve for nearly two decades of war.

The increased funding for the VA will go where it will do the most good for our veterans and their families, and that includes \$400 million to combat the opioid epidemic, which is \$18 million above the budget request; \$365 million above the budget request for the caregivers program; nearly \$500 million above the omnibus for mental health services; an additional \$87 million to increase staffing to process veterans' disability claims appeals; and an additional \$30 million to help deliver telehealth services to remote and rural areas.

We also add funding for VA medical care above the fiscal year 2019 advance appropriation that we provided in the omnibus. This includes an additional \$750 million for VA in-house care and \$1 billion to pay for privately provided care through VA's traditional community care programs.

We all agree that VA's community partners are essential to serving veterans and ensuring access, especially in rural areas, but privately provided care cannot come at the expense of VA's in-house medical services or other programs that are core to VA, and that is where the administration is trying to take us. Without budgetary relief, their efforts will leave a \$38 billion hole at VA and undermine its ability to serve our veterans and their families.

I know that the chairman and vice chairman of the whole committee are continuing to work with the leadership and the chairman and ranking member of the authorizing committee to fix this issue so that we can fulfill our promises to veterans, and on that, they will have my full support.

Madam President, I again thank Chairman BOOZMAN and his staff and my staff for their hard work and collaboration that went into crafting this bipartisan bill. I will have more to say as we move forward this week. In the meantime, I encourage any of our colleagues who may have amendments to file those as soon as possible so that we can ensure that we have sufficient time to review them.

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

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

COLORADO WILDFIRES

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, last year, Colorado had a great snowpack in many areas of the State. In fact, the moisture, rain, and snowpack in many areas of Colorado led to a lot of growth, a lot of great spring grass, and a lot of undergrowth that came in. The problem is, when you have a wet year followed by a dry year, that same

growth then turns into tinder during a drought.

That is, unfortunately, what we have seen in parts of Colorado this year. Many parts of Colorado are experiencing some of the driest conditions they have seen in 70 or 80 years.

On June 1, the 416 fire in Southwest Colorado was started. It started burning, and now about 35,000 acres of land have been gobbled up by this wildfire. There are also a number of other fires across Colorado: the Burro fire, the Buffalo Mountain fire, and there was a fire between Redvale and Montrose, CO.

I come to the floor to bring attention to some of the actions we have taken, though, that have helped with fighting these fires and to talk about policies we need to put in place that can do a better job giving more tools to fight these fires and what we can do to help make firefighters do their jobs in a better, safer way.

If you look at what we did these past years—a couple of months ago, we passed a bill that fixed the fire-borrowing crisis, which had consumed our wildfire fighting budget each and every year. What happened is that Congress would fund firefighting based on a 10-year rolling average, and then they would exceed that cost of the firefighting budget and consume other parts of the Forest Service budget, cannibalizing other parts that would go toward mitigation to prevent next year's forest fires just to fund the firefighting efforts of this year's fires. So we have never really caught up with the cycle. Over half of the budget of the Forest Service—at least prior to this fix—was being consumed on fighting forest fires.

This Congress did a great job with a bipartisan fix that now actually allows us to treat it more like a normal, traditional disaster instead of cannibalizing other funds within the Forest Service.

I asked one of the Forest Service representatives, employees, at the fire: Are you able to make better decisions knowing now that you have a budget fix in place? The answer was yes. So we are actually able to fight fires.

We have a map right here. The city of Durango, CO, is basically right here. This fire is moving, and we are able to fight this fire better, knowing that we have the funding, the resources necessary, to adequately supply these firefighting efforts.

At least as of a day ago, we haven't lost a home from this 35,000-acre fire, even though nearly 2,000 homes have been evacuated. I think that is a remarkable feat, an accomplishment. Great credit needs to go to the 1,300 firefighter personnel who are on this fire and the Burro fires 10 miles over the mountain. They have not lost a structure as a result of their efforts and the tools that we have helped to give them.

To the personnel: Thank you for the work that you continue to do.

To the people of Colorado who may have scheduled a vacation or planned a vacation in Durango and Silverton, CO: Know that these towns remain open, that you can still go to Durango, CO, that you can still go down the river, and that you can have an incredible time with your family.

I encourage people across this country not to cancel their vacations, not to cancel their plans, but to go ahead and visit. This town, this State, needs you now more than ever. I encourage people to recognize that, yes, there may be a fire in the forest, but it is not in the town. It is perfectly safe to go visit, to be there, and I hope they will because both Silverton and Durango need you now more than ever.

We also know that our land managers can use better policies in terms of reducing fuel loads and making sure they can get into the forest to reduce the potential for a serious conflagration—the types of which we have seen more and more of recently—to help give them better tools to cut through litigation and the analysis paralysis that has tied our decision makers' hands when it comes to fighting fires.

One of the things I have heard at other fires in Colorado, outside of the 416 fire, is the concern about drones. I hope every person listening to speeches and the news reports will take to heart that when you fly a drone, when you fly a UAV over a fire because you think it would be neat to get pictures of it, understand that you are putting people's lives at risk, and you are stopping—you are putting a halt—to significant elements of the firefighting effort.

What do I mean by that? One drone will shut down the air tanker program—no more slurry efforts, no retardant flying in, no more helicopters flying in, no more airplanes flying in and dropping retardant that can stop the spread of the fire. Please, please, stop interfering with active firefighting efforts.

SCOTT TIPTON and I will be introducing legislation that will increase penalties on people who are interfering with firefighting efforts by flying a drone over a wildfire. It has to stop. It is putting people's lives at risk, and it is certainly allowing these fires to spread because they have to shut down their firefighting efforts.

We can't fight these fires at night with tankers. We are working on that. We have other legislation that will allow night vision goggle research to be done to help make this effort happen, to be able to help fight these fires, but we can't do it now. So when you take out an hour or 2 or more of the day, that means those tankers can't get in, that means more acres are burned, and that means more lives are put at risk. Stop it. You are hurting people.

This is something for which we have to give more tools to our decision makers and land managers to help reduce the fuel, cut through the litigation, the

redtape, and reduce the number of lawsuits that are preventing these forests from being managed in a healthy manner. Let's do that. Then we have to make sure we continue with other policies to get more dollars on the ground for fuel-reduction efforts.

Long-term consequences of this fire, though, will remain because long after the smoke is gone, the effects will be felt. When there is a rainstorm, we will have hydrophobic soil conditions that will create debris flows that go into the river, causing conduits to be impacted, perhaps wiped out, and the viaducts that are going to be affected, the water conduits that will be affected through debris flows, the drinking water systems that could be impacted through-out, and the flooding potential that dramatically increases. Those effects will have to be dealt with, but there are other effects too.

When you are dealing with businesses here that rely on the use of the forest, particularly in the summer, those seasonal businesses are impacted right now and are going to need help, and the Small Business Administration, the Department of Commerce, and others could help provide disaster relief to these businesses. If you are relying on a forest for your business during the summer and that forest has been closed, obviously your business is greatly impacted. That is something this Congress will have to continue to work through as we address the impacts on seasonal businesses throughout Colorado—and around the West, for that matter—that have been affected by these wildfires.

To this Congress: Thank you for the work you did to fix the practice of firebombing, for putting an end to it, and for allowing us to budget regularly for wildfires, making sure we have the dollars necessary to do this without impacting forest programs that would have reduced next year's fires.

Let's stop dangerous activities. Stop flying drones, interfering with wildfires. Let's work on policies that we can innovate to bring new science, new expertise, new research to allow us to do a better job of fighting fires.

I hope people will remember that Durango and Silverton remain open; all of Colorado remains open. Come visit, and spend your time. There are great memories you could make with your families in our forests, in our incredible and beautiful environment of Colorado and the West.

Mr. President, I thank you. This is one more important thing to remind us that we are all in this together, and I thank this Congress for the work they have done.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the good economic news keeps pouring in. CNBC reports that economic growth for the second quarter of 2018 is "on track to double 2017's full-year pace."

In April, for the first time since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began tracking the data, the number of job openings outnumbered the number of job seekers. In May, unemployment dropped to its lowest level in 18 years. Wages are growing at the fastest rate since July 2009. Retail sales are up significantly, and small business optimism has hit its second highest level ever. A recent survey from the National Association of Manufacturers reported that 77 percent of manufacturers plan to increase hiring as a result of tax reform, 72 percent plan to increase wages or benefits, and 86 percent report that they plan to increase investments, which means new jobs and opportunities for workers. Those are a lot of numbers, but they all boil down to one thing; that is, that life is getting better for American families.

Yesterday, the Wall Street Journal reported: "Economic confidence among lower-income Americans has taken a recent leap, the latest evidence that benefits of the economic expansion are reaching a broader swath of workers."

If there is one thing that is needed to help people achieve the American dream, it is a thriving economy. What do people think about when they think about the American dream? They dream about starting a business from their kitchen table and growing it into a thriving enterprise. They dream about a secure job that will allow them to own a nice home, plus have extra to take the kids to the beach each year, and save for education, retirement, and those unexpected expenses. They dream about landing a job at their dream company and working their way up the ladder to the top; they dream about fulfilling work that can turn into a fulfilling career; and they dream about a secure retirement with extra money to treat the grandkids. Those are the types of things Americans dream about when they think about the American dream.

Well, it is pretty hard to accomplish any of those dreams if the economy is stagnant or struggling. It is pretty hard to work your way up the ladder if your company is having to lay off people. It is hard to buy a house or save for the kids' college if you don't have anything left over once you have paid the bills.

During the last administration, the economy did not thrive and, as a result, American families struggled. So when President Trump took office, Republicans and President Trump made reversing our economic decline a priority. Perhaps the two biggest drags on our economy during the Obama administration were burdensome regulations and an outdated tax code. So we took

immediate action to roll back burdensome Obama administration regulations, and we got to work on reforming our outdated Tax Code. Six months ago this week, we passed historic tax reform. Before the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the Tax Code was not helping businesses grow and create jobs. In fact, it was doing the opposite, and that had real consequences for American workers. A small business owner struggling to afford the hefty annual tax bill for her business was highly unlikely to be able to hire a new worker or to raise wages. A larger business struggling to stay competitive in the global marketplace while paying a substantially higher tax rate than its foreign competitors too often had limited funds to expand or increase investment in the United States.

So we took action to improve the playing field for American workers by improving the playing field for businesses as well. To accomplish that, we lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We lowered our Nation's massive corporate tax rate, which up until January 1 was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We expanded business owners' ability to recover investments they make in their businesses, which frees up cash they can reinvest in their operations and their workers, and we brought the U.S. international tax system into the 21st century so American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign competitors.

Now we are seeing the results. Companies have announced higher wages, better retirement benefits, bonuses, increased investment, new jobs, and more. As I mentioned above, 77 percent of manufacturers plan to increase hiring as a result of tax reform and 72 percent plan to increase wages or benefits. Meanwhile, at the end of May, the National Federation of Independent Business reported that a record-high percentage of small businesses had increased compensation for their employees. Then there are the 100-plus utility companies that are lowering rates as a result of tax reform, the companies boosting their education benefits to help employees get the skills they need for successful careers, the companies expanding parental leave benefits, the low unemployment rate, the pace of wage growth, and so much more.

In short, as I mentioned earlier, life is getting better for American families. Opportunities are expanding, paychecks are increasing, wages are growing, benefits are growing, and that means more families are able to afford those car repairs or that downpayment on a house. More families are able to set aside money for their kids' education, and more families are able to boost their retirement contributions. More families are looking forward to a secure future.

I am proud of the benefits the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is delivering for

American families, and I am going to keep working for policies that will expand opportunities for families in this country even further.

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. CORKER. 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. CORKER. Mr. President, I plan to speak more fully tomorrow on this topic, but the Constitution, as I know the Presiding Officer knows and I know others in the Chamber know, gives the U.S. Congress the authority to deal with revenues and tariffs.

I know we are dealing with some regular order business during this week, and I am glad we are able to do so. I congratulate my colleague—the other Senator from Tennessee, our senior Senator—for the way he is conducting himself as it relates to dealing with appropriations and the members of the Appropriations Committee for the work they have done to make sure we can move through this in a timely fashion.

From time to time, moments arise in U.S. history where Congress should assert its authority and play a calming role at a time when the world is roiling from a President who wakes up each morning and decides the next steps he is going to take against other countries, as it relates to tariffs, with no seeming strategy nor reasoning for much of what he is doing.

We have an amendment we are seeking to make even better to hopefully cause the Congress—the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives—to take its rightful role as it relates to this tariff situation.

Today, we had a number of small businesses from Tennessee—I am sure there are many from Indiana and Alaska—that are wondering what in the world they are waking up to as tariffs just seem to be rolling off at the White House—again, with no seeming strategy or thought, but just waking up and putting in place taxes on the American people, changing the relationships that have been built since World War II between our Nation and others, in some cases, appearing to take place over personal tiffs the President may have against an individual or another company. That is not the way the United States has led the world. We have a responsibility as a Congress over these matters.

Section 232 of the Trade Act has never been used like it is being used today, where we, in essence, are claiming, under the guise of national security, tariffs being put in place against our neighbors and against our allies. I don't think there is a person in this body who believes the national security waiver being utilized in the man-

ner it is being utilized is even appropriate. I can't imagine there is anybody in this body who even believes that to be the case. Yet our President wakes up on a daily basis and decides he is going to put in place policies that are going to affect our Nation and others and the citizens we represent, affecting them in major ways.

So I am here today to say that I know pressure is going to build. I know other countries are going to retaliate. They have no choice but to retaliate. The citizens they represent would push them—are pushing them—to retaliate. They have no choice.

We as a body have a responsibility at this time to reclaim our responsibilities as they relate to tariffs and revenues. Allow the President to continue to negotiate—allow him to do so—but when he completes his work, he should bring whatever it is he would like to impose on other countries—especially since he is using section 232 in ways that it was never intended—he should bring that to the Senate and to the House of Representatives, and we should decide. If section 232 is being abused in the way that it is, we should decide what tariffs should be put in place.

I plan to come back and speak on this matter tomorrow. I hope that at some point—as pressure builds, as chaos is created in other countries and around the world, as our leadership role in the world continues to take a hit and be challenged, I hope the Senate will rise to the occasion.

I thank those many people on both sides of the aisle who have sponsored legislation to deal with this. I hope the leader and the minority leader of the Senate will decide that this is an important issue we need to take up and that we will take action.

With that, 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.

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

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the appropriations package currently under consideration, particularly the section dealing with Energy and Water Development appropriations.

I know my good friend Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of our Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee, spoke last evening. I have served as chairman or ranking member of that committee for the past 5 years—we have alternated—and it has been a real pleasure and a great privilege for me to work with him.

I also want to thank Senator SHELBY and Vice Chairman LEAHY. Perhaps people don't know this, but they have taken truly meaningful steps to return us to regular order. It has been a long

time coming, and I truly hope it can be maintained. I have been on the Appropriations Committee for more than two decades, and I have been saddened to watch as we have descended into partisanship year after year and lessened our influence as a committee.

Believe it or not, it has been 21 years since Congress passed all 12 appropriations bills by October 1. Since then, we have just staggered through a series of continuing resolutions and omnibuses. So I thank my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for supporting this bill during markup, where we saw a vote of 30 to 1. I hope we will be able to maintain that spirit of bipartisanship on the floor, and I urge my colleagues to refrain from offering poison pill amendments, which would derail our progress.

I believe this is a fair bill. It contains tradeoffs and hard choices. I certainly don't agree with everything in it—particularly the nuclear weapons portion—but I support passage of the bill by the Senate.

Overall, the bill provides \$43.8 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Energy, and other agencies. This is an increase of \$566 million over fiscal year 2018 levels.

I want to highlight the fact that we received an increase in our nondefense allocation of \$474 million above 2018. This is a very generous allocation, and it has allowed us to do the following: to increase funding for reclamation programs that prevent and mitigate the effect of drought throughout 19 western States; to increase funding for critical Army Corps infrastructure; and to increase funding for the Office of Science, the largest single supporter of basic scientific research in the United States.

We were also able to continue strong support for applied energy programs, particularly those that fund the development of carbon-free renewable technologies.

Even with a more modest defense allocation, we fund efforts to address the environmental legacy of the Cold War in Tennessee, South Carolina, New Mexico, Washington, and other States.

The bill also funds key priorities in nuclear nonproliferation, including securing radiological materials in hospitals and industrial facilities in this country and helping our international partners do the same.

Before I turn to nuclear weapons, I wish to speak briefly about nuclear waste. There are over 80,000 metric tons of spent fuel stored at 77 reactor sites in 33 States. The vast majority of that is still stored in wet pools. This is important because every one of us has communities struggling to deal with their legacy nuclear waste. For the sixth year in a row, this bill includes a provision that would create a nuclear waste pilot program to allow for interim, consent-based storage of commercial spent nuclear fuel. But I want to say to all my colleagues in the Senate, we need your support to get this

done. We have a bipartisan path here in the Senate, but the House won't budge. They won't support any nuclear waste proposal that isn't Yucca Mountain. After all these years that have gone by, we can't let another year go by with no movement on nuclear waste. We need the Senate to be united, and we need your help to push the House to stop holding our bipartisan pilot program hostage to their impossible demands on Yucca Mountain.

Finally, I want to speak briefly about nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, this bill includes the \$65 million requested by the Trump administration to begin to modify the existing W76 warhead for the new low-yield weapon. If fully funded, this new nuclear capability will be completed in just 2 years.

I strongly oppose funding for this new nuclear weapon. I firmly believe we already have enough nuclear weapons, and the military actually agrees. When testifying before Congress on March 20, 2018, Gen. John Hyten, the commander of U.S. Strategic Command, said:

I have everything I need today to deter Russia from doing anything against the United States of America. We're fully ready against any threat that exists today, without a doubt.

That is the head of our nuclear forces saying he has everything he needs. So why waste money on new nuclear weapons the military doesn't need?

Not only do I share General Hyten's belief that we already have enough nuclear weapons in general, but I also believe we definitely don't need any low-yield nuclear weapons in particular.

The Trump administration has argued that it needs this new nuclear weapon in order to have a proportionate response to a Russian first-use of a low-yield weapon. That line of argument makes clear that the administration is actually contemplating using nuclear weapons to fight limited nuclear wars. Just think about it. There is no such thing as a limited nuclear war. We are kidding ourselves if we think there is, and the military agrees.

In February, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said:

I don't think there is any such thing as a "tactical nuclear weapon." Any nuclear weapon used any time is a strategic game-changer.

I share Secretary Mattis's view. I don't believe there is any such thing as a limited nuclear war. Once a nuclear weapon is used by any country against any target, that is the end of us. Therefore, I do not see any reason to develop low-yield weapons.

We have steadfastly funded the modernization of our nuclear stockpile and its supporting infrastructure over the past 8 years. Altogether, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that over the next 30 years, we will spend \$1.7 trillion to upgrade and maintain nearly all of our nuclear forces. But the low-yield submarine launched ballistic missile warhead is separate and apart from the scope of that effort.

Funding it simply does not make sense from either a budgetary or a strategic perspective.

Despite my opposition to funding for this nuclear warhead, I do recognize that, in other ways, this is a balanced bill. It builds on the investments we were able to make in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus. It provides another \$200 million for water projects in the West, and it continues investments in clean technologies that will help combat the effects of climate change. It is not perfect. It is not the bill I would have written if I were chairman, but on balance, I support this bill. I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

Once again, it is a great pleasure for me to work with my chairman. We have worked together now for over 5 years on this committee and produced a bill every year. Both of us have made compromises, and I am very proud of the relationship. I thank the chairman. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The majority whip.

FAMILY SEPARATION POLICY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday I spoke briefly about the ongoing situation at the U.S.-Mexican border. It continues to be on my mind and on the minds of many others, including the Presiding Officer, who has offered some very constructive suggestions for how to address this situation.

Just as under the Obama administration in 2014, we have seen a surge of unaccompanied children and families coming across our southern border during the spring and summer months. At the time, President Obama called it a humanitarian crisis, and it truly was and is.

Between October 1 of last year and May 31 of this year, the number of families apprehended at the southwest border rose by 58 percent, compared to the same period a year earlier. Many of these individuals hail from Central America. Some have presented themselves lawfully at ports of entry, but others have tried to enter illegally in more remote, unpopulated areas.

Let me explain. I think Secretary Nielsen tried to make this distinction, but I am not sure it quite penetrated. If someone shows up at a port of entry and asks for asylum, they have not violated our immigration laws, and their claim for asylum needs to be considered by the Border Patrol and by the immigration judge to whom their case is assigned.

If someone tries to enter the country between the ports of entry, they have violated a Federal law. Secretary Nielsen made the point that there is no reason for people legitimately claiming asylum to enter the country illegally when they can come through the ports of entry, much as Cubans have in times past during the existence of the so-called wet foot, dry foot policy that was later abrogated by President Obama.

People with a credible fear of persecution in their home countries may

present their claims through normal, well-defined processes. There is no reason for somebody to go to the far reaches of the frontier, the border region—the Wild Wild West, as I like to call it—and try to come in by illicit means. There is simply no reason to do that if you have a legitimate claim for asylum.

Nonetheless, many people opt to go that route anyway. For them, the Trump administration has made a decision to enforce our laws on the books by prosecuting adults in criminal court when they are apprehended crossing our borders illegally. Those are laws passed by Congress, signed by the President of the United States, and the Trump administration has made the logical decision that it is their responsibility to enforce laws that are on the books.

The relevant laws—the ones that make it illegal to cross the border in the first place, a misdemeanor, and it often makes subsequent crossings much more serious—have been on the books for many decades, but they were not always enforced by previous administrations when families were involved. Now, because of a number of Federal court decisions, consent decrees, and statutes, an adult must be separated from a child as the legal process plays its way out.

The reason I say that is we don't want children going to jail with an adult who is being processed for illegally entering the United States. Children are, under current practice, placed in a separate, safe setting. They are not left unattended and fending for themselves against violent criminals who are being detained by regular ICE or Bureau of Prisons facilities.

The relevant legal decisions, settlements, and statutes are important to acknowledge because, as the New York Times stated this past weekend, "Technically, there is no Trump administration policy stating that illegal border crossers must be separated from their children."

Instead, there are many variables that are hard to disentangle from one another: the current administration's stepped-up enforcement directives, the so-called Flores agreement, which requires that children be held for no longer than 20 days, a Ninth Circuit opinion that applies Flores to family units, protracted timelines for asylum claims, limited detention facilities, and a division of responsibility among ICE, Health and Human Services, and other agencies.

You can see how this quickly becomes enormously complex because of the overlay of Federal law, consent decrees, court judgments, and other divided responsibilities among Federal agencies.

Underlying this complex array of factors is something pretty uncontroversial, though. I think every Member of this Chamber will agree with the Trump administration that we should never be placing children in

prisons or jails with hardened criminals when their parents are being prosecuted.

By the same token, I and many others certainly don't want family members to be separated from one another as a consequence of Department of Homeland Security and administration officials enforcing the laws they are sworn to uphold.

What we are literally being told is that there is a false choice here. You can either enforce the law or unify family members. We are hearing from many of our Democratic colleagues that the administration ought to simply quit enforcing the law, but we all have taken an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States. Whether you are a legislator, the President of the United States, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, we have all taken that same oath.

I know U.S. Customs and Border Protection folks, like Manny Padilla and David Higginson and all the men and women who work under them in the Rio Grande Valley, are trying to do what is required of them by their job; that is, to enforce the law. That is a good thing. We appreciate all they do.

The answer to this current situation is a solution that allows us to both enforce the law and keep families together. They don't have to be mutually exclusive. We have to keep family members together and prevent unnecessary hardship, stress, and outrage. It is not our purpose to cause these children, in particular, the children who have been brought across our border illegally by their parents—we are not trying to take it out on them or punish them. We have heard about the consequences when family members are separated. Mental health problems may, for example, follow children all the way to adulthood. We need to be mindful of that risk and work to ensure the children's well-being.

None other than former First Lady Laura Bush wrote this last weekend that she believes we can find a better answer to this current crisis, and I agree with her. In fact, we are off to a pretty good start. Some of my colleagues and I, including the Presiding Officer's staff, are working together to try to come up with a way to keep families unified when they are detained at the border.

I think our goals should be pretty clear and simple: Ensure that families stay together at ICE facilities while their criminal or civil proceedings are ongoing; clarify that the so-called Flores settlement does not apply to children who have crossed the border illegally with their parents; and promote the expedited consideration of detained families by immigration judges so that they are not left in limbo for any longer than is absolutely necessary.

I believe these are the building blocks for a consensus approach, one that every Member—Republican and

Democrat alike—could rally behind. Throughout the course of our discussions, though, one point has become increasingly clear. All of us believe that families crossing the border should be kept together. Where we differ is whether we believe we should also enforce our immigration laws.

As I said, it need not be an either-or proposition. We can keep families unified and at the same time remain resolute in enforcing our immigration laws. In fact, Congress wrote them, and it is within our prerogative to change them if we wish, but as long as they are on the books, I believe everyone from the President of the United States on down has a responsibility to enforce laws on the books.

The Trump administration has said that it will not tolerate any violations of those laws or any others and that all offenders will remain on the table for prosecution. There is no reason for anybody to oppose what I have laid out. Either we are a nation of laws, with a government that enforces them, or we are a nation with no laws and open borders.

I urge all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to keep talking and keep an open mind. I believe that on a very contentious subject, like immigration, we could literally come together and resolve this situation swiftly and ensure that these children are kept with their families and the law is enforced, according to what the laws are on the books.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, as we await a 12:15 p.m. vote, I want to urge my colleagues to support the first amendment that we will be voting on today—the Gardner-Coons sense-of-the-Senate resolution, a resolution that focuses on the importance of federally sponsored research for the advancement of scientific innovation.

There are many great things to like about the program that is funded in this Energy and Water appropriations bill that is about to be before us, especially the work funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. Our bipartisan resolution reinforces that message by acknowledging that the United States has long been a leader in innovation, in large part because of a critical role played by Federal funding for both basic and applied research.

For decades, we have made investments that have led to incredible breakthroughs instrumental to our current prosperity, economy, and jobs. The Department of Energy National Labs—the 17 labs across 11 States—have been at the forefront through that process since their founding. It is the creative, generative, innovative partnership among these federally funded national labs, our network of universities and colleges that conduct federally funded and privately funded research, and the entrepreneurs and companies that take, through applied research, their innovations and inven-

tions to the marketplace that in combination have created one of the most innovative, most competitive economies in global history.

I am grateful for the leadership of Senators ALEXANDER and FEINSTEIN, the chair and ranking member of the Energy and Water Subcommittee of Appropriations, for having brought forward this balanced and thoughtful bill. I will remind my colleagues that for several years now, budgets presented by the executive branch have proposed deep and harmful cuts to the foundational, federally funded scientific research upon which the success of our innovation economy rests. I am thrilled that once again this year, on a bipartisan basis, we are rejecting those cuts and, instead, investing significantly more in Federal scientific research.

I am grateful for the opportunity to partner with my colleague, the Senator from Colorado, in moving the sense of the Senate. I am hopeful that it begins to clarify on a bipartisan basis that this Chamber is committed to innovation, science, competitiveness, and research. With that, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH

Mr. President, while we are waiting for floor action, I will briefly share with my colleagues that my day began with my speaking to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, which is made up of more than 500 Americans who have come from all 50 States and who are all across Capitol Hill right now, meeting with those in offices of the House and the Senate. They are folks who have lost loved ones—family members, relatives, neighbors—to one of the deadliest cancers, pancreatic cancer. They are here to urge that we invest more in medical research. This is a cancer that has affected families all over our country, but without greater investment in research, we cannot bend the trajectory of this dread disease.

It was just last February that I lost my own father to pancreatic cancer, and this year was my first Father's Day without him. I am grateful for the opportunity to have joined this morning with these Americans from every State. I join with them in urging my colleagues to consider investing more this year in research to end this scourge of pancreatic cancer.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

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

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:37 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WICKER).

ENERGY AND WATER, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I think we are going to have a couple of votes shortly on amendments. Senator ALEXANDER and I will offer one to the underlying bill. I think Senator COONS will offer another one along with, I believe, Senator ROUNDS.

AMENDMENT NO. 2920 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2910

As Members are returning from their caucus lunches, I will kick it off and lay the groundwork for the amendment Senator ALEXANDER and I will be offering. I believe we have Senate amendment No. 2920 at the desk on behalf of Senator ALEXANDER and myself.

I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 2920 be called up and made the pending business.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Delaware [Mr. CARPER] proposes an amendment numbered 2920 to amendment No. 2910.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To direct the Secretary of the Army to submit a report on the status of returning to non-Federal project sponsors excess non-Federal funds)

On page 14, between lines 18 and 19, insert the following:

SEC. 106. Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report that—

(1) includes a list of all cost-shared Corps projects that, as of the date of enactment of this Act—

(A) are physically and fiscally complete; and

(B) for which excess non-Federal funds have not been returned to the non-Federal project sponsor; and

(2) with respect to each project listed under paragraph (1), describes the status of—

(A) returning the excess funds to the non-Federal project sponsor; and

(B) providing the non-Federal project sponsor a final accounting of the project.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, the amendment Senator ALEXANDER and I are offering is a bipartisan effort, as you can tell. It is the result of discussions between Senator ALEXANDER's Appropriations Committee staff and the staff who works for us on the Environment and Public Works Committee.

The amendment would require the Corps to report to Congress on the status of Corps project expenses. The amendment would allow project sponsors to receive a final cost accounting of project dollars so that they understand how those dollars are spent and know whether there are excess unspent funds and whether those funds are being returned to State and local government or to the Federal Government.

As many of our colleagues know, the Senate is getting ready to address soon—probably, if not this month, then next month—the water resources development legislation that Senator BARRASSO, our chairman on Environment and Public Works, and I and other colleagues have worked on. It was reported unanimously out of the Environment and Public Works Committee. That bill, which is called America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, makes investments in updating and expanding water infrastructure systems throughout the country. Along with reauthorizing the ongoing work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, our legislation addresses a wide variety of priorities. Again, it was reported unanimously out of our committee about a month or so ago, 21 to 0.

In the drafting of this legislation, several concerns were raised about how the Corps selects and prioritizes projects for construction, as well as what happens to excess local cost share dollars at the end of a project. For example, in my home State of Delaware, our State agency that sponsors the beach renourishment and other shoreline protection projects has been asking the Corps for a detailed balance sheet for years to understand how funds are being allocated on various projects and how local tax dollars are being spent. Unfortunately, that material has never been provided despite repeated requests.

Delaware is not alone in this. The Senator from Kansas, Mr. MORAN, has brought to my attention an issue of malfunctioning radial arm gates—also called Tainter gates—on a reservoir in his home State of Kansas. The local irrigation district was billed for the repairs of the gates, which was added as an additional cost to their annual share of the operations and maintenance of that project.

Although the irrigation district has been paying on this bill, they never knew how much it actually cost to repair the gates. It took my staff and Senator BARRASSO's staff to find out that the total cost of repairs was \$31 million. This means, according to the Corps, that the remaining local cost share is about \$5 million. However, because there is not a detailed account-

ing, the question has been raised about whether the Corps billed the irrigation district correctly. If the Corps had accounted for this program correctly, the cost share should have been about \$1 million. That difference of \$4 million may not sound like a lot to us here in the Senate or in the Federal Government, but \$4 million to a local rural irrigation district is a lot of money.

Sadly, as I said before, this data has not been provided to many cost share partners, as is the law, and we need to get to the bottom of why and where it is happening.

Senator ALEXANDER and I believe that this report that is being requested sets the stage for more transparency and better budgeting at the Corps, which is also a theme in the America's Water Infrastructure Act that we will be addressing, I hope, next month.

Let me conclude by once more thanking Chairman ALEXANDER and his staff for working with my staff and me and also with Senator BARRASSO on the water resources development legislation and on this amendment. It truly is a bipartisan amendment and a good one to start off the discussion on the underlying bill. We are pleased to be a part of this, and we look forward to passing this important piece of legislation that is critical to funding a central piece of our Nation's economic infrastructure.

I encourage support for my amendment.

I yield the floor to Senator ALEXANDER and look forward to working with him as we go forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Delaware for his customary leadership. He has been wise to come up with this idea.

In some cases, the Corps of Engineers has completed projects under budget. The Corps had excess non-Federal funds paid by the project's sponsor.

His amendment, which I am happy to cosponsor, requires the Corps to provide a list of all the projects that have been completed and have excess non-Federal funds that have not been returned to the project sponsor put on that list. It also requires the Corps to provide a final accounting for each project and the status of the Corps' plan to return the excess non-Federal funds. It does not increase Federal spending. It is intended to ensure that the Corps returns excess non-Federal funds to project sponsors in a timely manner.

Let me thank the Republican and Democratic staffs for working with us through the morning in the customary smooth way to get an appropriations bill on the floor.

This is the first vote on the appropriations bills this week. We will vote on the Coons-Gardner amendment first and then on the Carper-Alexander amendment second. We have several other amendments waiting for consideration. Senators THUNE and DURBIN