

and for every year to come. This requires us to put an end to continuing resolutions and remove arbitrary budget caps and the threat of sequestration. Only by doing so can Congress fulfill its No. 1 responsibility: keeping Americans safe.

I conclude by again thanking the majority leader for bringing the fiscal year 2018 Defense appropriations bill to the floor. He can't do it alone. He needs our cooperation. He needs our understanding as to just how critical this is. If there is not unanimous consent to move forward, it will require 60 of us to agree. It is time to bring this bill to the floor for full debate and passage.

I ask all of my colleagues to support it, get it to the President's desk as soon as possible, and finally bring an end to the defense component of a continuing resolution that, with arbitrary budget caps, is so severely impacting the readiness of our Armed Forces.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CHILD PROTECTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that the Senate has received a message from the House to accompany H.R. 695.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is correct.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany H.R. 695.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the title of the bill (H.R. 695) entitled "An Act to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes." and be it further

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the aforementioned bill, with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 695.

CLOTURE MOTION

I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 695, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Jerry Moran, Richard Burr, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, James M. Inhofe, Pat Roberts, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Mike Rounds.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1922

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to refer the House message on H.R. 695 to the Committee on Appropriations to report back forthwith with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to refer the House message on H.R. 695 to the Committee on Appropriations to report back forthwith with instructions, being amendment numbered 1922.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

"This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1923

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 1923 to the instructions of the motion to refer.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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:

Strike "1 day" and insert "2 days"

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1924 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1923

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 1924 to amendment No. 1923.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike "2" and insert "3"

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to join my colleagues, both Republican and Democrat, in raising the alarm about a decision I believe represents politicized policymaking at its very worst. Just a few weeks ago, we were notified that the Trump administration's Interior Department seeks to open up 90 percent—90 percent—of America's waters to oil and gas drilling.

This was startling news for Americans everywhere but particularly for those of us who come from States along the Atlantic and Pacific coastlines who had no expectation that our coastal waters were about to be subjected to the search for oil and gas. The objections to the Trump administration's decision came swiftly from elected officials in both parties, Republicans and Democrats, because protecting America's fragile coastlines isn't—or shouldn't be—a partisan issue.

This decision by President Trump and Secretary of the Interior Zinke was not rooted in public input or scientific analysis. This decision was not based on concerns about community safety or economic prosperity. This decision was our administration putting their "energy dominance" goals above all else.

I know several of my colleagues have already spoken out to discuss what this means for their States and how it will impact their constituents, but I am here today to raise my voice for mine, to fight for Delaware. In Delaware, our coasts are critical to our local environment and our robust economy. Delaware has 28 miles of Atlantic coastline—some of the most pristine, most beautiful beaches in the entire country.

As you can see in this graphic of our boardwalk at Rehoboth Beach, DE, our 28 miles of coastline employ 10 percent of our total State workforce. That is a remarkable amount of economic activity in a very small space. Our coastline generates \$6.9 billion in economic activity every year and hosts thousands of acres of protected land. It includes on our bay shore side two national wildlife refuges that serve as critical

habitat for bald eagles, white-tailed deer, and striped bass. The future of our coastal economy depends on recreational access, fishing, and tourism, which are now potentially at risk because of this ill-advised decision to open the coastline off of Delaware and the rest of the mid-Atlantic to potential oil and gas exploration and production.

My colleagues know that I make an effort to promote pragmatic and bipartisan ideas. It is one of my top priorities, day in and day out, to work across the aisle and do what is right for our constituents and for the United States.

Let me be clear. My view is not based on an anti-oil or anti-natural gas message. I support an “all of the above” energy strategy and have advanced legislation that will embrace an “all of the above” energy strategy, and I acknowledge there are many places in the United States where we can, and do, safely produce these resources, both onshore and offshore. But what if we happen to face a spill of the scale and size of Deepwater Horizon?

This is an overlay of the footprint of the 2010 oil disaster of the Deepwater Horizon and how it spread to impact the gulf coastline. It is perhaps a little hard to see here, but the State of Delaware and New Jersey and its fragile coastline are underneath that footprint. It suggests how we might end up facing dramatic impacts, negative impacts on tourism and fishing that depend on clean coastlines to support tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic activity in my home State.

If we are going to think seriously about doing this, we need to think about the impacts. We need to ask whether the costs outweigh the benefits. When it comes to the Trump-Zinke plan to drill off the coast of Delaware, I am here to tell you that the potential costs dramatically outweigh the benefits. As you can see in this graphic, a spill the size of the Deepwater Horizon could devastate all of our beach communities and protected wildlife areas in Delaware and the region.

Again, protecting our coastlines, an idea supported by scientists and coastal residents alike, should not be a partisan issue. In Delaware alone, multiple city councils, all up and down our coast, have openly opposed offshore drilling through letters and resolutions they have sent to me and the rest of our congressional delegation.

Coastal lawmakers from both parties have opposed offshore drilling. I know for a fact the same is happening in virtually every other coastal State potentially impacted by this unwise decision. These are the people we should be listening to—the people who don’t just visit the coast for a week in the summer but who live on it, who rely on it, who have built their lives and their local economy around it.

Instead, as this decision shows, the Trump administration is prioritizing

the oil and gas industry and partisan politics over those of independent scientists, coastal residents, and the elected officials who speak for our coastal communities. That was made painfully clear when the Republican Governor of Florida, a close ally of the President, petitioned to shield just Florida from potential oil and gas exploration and production.

Sure enough, Florida promptly got a public promise from Secretary Zinke that its coastlines would be spared. I am sure Florida’s coastline is beautiful. In fact, I visited Florida’s coastline, and I can tell you it is beautiful. But guess what; so is Delaware’s. We deserve to be able to protect our coastline just as much as Floridians do. I invite Secretary Zinke to once again come to Delaware but to instead see the coastline and see these fragile resources and see what they have to offer for wildlife, for conservation, for fishing, for hunting, and for tourism.

Secretary Zinke promising to exempt Florida is the Trump administration deciding which States have to deal with oil and gas drilling based purely on partisan, political considerations. I think the state of our coastal communities and local economies shouldn’t be auctioned off to the highest bidder and shouldn’t be subject to partisan politics. Instead, they should be protected based on science and based on the views of coastal communities.

I am here today to voice my profound disappointment in this blatant neglect of local voices and the well-being of individual States and coastal communities. I came to the floor to fight for my State and to raise the local voices I have heard from our coastal communities. Our coastlines are just too fragile and too vital and too important to let partisan politics get in the way of their future.

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.

Mr. COONS. 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 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

CHILD PROTECTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2017—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2386 are printed in today’s RECORD under

“Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

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

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

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, it is no secret that our country faces a major healthcare crisis and, in fact, a dysfunctional healthcare system.

We have some 30 million people who have no health insurance, and that number is going to go up in the coming year. We have even more people who are underinsured, with high deductibles and copayments. Our people pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, which means that millions of people who go to the doctor to get a prescription are simply unable to afford the bill. In fact, the description of that is the definition of a dysfunctional, failing healthcare system.

In the midst of all of that, there is another particular crisis dealing with primary healthcare, and that is that even when people do have health insurance in many parts of our country, they are finding it very hard to go to a doctor and to get in to a doctor to treat the ailments that they have. We fall behind many other countries in terms of our lack of emphasis on primary healthcare, which should be the heart and soul of any strong healthcare system. The bottom line is that when you get sick, you should be able to get to the doctor when you need to and not have to wait weeks and months in order to do so.

In the midst of a failing primary healthcare system, there is one very strong bright spot, and that is that for many decades now, in every State in this country, we have had community health centers run by the people themselves—democratically run—addressing the healthcare needs of those given communities. Today, in America, we have about 27 million people—27 million men, women, and children—who are accessing community health centers. In my own State of Vermont, one out of four Vermonters gets their primary healthcare through a community health center.

These centers do more than provide primary healthcare. They also provide dental care, an issue that is too often ignored when we talk about the healthcare crisis. They provide mental health counseling, which is more important now than perhaps it has ever been because of the opioid and heroin epidemic our country is experiencing. Equally important, they provide low-cost prescription drugs at a time when so many Americans cannot afford the medicines they need. That is what community health centers do, and they