

wasteful manner. I would think we would want to take something like that, go through the appropriations process, and try to fix the spending.

But you will never get less waste if you give people more money. So really the bottom line is, you have to give people less money. If you give people more money, they will continue to waste it at the same rate. You can say we are rooting out waste, but if you are always increasing the amount of money you give people, there will be more waste. There are some Departments of government that should be completely cut out, eliminated.

I think there is a lot that can be done, but none of this is happening now. When weglom all the spending together in one enormous bill, there is not enough time to read it, and if there are no amendments, there is no way or no process to go through and try to reform government.

I think this has been a very useful debate, and my hope is that those who mutter and say "Gosh, why are we having to do this so late at night?" will say "Why do we do it at all this way? Why can't we do it in a better way next year? Why can't we begin to do the process of actually sending bills through committee and debating them in a normal fashion?"

So I, for one, think that this is an important debate and that the future of our country hinges on how much debt we are accumulating. I hope those who look at this bill who actually truly do believe that debt is a problem will consider saying: Enough is enough, and I am not voting for more debt.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we begin the cloture vote at this time. I believe we are only about 2 minutes away from the scheduled time.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative 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 with a further amendment to H.R. 1892, an act to amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Thom Tillis, James Lankford, John Kennedy, Roy Blunt, Richard C. Shelby, Lisa Murkowski, Susan M. Collins, Steve Daines, John Boozman, John Barrasso, James M. Inhofe, Orrin G. Hatch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with amendment No. 1930, offered by the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. McCONNELL, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCain).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 73, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 30 Leg.]

YEAS—73

Alexander	Hassan	Portman
Baldwin	Hatch	Reed
Barrasso	Heinrich	Roberts
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Rounds
Blunt	Heller	Rubio
Boozman	Hoeven	Schatz
Brown	Inhofe	Schumer
Capito	Isakson	Scott
Cardin	Isakson	Shaheen
Carper	Kaine	Shelby
Casey	Kennedy	Smith
Cassidy	King	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Thune
Cornyn	McCaskill	Tillis
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Udall
Cotton	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cruz	Moran	Warner
Donnelly	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Murphy	Wicker
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Fischer	Nelson	Young
Gardner	Perdue	
Graham	Peters	

NAYS—26

Bennet	Feinstein	Markey
Booker	Flake	Merkley
Burr	Gillibrand	Paul
Cantwell	Grassley	Risch
Corker	Harris	Sanders
Crapo	Hirono	Sasse
Daines	Johnson	Toomey
Enzi	Lankford	Warren
Ernst	Lee	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 73, the nays are 26.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer with instructions falls.

The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 1931

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1931.

AMENDMENT NO. 1931 WITHDRAWN

Mr. McCONNELL. I withdraw the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The amendment is withdrawn.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1930

The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with further amendment.

The yeas and nays have been previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCain).

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

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 31 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Graham	Peters
Baldwin	Hassan	Portman
Barrasso	Hatch	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Roberts
Blunt	Heitkamp	Rounds
Boozman	Heller	Rubio
Brown	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Inhofe	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Scott
Carper	Jones	Shaheen
Casey	Kaine	Shelby
Cochran	King	Smith
Collins	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	Menendez	Udall
Donnelly	Moran	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murray	Wicker
Fischer	Nelson	Young
Gardner	Perdue	

NAYS—28

Bennet	Flake	Merkley
Booker	Gillibrand	Paul
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Cantwell	Harris	Sanders
Cassidy	Hirono	Sasse
Corker	Johnson	Toomey
Crapo	Kennedy	Warren
Daines	Lankford	Wyden
Enzi	Lee	
Feinstein	Markey	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BROADER OPTIONS FOR AMERICANS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 302, H.R. 2579.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 302, H.R. 2579, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative 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 proceed to Calendar No. 302, H.R. 2579, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis, Cory Gardner, James Lankford, Bill Cassidy, Marco Rubio, Roy Blunt, Lindsey Graham, Mike Rounds, Richard Burr, Tim Scott, Jeff Flake, Pat Roberts, John Thune, John Hoeven.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING
LEGISLATION

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I wish to speak about an urgent challenge facing my constituents and my colleagues in the Pacific Northwest that unfortunately was ignored in this massive legislative mishmash we were asked to vote up or down on in the middle of the night: wildfires.

Communities across the West, including my home State of Washington, are being torn apart by these disasters. Last year, the Diamond Creek fire burned 128,000 acres in my State. In 2016, the Okanogan Complex burned 305,000 acres. Just those two fires alone burned an area around two-thirds the size of Rhode Island, and both devastating events spewed ash and toxic smoke across a vast region and destroyed billions of dollars' worth of forest products.

I am very concerned that these are not freak or rare, once-in-a-generation events. According to our best scientists, the killer combination of climate change and decades of inadequate forest management has made these monster infernos the new normal.

The numbers speak for themselves.

Ten thousand, that is the number of houses that have been burned down in wildfires last year.

Eighteen billion, that is the initial estimate of how much damage wildfires caused just in California last year.

Sadly, 54 Americans were killed by these wildfires in 2017.

That is why I have spent years collaborating with other Senators from affected States to hammer out commonsense, bipartisan solutions to this increasingly urgent challenge.

First and foremost is the inadequate funding for fire prevention and suppression programs.

How much longer are we going to shortchange fire programs? The fire

budget Congress allocated for this last year was short by over \$1.4 billion.

Under current law, when there is a funding shortfall like this, the Forest Service has to rob its own programs to make it up. What programs? The ones dedicated to fire prevention and forest restoration that could help prevent future fires. That is crazy and very shortsighted.

Also, we need a better management strategy for our national forests—an innovative strategy to manage our forests in smarter, more efficient, and more sustainable ways. There are many case studies of how we can reduce fire risk and increase local forestry jobs, all while restoring forest ecosystems.

For example, the Colville National Forest has been using innovative management tools to reduce the risk of wildfire in northeast Washington. The forward-thinking restoration work being performed by Vaagen Brothers Lumber in Colville has enabled this small National Forest to be ranked in the top three forest products-producing national forests in the country. Their holistic approach to forest restoration has also earned them the proud spot as the No. 1 national forest for number of culverts replaced to improve fish passage and water quality.

The success of local projects cannot help but inspire me and my colleagues. I am pleased to report that all of the Senators from the Northwest—both Democrat and Republican—have agreed on what is needed to enable the Forest Service to be proactive rather than simply reactive when it comes to wildfires.

Senators RISCH, WYDEN, CRAPO, MURRAY, MERKLEY, and I agree that the Forest Service's fire-borrowing problem needs to be fixed. All of us cosponsored legislation to do that.

Senators RISCH, WYDEN, CRAPO, MURRAY, MERKLEY, and I also all agree that we should treat the most at-risk parts of the national forests before they burn up and do so in a way that is supported by science. All of us cosponsored legislation to also do that.

These bills have been endorsed by environmental groups, timber industry, firefighter organizations, and local governments. All of these local and national stakeholders are in agreement, that we need to supply the Forest Service and impacted communities with funding, provide jobs in rural communities, and reduce the fire risk in our most at-risk forests.

Unfortunately, despite the urgency of the problem, despite the strong consensus on both sides of the aisle and amongst a diverse range of stakeholders, despite the fact that we have hammered out legislative text, it appears the inclusion of our bipartisan measure is being blocked from being included in the pending bill.

It is hard to overemphasize my frustration at the current situation. It took weeks, months, and in some cases years to develop these proposals and

vet with affected stakeholders this suite of bipartisan bills.

The bipartisan consensus legislation we offered last week included a permanent fix to the Forest Service's fire-borrowing problem. That was legislation cosponsored by 15 Senators. Our proposal also included funding for Secure Rural Schools. That bipartisan legislation was cosponsored by 32 Senators.

It turns out there were actors set on blocking our attempts to enact reasonable wildfire legislation. We received a counteroffer at the eleventh hour, and it contained only a short-term funding solution, with eight new radical land management policies that they knew we could not accept.

The new provisions ranged from repealing protections for old-growth trees on the Tongass National Forest to giving away Federal land. Other objectionable provisions included allowing exemptions for large clearcuts from environmental review and removing people's ability to file lawsuits on Forest Service projects in Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. That is ridiculous.

Instead of working to forward bipartisan ideas, Republican leadership decided to inject "poison pill" environmental riders into the process in a "take it or leave it" midnight offer.

This leaves many of us with a lot of doubt as to whether Republican leadership has ever been serious about fixing wildland fire budgeting. History tonight shows that they see it only as a vehicle to sideline long-established environmental laws that protect people, wildlife, and our public lands.

Well, I want to tell everyone here that we are not giving up. There are so many bipartisan, noncontroversial improvements to Forest Service management that can be enacted.

Members, like my colleagues from the Northwest, want to get something done. Our constituents are demanding it, and we need to do it before the next fire season starts in just a few months.

I want the record to reflect that, while there were many provisions I supported in the underlying legislation, I could not in good conscience vote for a bill that purposely left urgently needed wildland firefighting legislation on the cutting room floor. We can and must do better next time, and I am going to keep working at it until we get this problem addressed.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND
SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. THUNE, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PETERS, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. UDALL, Ms. SMITH, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mrs. MURRAY):