

[Rollcall Vote No. 400 Leg.]

YEAS—86

Alexander	Fischer	Reed
Baldwin	Gardner	Risch
Barrasso	Graham	Roberts
Bennet	Grassley	Romney
Blackburn	Hassan	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hawley	Rounds
Blunt	Heinrich	Rubio
Boozman	Hirono	Sasse
Brown	Hoeven	Schatz
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cantwell	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Jones	Shaheen
Carper	Kaine	Shelby
Casey	Kennedy	Sinema
Cassidy	King	Smith
Collins	Lankford	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Thune
Cotton	McSally	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Toomey
Crapo	Moran	Udall
Cruz	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Daines	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Perdue	Wicker
Ernst	Peters	Young
Feinstein	Portman	

NAYS—8

Braun	Lee	Paul
Enzi	Markey	Wyden
Gillibrand	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Isakson	Sanders
Harris	Klobuchar	Warren

The conference report was agreed to.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. 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.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I need.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, as I have reminded you all many times, this is the 59th straight year we will be passing the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Bill. It has passed for all these years in a row because we all know just how important it is. It is the most important thing we do around here. We are building on nearly six decades of bipartisan support for our troops and national security.

This year, I am glad to say, it is no different. We all came together to produce a conference report that is good for all of America. The House passed it overwhelmingly; the Senate passed it overwhelmingly. We voted for it overwhelmingly yesterday. And the President says he will sign it immediately. I am grateful to the President for understanding the importance of this bill.

This bill means everything for our national security. Every American ben-

efits from a strong national defense. Their lives, their livelihoods, their freedoms are all because we fight to protect them.

When I go around my State of Oklahoma, people think we have the best of everything militarily. We have the best people. We have the best soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen. There is no doubt about it. But we can do better when it comes to giving them the best equipment and the best training. That is what this bill does. It does that. The backbone of a strong national defense is the force—the men and women who lay their lives on the line each and every day.

When I travel around, I like to take some time to meet with the enlisted guys in the mess halls. You can learn more from them than you can learn from some of the brass. They are the ones who really know what it is that we can do to effectively build a strong national defense. We get to hear what they are worried about. We get to hear how we can support them.

They need the training and equipment that makes them the most fearsome fighting force in the world. This bill does that. They need a safe roof over their heads and over the heads of their families, and this bill does that. They need to know that they have the full support of the U.S. Government throughout their service. This bill does that. At the end of the day, we have the best military in the world because of our people. We take care of them, and that is what this bill is all about.

We are here today because of the brave men and women who wear and have worn the uniform. We are safe and prosperous and free because of them. That is what this bill is all about.

The Senate just passed the Defense authorization bill for the 59th year in a row. There isn't much left around here that has that kind of longevity. It is a testament to the importance of the bill.

It is also a testament to the hard work of the staff. They worked tirelessly to bring this conference report to the floor. I want to take just a moment to recognize and thank everyone who made this bill possible, starting with the Armed Services Committee staff, especially the staff directors, John Bonsell for the majority and Liz King for the minority. They are the ones who provided the leadership behind the scenes. They did most of the work.

Then there is my partner, Senator JACK REED. We are a real team. We know how to do things and have learned over the years how to do things right. I couldn't praise him more. In fact, we had a lot of obstacles this year that we didn't have before. If it hadn't been for Senator REED and the staff working on it, we wouldn't have pulled this thing off.

A few minutes ago, Senator REED read the names of all of the members of the Armed Services Committee. I want to go ahead and get those in my statement here also.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the names of the Armed Services Committee staff that were listed by Senator REED be placed in the RECORD in my statement.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

My staff from the Senate Armed Services Committee:

John Wason, Tom Goffus, Stephanie Barna, Greg Lilly, Rick Berger, Marta Hernandez, Jennie Wright, Adam Barker, Augusta Binns-Berkey, Al Edwards, Jackie Kerber.

Sean O'Keefe, Tony Pankuch, Brad Patout, Jason Potter, J.R. Riordan, Katie Sutton, Eric Trager, Dustin Walker, Otis Winkler, Gwyneth Woolwine, Katie Magnus.

Arthur Tellis, Leah Brewer, Debbie Chiarello, Gary Howard, Tyler Wilkinson, John Bryant, Patty-Jane Geller, Baher Iskander, Keri-Lyn Michalke, Jackie Modesett, Soleil Sykes.

From the minority side:

Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Creighton Greene, Ozge Guzelso, Gary Leeling, Kirk McConnell, Maggie McNamara, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Arun Seraphin, Fiona Tomlin.

Mr. INHOFE. Again, I want to thank my personal staff, office staff, and floor staff.

We need to pivot to our next task at hand: funding the Department of Defense. This puts financial resources behind all of the policies we just approved today.

Our military leaders have told the Armed Services Committee over and over again—and I have repeated this several times—that stable, predictable, on-time funding is the most important way Congress can support our national defense. It is now 2½ months into the new year, and we got it done.

To all of my fellow Members here, I thank you again for your support of the national defense authorization bill.

Merry Christmas.
I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:04 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

MORNING BUSINESS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

SENATOR CRAMER'S MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today because it is my honor to introduce my colleague, who actually needs no introduction, but for this speech today I have the pleasure to introduce KEVIN CRAMER, who will be delivering his official maiden address to the U.S. Senate.

I have known KEVIN for many years and he has always been an incredibly

diligent worker for the people of North Dakota. He has served our State in many different capacities. He served as tourism director and did a tremendous job promoting our State, promoting tourism, and, really, promoting the beauty and the history of our State in a way that brought a lot of national attention and really made a difference in terms of tourism for our State.

He also served our State as economic development director, something that is certainly near and dear to my heart. I have always believed that job creation is job one, and so, to me, that is the engine that drives the car. KEVIN served as the economic development director under Governor Schafer, my predecessor, and, again, did a fantastic job. He knows the importance of supporting our farmers and our small businesses, the energy industry, and all the things that really make our State go, and he has been a huge part of helping to create an environment in our State that, from a tax and a regulatory environment, has been very supportive of the growth and development of our economy and all aspects of our economy—as I say, from ag to energy, to technology, to manufacturing and throughout the small business world—and, like me, he is a true champion for small business. We are big believers that small business is what makes this economy go. Whether it is North Dakota or the United States of America, it is small business that makes our economy go.

As Governor, I had the opportunity to appoint KEVIN to our State's public service commission in 2003, and he followed that and ran and was elected to the PSC by the people of North Dakota and served as the public service commissioner for the State until 2012. Certainly, in that role he was a big part of the growth and development of our State.

Back in 2000, when I started as Governor, we produced less than 100,000 barrels of oil a day. Today, we now produce more than 1.5 million barrels of oil a day. The only State that produces more oil than North Dakota is Texas, and KEVIN was a big part of building that climate where the industry just developed amazing technologies and this whole shale play came to be. Of course, now the United States is the largest producer of oil and gas in the world.

So he truly understands that you have to help to promote that kind of economic development, but, at the same time, there is a reasonable role for regulation and things have to be done right and well and with good environmental stewardship.

Prior to joining me in the Senate, KEVIN served for three terms in the House of Representatives, where we worked together on many of our State's priorities. We share the same beliefs in not only our great State but in this great country, and we certainly had a tremendous working relationship in the House and now, of course, I am

pleased to have him as a colleague in the Senate.

We both served as members of the farm bill conference committee a year ago and were able to put in place a strong farm bill for our farmers and ranchers.

We both work to rein in regulation, as I said, to grow our economy, and to support our military. He is a member of the Armed Services Committee and also the Veterans' Affairs Committee and has already passed a resolution supporting our veterans with his Battle of the Bulge resolution, which has been passed by this body.

These are just a few of the things that he has already done as a Member of the U.S. Senate.

He has been a dedicated public servant for the people of North Dakota. He is also a very devoted family man. He and his wife Kris have three sons—Isaac, Ian, and Abel—and two daughters—Rachel and Annie. They are the proud grandparents of five. Now, I have him by one. I have six, but this is a competition. So we will see where it ends up.

He has a great family and has been a great partner in the Senate, and, of course, I look forward to continuing to work with him.

Again, I am very pleased today to introduce Senator KEVIN CRAMER for this speech.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, a very special thanks to my senior Senator, my great friend, and our former Governor, Senator JOHN HOEVEN.

In fact, as he went through much of my speech for me, I thought to myself: Why, this is kind of like when I played high school basketball in Kindred, and we would be ahead by 20 points and the coach would get me off the bench and say: Go in and try not to screw this thing up. That is a little bit how I feel right now, but I thank him for the very kind introduction. Most of it was true.

The idea of a maiden speech a year into your first term may seem a little odd, but I actually kind of like the idea. It gives me a year's worth of opportunity to reflect, which creates greater clarity about the future and vision.

The first thing I want to say to all of my colleagues here is thank you for being so welcoming—and I mean all of them. What they say about the Senate and the collegiality of it is very true. It is not just true. It is really important, and it is something worth preserving.

I can honestly say that out of the 99 that I have met, I love every one, individually and collectively, and appreciate all they have meant to me.

Kris and I have been married for 33 years. We have five children together, and I am going to talk about one in particular in a little bit.

Our children range in ages from 12 to 38, and that is too long of a story to explain, but we love and are proud of all of them.

Our five grandchildren are a little closer in range. They range from 1 to 7, and we love every single one of them—Lyla, Beau, Nico, Chet, and Willa—with all the love any grandparent could come with and with all the love that God has for us.

I think it is important for people to know I am a child of God and a follower of Jesus, and it informs everything that I do, both at home and here and throughout life.

I think it is important to know a little bit about where you come from. I was raised by loving parents. My dad was a rural electric lineman who never once complained about going out in a storm to get the lights back on for the farmers of our area. My mother was an elder care giver when she wasn't pumping gas at the local Farmers Union station. They did whatever they needed to do to help us kids and to provide for our family. We never felt like we needed anything because we didn't. We were loved, and we were well cared for and had great examples of culture and work ethic and values that are North Dakotan.

I think it is important to understand where a person comes from, but I want to fast forward a little bit to this last year. I said I was going to talk a little bit about one of our sons. It was a tough campaign. A lot of people think that North Dakota is this bright red State and that everyone who runs there who is Republican wins. While that certainly has been the trend, I think it is sort of important for people to know that I am the first Republican in my lifetime to hold the seat that I hold right now for the people of North Dakota. In fact, the names of the previous Senators in this lineage are in this desk that I stand at.

So it was a tough campaign. I got into the race late. I really didn't aspire to be a Senator. I liked the House of Representatives and still do, but the call came and I answered it.

But what made the year so tough—and, fortunately, it was shorter than most campaign years in the U.S. Senate—is that I got in late. So it was a short year, but in the middle of the campaign, in the early part of the campaign, our 35-year-old son Isaac became very ill. He suffered from alcohol-induced liver disease, and we spent a good month and a half in the middle of an already short campaign at his bedside in intensive care both in Bismarck and in Rochester at the Mayo Clinic. I say that because it was perhaps one of the hardest 6 or 7 weeks of my life, the deepest valley of my life, but it was also one of the most instructive and informing. It was as informing as all those years in North Dakota in the State office helping Senator HOEVEN—then-Governor HOEVEN—build this dynamic economy.

Those several weeks with my son probably prepared me as well for this