

and the nays are 34. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

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## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and 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.

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### TRIBUTE TO TAYLOR NORDSETH

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Taylor Nordseth, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several weeks.

Taylor is a graduate of Worthington Senior High School in Worthington, MN. Currently, she is attending the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, SD, where she is pursuing a degree in communications studies and political science. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Taylor for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.

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### TRIBUTE TO GENE DODARO

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise to acknowledge the service of an extraordinary public servant who is retiring later this month, U.S. Comptroller General Gene L. Dodaro of the Government Accountability Office.

Gene's service to GAO and Congress is truly remarkable, spanning an incredible 52-year career at GAO, with more than half of that time spent leading the agency as Chief Operating Officer, Acting Comptroller General, or since December 2010, Comptroller General. Gene is just the eighth U.S. Comptroller General, and the first to come from within GAO. In these and his other roles working at GAO, he has served Congress by helping us better manage taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse while also improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the critical Federal programs and services our constituents depend on.

I have seen the importance of GAO's work firsthand. Over the years, Gene and the hard-working staff at GAO have assisted my work in overseeing the Committees on Veterans Affairs, Budget, HELP, and Appropriations. I can attest how greatly Congress depends on the expertise of the staff at GAO. And in the case of Gene Dodaro, few have done more to serve this insti-

tution and the American people. I want to thank and commend Gene for his many decades of excellent public service to GAO, the Congress, and the Nation and to wish him and his family all the best in his much-deserved retirement.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Gene for his dedication and service to us and the American people.

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### 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before he became President, a member of Congress, or even a lawyer, Abraham Lincoln was a postal worker. From 1833 to 1836, Lincoln served as the postmaster of New Salem, IL. He walked for miles delivering letters to Illinoisans, and he developed a habit of storing them in his now-famous stovepipe hat. As he traversed the prairies of Sangamon County, he learned about the State that would eventually be known as the Land of Lincoln. Although postmaster was just one of the many jobs Lincoln had during his days in New Salem, it was his first taste of civil service and his introduction to the people of Sangamon County.

But Abraham Lincoln is not the only person whose life has been shaped by the Post Office. For 250 years, the U.S. Post Office has provided essential services that connect Americans, support commerce, and strengthen the foundations of our democracy. Founded during the Second Continental Congress, even before the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Post Office played an indispensable role in the success of our young democracy. Not only was the Post Office crucial in facilitating communication between American revolutionaries, it also strengthened the ties between the 13 Original Colonies, allowing our country to develop into one cohesive Nation. After the Colonies won independence, the Post Office continued to grow, ensuring Americans anywhere could have access to the information necessary to participate in the democratic process.

But as the Post Office grew, there was one glaring gap in its services. People living in rural areas would need to venture to the nearest Post Office to access their mail, which could be located miles away. While Americans living in more populous locations had access to free home delivery for decades, rural Americans were still walking for miles to retrieve their post at the end of the 19th century. In 1896, the U.S. Post Office decided to try a new service in two counties in West Virginia, free rural home delivery. In less than a decade, this experiment was adopted nationwide, and today, millions of rural Americans count on home delivery.

This commitment to equitable, universal delivery is one that is near and dear to my heart as a Senator from Illinois. Across Illinois, especially downstate, we have many rural counties and towns that struggle to attract

the attention of for-profit shipping corporations. For these communities, USPS is often the only option to receive mail and send packages. That is what separates USPS from the rest of America's shipping industry. USPS is not a company; it is a public service. Its employees are public servants. The role USPS plays in connecting Americans is one that is vital for my home State and for many others across the country.

Today, USPS delivers more mail than any other company in the world. There are more than 30,000 Post Offices that serve 169 million homes across the United States. Americans rely on the United States Postal Service to deliver their medications, Social Security checks, and other important correspondence, along with birthday cards from Grandma. The post remains a lifeline for small businesses, who often cannot afford to use large for-profit shipping corporations, as well as for rural Americans. And USPS continues to support our democracy by helping Americans send and receive their mail-in ballots for local, State, and national elections.

On October 9, the Senate passed S. Res. 337, a resolution recognizing the 250th anniversary of the Postal Service of the United States and commending its indispensable role in the success of our Nation. But any recognition of the USPS would be incomplete without acknowledging America's incredible postal workers. Continuing in the tradition of President Lincoln, postal workers ensure that through rain or snow, heatwaves and arctic blasts, Americans receive their essential mail. As we celebrate the U.S. Post Office's anniversary, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to postal workers and letter carriers, both past and present, for their essential service to Illinois and the Nation.

While much has changed since the founding of the U.S. Post Office, its role as an essential pillar of our democracy and community remains the same. Congratulations to this 250-year-old public institution, and here is to many more years of service.

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### TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL SUSIE DUNHAM

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Lt. Col. Susie Dunham on her distinguished 22-year career of dedicated service to the Air Force and Air National Guard. Lieutenant Colonel Dunham served as the lead liaison for the National Guard Bureau appropriations and expertly managed engagements with Senate and House Appropriations Committees.

She facilitated seamless communication between military leadership and the U.S. Congress while directly managing correspondence with over 90 congressional offices in the House of Representatives. As the National Guard's primary point of contact for House Appropriators and Budget Committee

Members, Lieutenant Colonel Dunham oversaw a diverse portfolio of Air and Army National Guard priorities, coordinating across the National Guard Bureau joint staff, as well as ANG and ARNG staffs.

Commissioned into the Air Force in 2003 after graduating from the University of Virginia, Lieutenant Colonel Dunham earned both Top Graduate and Top Academic Awards from Undergraduate Air Battle Manager Training. She then served in the E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System Unit at Tinker Air Force Base, OK. She accumulated over 2,000 E-3 flying hours, including 580 combat hours during Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom. She also gained 200 hours on the MU-2 and served as both an instructor and evaluator air battle manager.

As an Air National Guardsman, she defended the National Capitol Region Special Flight Rules Area and prosecuted hundreds of tracks of interest in support of Operation Noble Eagle. During this time, she served as a tactical coordinator, air defense liaison officer for NCR rotary wing operations, air weapons officer, instructor, evaluator, and chief of training at the Joint Air Defense Operation Center and National Capitol Region Coordination Center.

Lieutenant Colonel Susie Dunham exemplified selfless service to our Nation during her 22-year career in the Air Force and Air National Guard. I ask the Senate to join me in celebrating her extraordinary career and enduring legacy.

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#### WELCOMING ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

Mr. FETTERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to welcome the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew, to the United States.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the longest serving Archbishop of Constantinople in the two millennia history of Christianity. As the highest spiritual authority for nearly 300 million Eastern Orthodox Christians, he has cosponsored international peace conferences; convened Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders to promote cooperation and mutual understanding; and advanced the cause of religious freedom around the world.

Environmental stewardship has been a consistent theme of His All Holiness's ministry. In honor of this commitment, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize.

I am proud to join faith leaders from across Pennsylvania in welcoming His All Holiness to the United States and extend my heartfelt congratulations on this momentous achievement.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO DR. WENDY WINTERSTEEN

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, Iowa State University President Dr. Wendy Wintersteen is an exemplary leader whose decades of service have left an enduring mark on generations of Iowa students, families, and communities.

Dr. Wintersteen's Iowa State journey began more than 40 years ago as a graduate student studying fly populations around poultry facilities. From those early days in research, she quickly earned her doctoral degree, accepted an assistant professorship, and took on leadership roles in pesticide management programs. Her dedication and vision propelled her to serve as the inaugural endowed dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, CALS, and director of the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station.

Beyond the university, Dr. Wintersteen's impact has extended across the agricultural and academic communities. She has served with distinction on the boards of the U.S.-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund, the Farm Foundation, the Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation, and the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, as well as the administrative heads section of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' Board on Agriculture Assembly.

As president of Iowa State University, Dr. Wintersteen has championed entrepreneurship, innovation, and a strong return on investment for students. Her leadership has strengthened Iowa State's national and global reputation for excellence in agricultural research and innovation, placing the university in the top 3 percent for research among nearly 500 universities without a human medical school.

Dr. Wintersteen's commitment to Iowa's students and families has never wavered. Congratulations, Dr. Wintersteen, on an extraordinary career and a lasting legacy of leadership.●

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##### TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES E. SHMERLING

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the remarkable career of Dr. James E. Shmerling. Dr. Shmerling has dedicated nearly five decades to serving the needs of children, their families, and their communities across the Nation.

Dr. Shmerling's career in children's hospitals began in the Children's Hospital of Alabama in 1979. Over the course of 8 years, he progressed in administrative responsibilities, eventually becoming associate administrator. During this time, he completed a master of science in hospital and health administration at the University of Alabama in 1980. Extraordinarily accom-

plished in the world of academia, Dr. Shmerling also earned a master of business administration from Samford University in 1984 and a doctorate of health administration from the Medical University of South Carolina in 1999.

Dr. Shmerling has set a gold standard for hospital leadership and administration across the Nation. He has held key leadership positions at children's hospitals, including the James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University, the Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center in Memphis, the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt University, and the Children's Hospital Colorado. In each position, he brought a high level of expertise, dedication to his patients, and genuine devotion to advancing children's health.

Dr. Shmerling first came to Connecticut when he was appointed as president and chief executive officer of Connecticut Children's on November 2, 2015. He has led the organization through a period of extraordinary growth and innovation, upholding an unwavering commitment to improving children's healthcare across the State and region. A visionary leader, he was responsible for leading Connecticut Children's transformation from a standalone medical center to a leading pediatric health system spanning three States, spearheading the largest expansion in the health system's history with the construction of a new eight-story clinical tower, expanding the neonatal care network, and increasing access to specialized pediatric care.

Dr. Shmerling has also served in many other leadership roles on national boards and committees related to children's health, including the Children's Hospital Association and the American Hospital Association's Maternal and Child Health Council. He has been widely recognized by his peers, including as a fellow in the American College of Health Care Executives. Dr. Shmerling has also championed other worthwhile causes throughout his career, notably promoting childhood literacy. In Connecticut, he has served as a member of the Hartford Board of Education and is currently a board member of United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut.

Dr. Shmerling's contributions to the cause of children's healthcare have been historic. Connecticut Children's and the health and well-being of our State's children are stronger than ever thanks to Dr. Shmerling's leadership. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing and celebrating the remarkable career and work of Dr. James E. Shmerling.●

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#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

##### ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 10:28 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by