

in the custody of the Federal Government.

As I said, there are, unfortunately, Democrat holds on this noncontroversial, bipartisan—bipartisan—legislation. Now, my understanding is that these holds are unrelated—unrelated—to the legislation itself.

While I do have a hold on one of the bills in the package, I will acknowledge now that Senator BENNET has been working with me to help clear the holds on my Roosevelt Library bill, and I want to express my appreciation for his help, and I look forward to continuing to work with him.

So, therefore, at his request and in the spirit of good faith, I will not object at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills, en bloc, be considered read a third time.

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

The bills were ordered to a third reading and were read the third time en bloc.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I know of no further debate on the bills en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bills having been read the third time en bloc, the question is, Shall the bills pass en bloc?

The bills were passed en bloc as follows:

FINISH THE ARKANSAS VALLEY CONDUIT ACT

The bill (H.R. 131) to make certain modifications to the repayment for the Arkansas Valley Conduit in the State of Colorado, was passed.

MODERNIZING ACCESS TO OUR PUBLIC WATERS ACT OF 2025

The bill (H.R. 187) to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, and for other purposes, was passed.

ALASKA NATIVE VIETNAM ERA VETERANS LAND ALLOTMENT EXTENSION ACT OF 2025

The bill (H.R. 410) to extend the Alaska Native Vietnam era veterans land allotment program, and for other purposes, was passed.

LA PAZ COUNTY SOLAR ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT

A bill (H.R. 1043) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal land in Arizona to La Paz County, Arizona, and for other purposes, was passed.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I would like to thank Senator SULLIVAN from Alaska for helping to get us all to the floor here today. I would like to thank Chairman LEE for his leadership getting us here, Ranking Member HEINRICH, and Senators KING and HOEVEN and PADILLA. Thank you to Senator HOEVEN for his kind words.

We are working together to try to make progress, and I want to thank my team for working well with his on this as well.

I am not going to go on for a long time today, but I do want to talk about the Finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act, which just passed the floor of the Senate, and the bipartisan effort to get this bill done and get it to the President's desk.

Over six decades ago, President John Kennedy came to Pueblo, CO, and famously promised to build the Arkansas Valley Conduit. It is the last component of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, a Federal water diversion and storage project that Congress approved in 1962.

Once completed, the Arkansas Valley Conduit will deliver clean water to over 50,000 people in 39 rural communities across southeastern Colorado. That is why for over a decade, across Republican and Democratic administrations, I have worked to secure over \$500 million to ensure that the Federal Government keeps its word and that we finish the conduit.

Unfortunately, due to recent increases in pipe and labor costs, the total cost of the conduit has nearly doubled. This has created a huge challenge for local communities, many of whom currently rely on contaminated groundwater for their water supply.

Our bill, based on the great work of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District, takes this affordability crisis head-on, cutting local costs by lowering the interest rate and providing more flexible repayment terms. This is a commonsense solution to ensure that southeast Colorado can afford safe and reliable drinking water.

This legislation costs the American taxpayer nothing, but it would pay dividends for 50,000 people in southeastern Colorado, and it would fulfill a decades—many decades—old promise on which they have relied.

I am glad the House and Senate have acted unanimously to pass this legislation, and I look forward to the President now signing this bill into law.

I want to say again to my colleague from Maine how much I appreciate his willingness to be able to, in the spirit of bipartisan compromise, withdraw his objection to this package as well, and I look forward to working with him to

pass the bills he has said are so critical not just to Maine but to this Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend and colleague the senior Senator from Colorado for his outstanding work on this, for working with me and my team. I am glad that we were able to make this a success. It is my hope and my intent that this will not be the end but the beginning of a much bigger pattern of success. It is a good example of the kind of legislation we ought to pass every time we get the chance. When we have bills that are uncontroversial, we can get them passed.

Sometimes these bills are held up not in spite of the fact that they are noncontroversial but because they are noncontroversial—because we want to couple them with other legislation that may be less popular.

We have heard some observations today, some concerns expressed about the ability, once we pass legislation over here, to get it passed over on the House side. There are a couple of things I think we ought to take note of that should give us hope on this.

In the first place, the way legislation like this works on the House side—they don't have the 60-vote cloture standard that we have in the Senate, but with these lands bills, they tend to pass them under a procedure known in the House as suspension of the rules.

Under suspension of the rules, it requires them to be passed with 290 votes instead of 218. Because of the way that works, it ends up yielding a similar outcome to how it works over here. They tend to be able to enhance their ability to pass those under the suspension calendar if they bring them to the floor while paired with other bills—not surgically stitched together so it is the same legislation, but they bring them forward for procedural consideration in the House on the floor, resulting in an approximate number of noncontroversial Republican and Democratic bills passing regardless of who happens to be in the majority at the time.

My friend and colleague the distinguished Senator from California had mentioned a moment ago concerns about that process over in the House, but I will remind him that at the end of the last Congress, he and I had several bills that were brought together and passed through the procedure that I am describing on the floor and that were passed into law by the House of Representatives after that.

Although, under certain circumstances, two separate bill sponsors of two separate bills may choose to merge, surgically stitch their bills into one bill, there are downsides to that too, and it certainly ought not be that without which, not passing legislation in the Senate—they ought to be able to stand on their own.

I, for one, am happy—particularly within the range of this type of bill

that we have dealt with here, bills that have passed the Senate in the past and that do not have significant opposition over here—happy to work with my counterparts in the House to make sure those move forward.

There are sometimes reasons why something doesn't move as quickly over there as it might over here, and there are as many different reasons for that as there are types of legislation.

In any event, I want to thank all the people participating today—in particular Senator BENNET and Senator SULLIVAN for their tenacity in moving these bills forward.

Finally, Mr. President, let me just remark briefly on another topic that has come up within the last few minutes where we are celebrating anniversaries related to the First Step Act. This is something that I worked on for nearly a decade before it became law. It was an honor and privilege to do that.

I appreciate the remarks made earlier by Senator BOOKER from New Jersey. I still remember the exact moment Senator BOOKER first stepped onto the floor in the Senate right after he came to the Senate in October of 2012, I believe it was. He introduced himself to me and in the same sentence said: I am really interested in your criminal justice reform efforts, and I want to be partners.

So it was a great privilege to work with him, with Senator DURBIN, Senator GRASSLEY, and all the others who made it possible. It has been a good development for the United States of America.

We have been more effective in combating crime by being smart in the way we punish crime. When we unduly take away discretion from judges to allow them to be judges, sometimes it can present odd outcomes, as it certainly did in the case of Weldon Angelos, the young man who, in his midtwenties, sold three dime-bag quantities of marijuana over a 72-hour period to what turned out to be a confidential informant.

The firearm that he had in his possession at the time—because of the way minimum mandatory laws were being interpreted and applied in the courts at the time, Mr. Angelos was subjected to a minimum mandatory sentence that would put him in prison for the rest of his natural life—to a 55-year minimum mandatory sentence because he had a gun on his person at the time even though the gun was neither brandished nor discharged in connection with the offense.

Under the so-called three-strikes laws at the time, the Federal district judge, Paul Cassell of Salt Lake City, who sentenced him said: There are hijackers, there are murderers, rapists, all kinds of people who do horrible things who don't get anywhere near this much time in prison, but I, as a Federal judge, have no discretion here, no choice but to send him to prison for 55 years based on three dime-bag quantities.

Each of the two first offenses, even though they were all charged on the same document and occurred over the same 72-hour period—they counted as prior convictions for purposes of the three-strikes law, and that is one of the many issues we set out to address in the First Step Act. The country is better off for it.

Mr. President, back to the lands package, I again want to thank Senator SULLIVAN for his tenacity in this, for his patience and his willingness to stick with the effort. The people of Alaska are fortunate to have him serving that great State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank the chairman, Chairman LEE, for his comments, I want to thank Senator BENNET for his hard work, and I really want to thank Senator KING.

You know, I have worked well with Senator KING of Maine for many years. He and I are good friends, good colleagues. We have worked together on a lot of issues—actually, all the Senators down here: Senator BENNET, Senator PADILLA, who was here a little bit ago.

So I certainly give my word to Senator KING on working with House Members. As a matter of fact—I think he knows it—my team and I have already been doing that with the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee over there and with our Alaska Congressman. We have been pressing them already on the issues that Senator KING has raised. He has my word and continued commitment to work with him on these other bills that I think it is important to continue to move forward on.

What we just did, Mr. President—as you know, but I think for people watching, particularly back home, our Alaska Native Vietnam veterans—we just passed four Senate bills that were actually House bills that were pushed by four different Senators—two Republicans, two Democrats. I think that is a good example of cooperation and moving forward on these issues that matter to all of us, and they matter to all of our constituents.

Now, I want to talk again—I have probably given 10, 12, 15 speeches on the Senate floor about my bill, the Alaska Native Vietnam Veterans Land Allotment Act, and I already mentioned this idea of special patriotism. Alaska Natives—almost 20 percent of the population of my State—serve at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic group in the country.

This is a great picture of a good friend of mine, George Bennett, who served in the Army from 1966 to 1968. He served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968—a tough time to be in Vietnam, by the way—from Southeast, where we have a lot of our Vietnam vets.

Let me talk about the importance of this program and this bill.

By the way, just so there is no confusion, these four pieces of legislation are going to the White House to be

signed. It is really exciting, particularly on this bill.

It is a simple bill. It is essentially changing a program—it is a one-sentence bill—from 5 years to 10 years.

Let me step back and speak a little bit about this bill because I am so pleased and it is such a great honor to represent great Americans like George Bennett and others. Here is the background. As I mentioned, Alaska Natives—whether it is World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea, the gulf war—they just serve in the military. It is part of their heritage. It is part of their culture. It is an incredible part of who they are. It is remarkable, like I said. I refer to it as “special patriotism.”

This special patriotism was on full display during the Vietnam war, in the Vietnam era, when so many Alaska Natives answered the call. Here is what happened. A lot of them, like George, got drafted. They didn't complain. They said “Hey, my dad served in World War II. My uncle served in Korea. It is my turn to go,” and they did. They went overseas.

But here is what happened. It is a little complicated. They came home during this time—and it is not just for Vietnam vets. If you deployed to Korea or Germany during this time, we had a program in the law dating back to 1906 that gave Alaska Native people the right to apply for what was called a Native allotment—very, very important program for these people. It said: Hey, if you can show that this part of Alaska you hunted, fished, your family raised you in this part of the great State of Alaska, you have a right to a 160-acre allotment.

Now, look, you can't do that in a lot of States, but Alaska is so big, so vast, that these Native allotments were a really important part of the Federal Government taking care of but helping Alaska Native people. So that was going on for years—very noncontroversial.

When they were overseas in 1971, Congress passed one of the most important pieces of legislation, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. And it was a great piece of legislation. I won't go into it. I have talked about it on the floor many times. But what that legislation did, it extinguished the ability for Alaska Natives to get their allotment—extinguished it.

Well, think about it. If you are in Vietnam or Germany or Korea serving your country, let's face it—especially during the Vietnam era when a lot of people were avoiding service—you didn't have the internet; you didn't have iPhones. They didn't know. Nobody knew that their right to an allotment was extinguished.

So they came home—and let's face it, they weren't treated well. A lot of Vietnam vets were not treated well. It is still a stain on the honor of our great Nation. They are Alaska Natives. There was still a lot of discrimination against Alaska Natives. That wasn't good.

Then they are told: Oh, by the way, that allotment that you wanted, sorry. When you were serving your country, fighting in Vietnam, the deadline passed.

A triple whammy, in my view, of injustice.

We worked on that in a bipartisan way and got my Alaska Native Vietnam Veterans Land Allotment Act that said: Hey, if you were serving overseas and you missed the deadline to apply for your allotment, you can still do it. That is just fair.

I was in the Oval Office when President Trump, during his first term, signed this legislation. It was part of a bigger land package. And I remember his saying the injustice that happened to the Alaska Native Vietnam vets—that we ended that with this bill. It was great. We were so excited.

The law created a 5-year window by which to have Alaska Native Vietnam vets—and there are still several thousands—apply for their allotment. It was all great, exciting. Again, a lot of them are getting a little old in age. We wanted to hurry up and make sure you apply for your allotment.

Then we had another speed bump in this long saga. The incoming Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Haaland, in two different meetings with me—two—committed to me that she would expedite the application process in granting these allotments to these Vietnam vets under the new law. Twice she committed to me on that before her confirmation vote. As a matter of fact, I told her: This is more important than anything else you can commit to me on, Congresswoman Haaland. She was a Congresswoman then. It is more important than oil and gas in Alaska, more important than our resource economy, this issue. Please commit with me to work with me, expedite it. Let's get these American heroes their allotments before a lot of them start passing away.

Well, that didn't happen. About 2 months into her tenure, she put a 2-year freeze on getting any of these allotments out to anybody. I mean, a blatant—blatant—I am still mad about it—disregard to the commitment she made to me twice. It was the biggest thing I asked her.

By the way, I voted for her—big mistake.

Two years' freeze. None of these guys could get their allotment. Remember, it is a 5-year program. We only have so much time, and it is complicated to prove that this is where you grew up and hunted and fished. In the 4-year tenure they had with Secretary Haaland, only 40 of these were issued. That is just shameful.

What this bill does—all it says is, we are going to keep the status quo. We are going to extend the program from 5 years to 10, so we can go back to the business that the Trump administration and Secretary Burgum are doing of getting these veterans their allotments.

That is the bill. That is what it does. It is a one-sentence bill saying this really important program is going to go from 5 years—which, by the way, was going to expire at the end of this year. It was going to expire in 2 weeks. It is going to go from 5 years to 10 years. We are going to have time.

I hope heroes like this guy are going to work with us, work with the Department of the Interior to get their allotment. This is kind of a Christmas gift for these great American heroes. I put on my Christmas tie today thinking maybe we can work this out—a Christmas gift for these great American heroes.

Even if you don't live in Alaska, you have to love this story. These are great heroes, and they served at higher rates in Vietnam. If you go to Alaska Native villages and ask: How many veterans do we have, almost every male in the village raises their hand. It brings a tear to your eye. It brings a tear to my eye.

I want to thank Senator KING, Senator BENNET, Senator PADILLA, and, certainly, Senator LEE, Senator HOEVEN, and, again, my staff. Erik Elam is the best LD in the U.S. Senate. He is relentless and creative, bringing everybody down here today. It wasn't easy, but we got this done at the buzzer. It is going to be signed into law. It is going to go to the White House. The President will sign this, and we are going to get to work—get to work—and get these heroes the land allotments that they deserved.

The only reason they don't have them right now is they were serving their country in a war. I mean, I think it is a really important day, a really good day.

I commit to working with all my Senate colleagues on other commitments. Senator KING, Senator PADILLA, thank you again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. 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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant informa-

tion is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 25-1T. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 24-40 of June 7, 2024.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 25-1T. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 24-40 of June 7, 2024.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BRIAN MAST,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 25-1T. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 24-40 of June 7, 2024.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 25-1T

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (SEC. 36(b)(5)(C), AECA)

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Denmark.

(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 24-40; Date: June 7, 2024; Implementing Agency: Air Force.

(iii) Description: On June 7, 2024, Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 24-40 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of eighty-four (84) AIM-120C-8 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM); and three (3) AIM-120 AMRAAM guidance sections. The following non-MDE items were also included: spare