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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 3, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF DENHAM to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

SQUARING RHETORIC WITH THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most powerful moment on Inauguration Day when the President gave his speech was when he reminded his supporters and the people who were assembled there that there were too many in America who were forgotten by the Federal Government; and that it was his promise that he would, in fact, remember them in terms of how he de-

veloped policies and programs during his time as President. It is a message which obviously he used quite effectively on the campaign trail. I think personally it is what propelled him into the White House.

Fast forward to where we are today, Mr. Speaker. It is hard to really square that rhetoric with the budget, which was submitted a couple of weeks ago by the Trump administration. The one agency which probably has the closest connection to rural America, that part of the country which he was addressing in his comments on Inauguration Day, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was cut by 20 percent in terms of what came over from the White House.

Again, that was the third largest hit of any Federal agency of the entire Federal Government, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It does so much in terms of helping farmers, small town America, and rural America in terms of dealing with the challenges which, again, I think, were just a huge, powerful undercurrent in last November's election.

In particular, the budget proposes eliminating completely the USDA Rural Development for drinking water and wastewater programs, which, again, for so many communities, is desperately needed.

Again, the property tax base of small town and rural towns across the country really cannot, by themselves, pay for sewer plants, pay for drinking water upgrades. I know because I come from one of those districts.

Even in Connecticut, the eastern half of the State, the Second Congressional District is small town, rural America for which the USDA Rural Development programs have been the lifeblood of making sure that community facilities and, again, a decent quality of life are possible.

So, for example, in towns like Vernon, Connecticut, where I am from, the Bolton Lake sewer plant was just

finished a couple of years ago through USDA Rural Development. In the town of Putnam, \$28 million over just the last couple of years, they just built a new fire station, the north Putnam fire station, with USDA Rural Development.

Stafford, Connecticut, there was a sewer plant upgrade. Windham, Connecticut, there was a new community health facility, which was a community facilities program, through USDA Rural Development. There were projects in Thompson, Connecticut, \$2.4 million for water and sewer; Brooklyn, Connecticut, \$1.3; Killingly, and the list goes on and on.

This budget, let's be clear, doesn't just give this program a little haircut or tailor it back. It eliminates it. It eviscerates this type of help which, again, rural communities, with their own resources, are incapable of accomplishing on their own.

Mr. Speaker, a budget is more than just a collection of numbers. It is a statement of your priorities. It is about what is important to you as an executive or as a legislator, and this budget fails that test for rural America, for the forgotten Americans which the President addressed on Inauguration Day.

I am confident that, in this Chamber, there is potential for a bipartisan group of Members to push back on this type of really just backwards budgeting and backwards priority.

Again, in terms of what my father told me a long time ago: Talk is cheap. Put your money where your mouth is. Put your budget where your rhetoric is.

On that score, this administration has failed that test. It has also failed it with the Sea Grant program for fishermen in America. Again, 90 percent of seafood that is consumed in this country is from overseas.

Even though we are a great maritime country, the Sea Grant program helps

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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fishermen deal with all the complexity of the maritime domain in terms of regulations. I have seen it in Connecticut.

Again, my district borders on Long Island Sound. We have seen shellfish growers coming back to life because of the Sea Grant program administered through the University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus that has given these really hardworking, inspiring entrepreneurs the tools that they need to again give America a domestic seafood industry. It is just ridiculous when you look at the disproportion of imported seafood that is consumed on the tables of Americans all across the country.

Later today, 100 House Members, on a bipartisan basis, will be releasing a letter of support for the Sea Grant program. Congressman ZELDIN, Republican from Long Island, and myself led that letter. Again, this is where our focus ought to be in terms of this country.

If you really care about making America great again, it is about giving people out there in the great heartland and in the coastal sections of this country the tools that they need to grow, thrive, innovate, and succeed. This budget fails that test.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WESTERMAN) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Dan C. Cummins, Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, California, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God and Father, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like sweet perfume upon our heads.

Let us walk together in the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love, keeping the unity of the spirit in the bonds of kindness, till we all come into the harmony of faith and the knowledge of God's Son unto a more perfect union, till we are no longer children tossed and carried about by every wind of opposition.

Let us speak the truth in love that we may grow up into You in all things.

Sanctify us, Lord, through the truth. Thy Word is truth.

And the glory You have given us; for what purpose, O God? That we may be one? Yes, that we all may be one.

I pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CONGRATULATING GAMECOCKS, NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last night, the Gamecocks women's basketball team made history, winning the NCAA National Championship for the first time in school history. Defeating Mississippi State 67-55, the Gamecocks dominated the all-SEC game, leading the Bulldogs in scoring and in rebounds.

Early in the season, the Gamecocks set their sights on the championship, themeing the season as 100, with the "1" reflecting their commitment to one goal, one team, one dream, one family, and one focus. They never gave up their goals, and their dedication clearly paid off.

I join all of Gamecock Nation in celebrating this remarkable victory.

We are also grateful for the Gamecock men, who, in the Final Four, were ahead of number one Gonzaga in the last 3 minutes until the disturbing Zags pulled ahead.

Special congratulations to superstar A'ja Wilson of Heathwood Hall and Hopkins, South Carolina, who had a great game, scoring a team high 22 points, and who was also named most outstanding player in the Final Four.

Congratulations as well to Head Coach Dawn Staley, President Harris Pastides, and USC First Lady Patricia Pastides.

The Gamecocks women's basketball team joins Clemson's football team and Coastal Carolina's baseball team as the third college national championship from South Carolina in just 1 year. Go Gamecocks.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Welcome, Timmerman School of Forest Acres, South Carolina, to the Capitol.

REMEMBERING LOUISVILLE METRO POLICE OFFICER NICK RODMAN

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the city of Louisville will lay to rest Officer Nick Rodman, a loving husband, father, son, and friend, who died in the line of duty last week.

The special commitment that the men and women of law enforcement make to protect and serve their fellow citizens is one that the Rodman family holds dear, and Nick felt that call to service deeply, growing up as the son and brother of fellow officers.

He is survived by the loves of his life: his wife, Ashley; his young son, Mason; and his newborn daughter, Ellie Jean.

I ask my colleagues and our Nation to join me, the Louisville Metro Police Department, and our entire city in honoring this public servant as he is laid to rest.

To Nick's wife, Ashley: I hope the memories you have with your husband will be a source of comfort as you face this heartbreaking tragedy. The city of Louisville joins you in grief, and we will ensure that Nick will always be remembered.

CONFIRM JUDGE GORSUCH

(Mr. BABIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly urge my colleagues in the United States Senate to confirm Judge Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Since being nominated by President Trump, Judge Gorsuch has provided unprecedented transparency and access. He has completed three rounds of intense questioning by the Senate Judiciary Committee, which totaled nearly 20 hours and covered nearly 1,200 questions. This was the longest hearing of any nominee in the 21st century.

During this time, Judge Gorsuch showed himself to be uniquely qualified and experienced to serve on our Nation's highest court. In fact, he showed the exact same qualification that previously earned him unanimous approval by the U.S. Senate in 2006 to serve on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. Then-Senators Obama, Biden, Clinton, and SCHUMER were all serving in the Senate at that time and raised no objections whatsoever to Judge Gorsuch's nomination.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Senate to put politics aside and confirm Judge Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 30, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 30, 2017, at 4:45 p.m.:

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H.J. Res. 43.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1704

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) at 5 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

CONDEMNING NORTH KOREA'S DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIPLE INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 92) condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 92

Whereas the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), also known as North Korea, possesses a ballistic missile and nuclear weapons development program that poses a grave threat to the United States,

United States allies South Korea and Japan, and to regional and global security;

Whereas North Korea's ballistic missile program has demonstrated an increasing ability to reach the United States, which constitutes a credible and growing threat to the security of the American people;

Whereas North Korea has demonstrated a willingness and ability to proliferate its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons technology to a variety of countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic, which the United States has designated as state sponsors of terrorism;

Whereas, on January 6, 2016, North Korea detonated a nuclear device, marking its fourth nuclear test to date;

Whereas, on February 7, 2016, North Korea, utilizing a modified version of the Taepodong-2 ballistic missile, launched a "satellite" into space;

Whereas according to the U.S. Intelligence Community's 2016 Worldwide Threat Assessment, North Korea is "committed to developing a long-range, nuclear-armed missile that is capable of posing a direct threat to the United States; it has publicly displayed its KN08 road-mobile ICBM on multiple occasions";

Whereas, on April 28, 2016, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in a hearing before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, testified "the benefits of [the trilateral] relationship are crystal clear in the face of the region's most acute challenge—the challenge from North Korea and its provocative acts in the nuclear missile domain";

Whereas, on August 24, 2016, North Korea successfully tested a submarine-launched ballistic missile, firing the missile over 300 miles from a submerged submarine;

Whereas, on September 9, 2016, North Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test, which it claimed was a warhead that could be miniaturized for its ballistic missiles;

Whereas, on September 15, 2016, Admiral Harry Harris, Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, stated "Combining nuclear warheads with ballistic missile technology in the hands of a volatile leader like Kim Jong-un, is a recipe for disaster";

Whereas, on September 16, 2016, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter stated "Everyone can see that North Korea is determined to try to expand its missile threat to the peninsula, to the region, and to the United States";

Whereas in 2016 North Korea willfully and repeatedly violated multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, through its nuclear tests, missile tests, and satellite launch;

Whereas, on January 6, 2017, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that North Korea had conducted 24 missile tests in the past year, as well as two nuclear tests and "in our assessment, we have a qualitative improvement in their capabilities in the past year as a result of this unprecedented level of activity";

Whereas, on January 8, 2017, North Korea declared that it is ready to test-launch an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM);

Whereas, on February 11, 2017, North Korea launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile off its eastern coast while President Donald Trump hosted Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on an official visit to the United States;

Whereas, on February 18, 2017, the People's Republic of China announced that it would suspend all coal imports from North Korea, a significant source of revenue to the North Korean regime;

Whereas, on February 27, 2017, the United Nations Panel of Experts on North Korea determined that "The Democratic People's Re-

public of Korea is flouting sanctions through trade in prohibited goods, with evasion techniques that are increasing in scale, scope and sophistication.";

Whereas, on March 6, 2017, North Korea launched four intermediate range missiles, three of which landed approximately 200 miles off the coast of Japan;

Whereas South Korea and the United States have made an alliance decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system as a self-defensive measure to ensure the security of South Korea and its people, and to protect alliance military forces from the growing threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program; and

Whereas a nuclear North Korea with a functional and operational intercontinental ballistic missile program would pose a direct threat to the United States and United States interests: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs);

(2) welcomes the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea to counter North Korea's missile threat, which supports an alliance security decision;

(3) urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to immediately cease its diplomatic intimidation and economic coercion against South Korea in an attempt to block the THAAD deployment;

(4) reaffirms the United States support for a layered, integrated, multi-tier missile defense system to protect Americans and allies in Northeast Asia;

(5) supports continued bilateral security cooperation between the United States and South Korea and the consideration of additional measures to strengthen the alliance, including expanded foreign military sales, joint exercises, and other actions as appropriate;

(6) reaffirms, in view of the ICBM threat by North Korea, the commitment of the United States to its alliances and to trilateral cooperation with South Korea and Japan, which is critical for the preservation of peace and stability in Northeast Asia and throughout the world;

(7) supports and urges the full implementation of the intelligence sharing agreement between Japan and South Korea signed on November 23, 2016, concerning the direct exchange of intelligence on North Korean threats;

(8) calls upon the People's Republic of China to use its considerable leverage to pressure North Korean leaders to cease their provocative behavior and abandon and dismantle their nuclear and missile programs, and comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions;

(9) calls on the United States to fully enforce all existing economic sanctions on North Korea and to seek to continuously adapt the sanctions regime to address evasive techniques employed by the North Korean regime; and

(10) calls on the Secretary of State to undertake a comprehensive and rigorous diplomatic effort to urge allies and other countries to fully enforce, and build upon, existing international sanctions on North Korea.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin here by thanking Mr. WILSON for his leadership on H. Res. 92. What this resolution does is to describe in alarming detail the growing sophistication of North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons program. This, of course, poses a direct threat to the United States as well as to our allies.

Last year alone, North Korea, as we will recall, conducted more than 20 missile tests, including one from a submarine, and they are doing this in pursuit of an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of striking the United States. Kim Jong-un has detonated two separate nuclear devices in the same year, a first for this rogue regime. Today, the Kim regime's aggression continues, and recent satellite imagery indicates that Pyongyang is now prepared to detonate its sixth nuclear device.

With every test, North Korea gains valuable knowledge that has enabled it to make significant improvements to this developing arsenal. Bear in mind that North Korea has cooperated on its program with these countries, and I would like the Members to think on this: they have cooperated with Iran, they have cooperated with Syria on a nuclear program, and they have cooperated with Pakistan. This, of course, is undermining U.S. security, but, frankly, it undermines the security of the entire global counter-proliferation system.

That is why I strongly support the passage of this resolution. I have been in North Korea, and let me tell you, this resolution, which condemns North Korea's development of an ICBM and calls for the United States and others to immediately address this urgent threat, is very necessary at this time.

Fortunately, the new administration already has several tools at its disposal. One of those is a bill that we wrote up in the committee, a bill authored by myself and ELIOT ENGEL, the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act. It was signed last year, and it was also taken up at the U.N. Security Council and passed at the Security Council office. This resolution, among other things, empowers the President to ramp up pressure on the North Korean regime by sanctioning foreign companies that do business with—and therefore enable—the regime.

The deployment of the anti-missile defense system THAAD to the Korean

Peninsula must also continue as quickly as possible, and China should end its economic intimidation of our ally South Korea in response to this deployment. THAAD will serve as a vital first line of defense protecting U.S. personnel in the region and protecting our allies from Kim Jong-un.

As this resolution notes, China needs to do its part to implement the sanctions contained in multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. President Trump should press this issue with President Xi when the two meet this week. With these steps, I believe the United States can again exert effective pressure on the Kim regime.

As H. Res. 92 emphasizes, Congress stands ready to help counter North Korea's belligerent behavior and maintain peace and maintain stability in the Asia Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,

Washington, DC, March 30, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H. Res. 92, a resolution "Condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes," as amended. There are certain provisions in the legislation which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive this committee's further consideration of H. Res. 92. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the resolution the Committee on Armed Services does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the legislation which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, March 30, 2017.

Hon. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H. Res. 92, Condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that resolution so that it may proceed expeditiously to consideration by the House.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future.

I will seek to place our letters on H. Res. 92 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation

regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your Committee as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 92.

I am the chief Democratic cosponsor and the gentleman from South Carolina is the sponsor of this resolution condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes. It should be noted that this resolution now has 120 bipartisan cosponsors, including the ranking member and chairman of the committee, the chairman of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, and myself as ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee.

This resolution is necessary at a time when the regime of Kim Jong-un is as belligerent as ever. His intentions are clear. He is conducting intermediate and intercontinental ballistic missile tests and nuclear tests for the purpose of being in a position to intimidate the United States and the rest of the world. Just this month the regime in Pyongyang released a fake propaganda video showing the imagined destruction of a U.S. aircraft carrier by its forces.

In addition to the five nuclear weapons North Korea has already tested, Kim Jong-un continues to test ballistic missiles, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and is moving toward intercontinental ballistic missiles. These missiles have as one of their chief purposes to be able to reach the continental United States and particularly the Pacific Coast of the United States.

We used to have the luxury of saying that North Korea just wants attention; they just want this or that concession. But now their goal is clear. It is to threaten hundreds of millions of Americans. It is clear that North Korea is testing missiles and bombs for the purpose of developing warheads that can do just that.

The resolution we are considering today, H. Res. 92, condemns North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile tests, calls for the United States to apply economic sanctions on North Korea, and calls on China to pressure North Korean leaders to cease their provocative behavior, abandon and dismantle their nuclear missile program, and it calls upon China to curtail, or at least threaten to curtail, their economic support of Pyongyang.

President Xi is coming to the United States. He will meet with our President in Florida. And I hope that the recent comments that we are going to handle this issue on our own are not what comes out of Florida, because, instead, we must demand that China pressure North Korea.

According to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, China accounts for over 90 percent of North Korea's foreign trade and approximately 95 percent of its foreign direct investment. Beijing needs to know that there are serious challenges to its relationship with the United States if it does not assist us in this effort. Officials in Beijing cannot assume that their companies will always have access to the United States market.

There are those who say it is unthinkable to link our trading relationship with China to its position on North Korea. I believe it is unthinkable for us not to use all the tools at our disposal to try to prevent the least predictable leader in the world—and perhaps the least stable—from having the capacity to hit the United States mainland with intercontinental nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), who is a senior member of both the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Armed Services Committee and the author of this resolution.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I was grateful to visit North Korea on a congressional delegation in 2003 with House Foreign Affairs Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL on a delegation led by Congressman Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania. While there, we witnessed a regime obsessed with a Potemkin-like appearance and preservation to the detriment of its own citizens who have been reduced to destitution and starvation.

□ 1715

After seeing the devastation of the people at the hands of the totalitarian regime, I have been even more invested in the need to hold the regime in Pyongyang accountable for threatening neighbors.

In early February, I introduced this bipartisan resolution in response to North Korea's threat to test an intercontinental ballistic. Their threat is concerning because an ICBM has the capability of reaching the West Coast of the United States.

The rapid pace of North Korea's growing offensive nuclear weapons development is alarming to the United States and our allies. In just a few short months, North Korea has appeared to successfully test an ICBM; launched a satellite; tested four simultaneous ballistic missiles, three of which landed in Japanese territorial waters; had a failed missile launch; and tested a ballistic missile engine. The regime also claims to be planning another nuclear test for later this month.

Sadly revealing, the regime in North Korea recently released a propaganda video depicting a missile striking a U.S. aircraft carrier and calling for the destruction of the American people.

North Korea is rapidly advancing their capabilities, working to minia-

turize nuclear technology to deliver a nuclear weapon anywhere in the world. Sadly, 8 years of strategic patience only enabled the dictatorship. We cannot afford to stand by as this regime grows in power and influence, threatening the United States and our allies.

I am grateful that President Donald Trump is taking the regime and its threats seriously. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson recently visited our allies in South Korea and Japan; and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, has led the efforts for strengthening international sanctions against North Korea.

The administration has also demonstrated peace through strength by backing up their commitments to our allies with action. We have begun deploying the THAAD missile defense system, recently resumed the annual military training exercises with South Korea, and deployed attack drones to support our servicemembers stationed in the region. This defends the extraordinary people of South Korea, who have developed one of the most prosperous nations on Earth.

As we work to check the growing influence and missile capability of North Korea, Congress, too, has a vital role, starting with passage of H. Res. 92 to forcefully condemn North Korea for these actions and call for the consideration of all available sanctions on the regime and the individuals or businesses who sustain it. We are clear: the United States must stand strong against North Korea for American families and our South Korean allies.

I appreciate the consideration of H. Res. 92, with 120 bipartisan cosponsors. I know that America is fortunate to have the leadership of House Foreign Affairs Chairman ED ROYCE, serving in a bipartisan manner with Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL.

I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the resolution.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairman emeritus of the committee who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and has authored previous legislation to address the North Korean threat.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I commend the commitment that Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL have shown in holding North Korea accountable for its illicit activity, and it is a long list.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also commend my good friend and colleague, Congressman JOE WILSON, for authoring this important measure, H. Res. 92, condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs.

Recently, North Korea has made the calculation that it either needs to flex

its muscles through the test of ballistic missiles or, at the very least, provoke an international response so that the regime can use it as propaganda against the West.

We have seen dozens of missile tests over the past year, and, just as troubling, at least two nuclear tests. I know that this is resolution condemning North Korea's provocative action, but I do think this is an opportunity to call attention to the Iranian nuclear and ballistic missile program. What I and some of my colleagues have been saying for years now is that Iran has been following the North Korea playbook.

We signed a weak and dangerous nuclear deal with North Korea, and what was the result? A nuclear-armed Pyongyang that is testing and upgrading its ballistic and nuclear program unchecked and possibly even proliferating these materials, or at least the know-how, to Iran.

We concluded a weak and dangerous nuclear deal with Iran, and you can be sure, if we don't do more to press Iran, we will be welcoming another dangerous regime to the nuclear weapons club.

While we rightfully condemn North Korea for its provocations, we must be mindful that, if we follow the same path and make the same mistakes, it will be Iran in a few years that will have a nuclear weapon and ballistic missile program that can threaten global security, and that is in none of our interests.

I urge my colleagues to fully support Mr. WILSON's measure, Mr. Speaker, but I also urge them to realize the failures of past policies and what got us here to this point with North Korea and not to allow the same mistakes to happen with respect to Iran.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 92, condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Without question, North Korea's relentless effort to develop ballistic missiles poses a serious threat to the security of the United States, especially to our allies in the region, and possibly all across the globe.

For the past several years, Kim Jong-un has made significant strides in their nuclear missile program. It seems like every few weeks we hear new reports concerning the growing North Korea nuclear threat. North Korea has conducted multiple nuclear tests and demonstrated that it is bound and determined to develop a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the continental United States.

It has also become abundantly clear that the Kim regime will continue to

work toward a nuclear warhead, no matter the cost. Just today, a senior North Korean defector stated that the young, irresponsible dictator will do anything to remain in power and that Kim believes nuclear weapons will help guarantee his rule.

We must condemn these actions and begin taking concrete steps to mitigate the growing North Korean threat. I also believe we must work closer than ever with our South Korean partners and increase our already strong security alliance by assisting with technological developments, carrying out more joint exercises, and quickly making the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems, or THAAD, in South Korea operational.

I commend my friend, Mr. WILSON of South California, for his leadership in championing H. Res. 92. I also want to thank Chairman ROYCE and the ranking member, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, for, again, using the format of the Foreign Affairs Committee in a bipartisan manner.

This is one committee in the House—and there are a few others—that works very much in a bipartisan manner. This is one we do need to be united on. The threat from Kim Jong-un is serious. It is dangerous. It is a threat to world peace. We need to take it seriously. H. Res. 92 goes in the right direction. I, again, want to thank Mr. WILSON for proposing it.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I will add a comment to the upcoming visit of President Xi to Florida and President Trump's statement in advance of that: Well, we don't need China to get tough on North Korea.

The fact is, President Trump has not given us a plan that would put effective pressure on Pyongyang that does not involve China. There is no magic road to dealing with the North Korean threat that does not go through Beijing.

My fear is that, in the guise of being the tough guy who doesn't need China's help, in fact, President Trump is preparing to fail to get China's help in controlling North Korea, is preparing to be weak in dealing with China and to weakly accept their unwillingness to act, and then disguising it all in some machismo statement of strength: Oh, we don't need China.

We do need China. There is no plan to control North Korea that doesn't involve China. Macho statements are not an excuse for real strength in dealing with President Xi.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 92, condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The world has watched in fear as this brutal dictatorship has labored to miniaturize a nuclear warhead capable of being delivered by an ICBM. Across the 45th District, Californians are anxious about the growing threat from North Korea and its efforts to develop the capability to strike the West Coast.

Orange County is home to a large Korean-American population who have spoken out forcefully against this rogue regime, fearing for the life of their Korean kin and the safety of the entire world. As I tell all concerned constituents when I am back home in California, and I will repeat here today: I share your concern and will do all I can to ensure we eliminate this threat.

Mr. Speaker, just today, an interview with the most high-profile North Korean defector in two decades was released. The man's warning was dire: Kim Jong-un will use nuclear weapons at the slightest sign of an imminent threat to his rule.

The time for the old strategy of strategic patience has passed. We must take serious actions now to prevent a nuclear weapon from ever threatening the United States or one of our allies. I urge the President to address this grave threat with the Chinese President at their upcoming summit.

I thank my friend, the gentleman from South Carolina, for undertaking this effort, and I am proud to join him in this fight.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that I commend the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. WILSON, for authoring this resolution, which has secured the support of 120 bipartisan cosponsors, including the chair and ranking member of the full committee and the chair and, in my case, ranking member of the relevant subcommittee.

I, again, call on my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 92, condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes.

We need an official congressional condemnation of North Korea's continued ballistic missile testing and its related nuclear program. We need to ramp up sanctions on North Korea, while applying pressure to China, hopefully later this week, for being North Korea's economic lifeline.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, North Korea, as we all know, poses an urgent threat to the United States and to our allies. Experts say that, in less than 4 years, Kim Jong-un will likely have the ability to make a reliable intercontinental ballistic missile topped by a nuclear warhead capable of targeting the continental United States. They also expect that, by then, North Korea may have accumulated enough nuclear material to build up to 100 warheads for those ICBMs they have been making.

In an interview, the President says he is going to discuss this growing threat and Kim Jong-un's behavior with Chinese President Xi this week. As he says, China has great influence over North Korea, and China will either decide to help us with North Korea or they won't, but, if they do, that will be very good for China.

It will be good for China because we have made it very clear that this is a key interest of the United States. We do not want to see North Korea able to proliferate this kind of weaponry. They have already tested this off of a submarine. It would be irresponsible for us, China, and every member of the international community not to take steps now to cut off all hard currency into North Korea that allows that regime to continue down this path.

□ 1730

This threat is real, and that demands real response. I appreciate JOE WILSON bringing this resolution because, as he notes, one other point that I think we have to make, the deployment of THAAD needs to be completed as quickly as possible.

The President must also utilize the economic tools that Congress has given him with the act authored by myself and Mr. ENGEL to cut off funding for the regime of Kim Jong-un. I would also encourage the administration to pursue all opportunities to strengthen our economic and security relationships with our partners throughout the Asia Pacific right now because, as we know, our allies there are equally concerned about this development.

I thank the author of this resolution, Mr. JOE WILSON, and, of course, my committee's ranking member, Mr. ENGEL. I want to thank Mr. SHERMAN as well for working on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H. Res. 92, Condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The security of our nation and allies rests on a global community of nations acting in a responsible manner. For too long the Asia-Pacific region has been rocked with instability because of North Korea's irresponsible behavior. Last year, the North Korean regime conducted two nuclear tests and twenty missile tests, including successfully testing a submarine-launched ballistic missile. This is a marked increase from two nuclear tests and 42 missile tests over the previous seven years. In February 2017, North Korea fired a ballistic missile that landed in the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, sending shockwaves among our two closest allies in the Asia-Pacific.

Passing this resolution will reaffirm our commitment to trilateral missile defense cooperation with South Korea and Japan and to an interoperable, multi-tier missile defense system that will protect Americans and our allies on the Korean Peninsula. At a time of increasing belligerence by North Korea, our allies need such security assurances. This bill will also urge the President to promptly deploy the

Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea, apply all available economic sanctions on North Korea, and consider additional measures to strengthen bilateral security cooperation with South Korea, including increases in foreign military sales and joint exercises.

Like many of my colleagues, the constituents whom I represent want assurance that the United States is secure from all external threats, including the potential threat of weaponized intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). ICBMs are designed to travel between 5,500 km and 10,000 km. California is about 9,000 km from North Korea. Given that the North Korean regime has made steady advances in its nuclear weapons program over the past few years, it is not surprising that my California colleagues are increasingly alarmed by Pyongyang's actions.

The level of bipartisan support for H. Res. 92 reflects the importance of the threat North Korea poses to global stability. Our security and the security of our allies is an issue that crosses party lines. It is imperative to our national security interests that North Korea does not develop a weaponized ICBM capable of reaching any part of our country.

This resolution provides more assurance to our allies in the Asia-Pacific and sends a message to the North Korean regime that all Americans are united in our determination to safeguard our country against foreign threats. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote yes on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 92, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REAFFIRMING THE UNITED STATES-ARGENTINA PARTNERSHIP AND RECOGNIZING ARGENTINA'S ECONOMIC REFORMS

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 54) reaffirming the United States-Argentina partnership and recognizing Argentina's economic reforms, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 54

Whereas, on November 22, 2015, the citizens of the Argentine Republic elected Mauricio Macri as their President;

Whereas President Macri has pledged to promote greater national unity, rebuild the economy, combat domestic corruption, strengthen freedom of the press, defend human rights abroad, attract foreign direct investment, return to international credit

markets, and reassert Argentina's leadership globally;

Whereas President Macri has emphasized his intention to seek closer ties with the United States and restore the bilateral partnership previously enjoyed by both countries;

Whereas the Argentine Republic has been a major non-NATO ally of the United States since 1998 and is the only country designated as such in Latin America;

Whereas United States-Argentina relations are historically characterized by comprehensive commercial ties and strong bilateral cooperation on human rights, peacekeeping, science and technology, non-proliferation, and education, as well as on regional and global issues;

Whereas, in an appearance with President Macri at the Casa Rosada in Buenos Aires in March 2016, President Barack Obama said that "our countries share profound values in common—respect for human rights, for individual freedoms, for democracy, for justice, and for peace";

Whereas Secretary of State John Kerry visited Argentina in August 2016 to launch a High-Level Dialogue to develop and sustain cooperation on bilateral, regional, and global challenges, including democratic development and protection of human rights in Latin America;

Whereas Secretary Kerry, during his visit, stated that "the United States strongly supports President Macri's effort to deepen Argentina's integration with the global economy" and that "our governments will be supporting policies that are aimed at strong, sustainable, and balanced economic growth";

Whereas the United States Department of the Treasury no longer opposes multilateral development banks lending to Argentina because of the Government of Argentina's "progress on key issues and positive economic policy trajectory";

Whereas President Macri prioritized Argentina resolving its 15-year standoff with private creditors stemming from the 2001-2002 economic crisis, which facilitated Argentina's return to international financial markets;

Whereas the Macri Administration lifted controls on trade, currency, and poultry, enhanced the quality and transparency of government data, and eliminated subsidies on electricity, water, and gas;

Whereas Argentina is Latin America's third largest economy and the International Monetary Fund, in April 2016, claimed the Macri Administration "embarked on an ambitious, much needed transition to remove domestic imbalances and distortions and correct relative prices"; and

Whereas the Government of Argentina has expressed a renewed commitment to bring the perpetrators of the 1994 bombing of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) building, that occurred in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1994, killing 85 people and injuring hundreds, to justice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) upholds its commitment to the partnership between the United States and Argentina and reaffirms that the Argentine Republic is a major non-NATO ally of the United States;

(2) encourages the Department of State to coordinate a new interagency strategy to increase cooperation with the Government of Argentina on areas of bilateral, regional, and global concern;

(3) commends the Government of Argentina for making far-reaching economic reforms that will benefit the people of Argentina, stimulate economic growth, and deepen

Argentina's integration with the global economy;

(4) praises the Government of Argentina for resolving most of its business disputes at the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) thereby hastening their re-entry into world financial markets to the benefit of the Argentine people; and

(5) encourages the Government of Argentina to continue to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the 1994 bombing of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) building in Buenos Aires, as well as the January 2015 death of AMIA special prosecutor Alberto Nisman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to put any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me just start by thanking Mr. SIREN, the author of this measure, and I rise in support of it. It reaffirms the United States-Argentina partnership.

After over a decade of economic mismanagement and corruption and alliances with the likes of Iran—well, we should say the Ayatollah in Iran—and alliances with the regime in Venezuela, the people of Argentina used their vote to usher in a new era of what I would call economic common sense and a new era of regional leadership.

Since assuming the Presidency in December 2015, President Macri has undertaken difficult economic reforms to undo the damage caused by his predecessor's policy and taken reforms to return to the global markets. He tore up the laughable agreement that President Cristina Kirchner signed with Iran to investigate the 1994 Hezbollah bombing of the Jewish community center, which killed 85 and injured hundreds of other people in the Jewish community in Argentina. He has shown regional leadership in condemning Venezuela's human and democratic rights violations.

As the new Argentinian Government undertakes difficult reforms, it needs the moral support of its allies in the region, including the support of this body. This measure seeks to reaffirm the partnership, the friendship that we share with Argentina. It commends the government's hard work in bringing Argentina back from economic ruin.

This measure also encourages the Government of Argentina to make good on its promise to finally bring the perpetrators of the 1994 bombing there

of the Jewish community center to justice, while thoroughly investigating the January 2015 death of special prosecutor Alberto Nisman. As my colleagues know, immediately before his mysterious death, Nisman was set to issue a thorough report on his findings that the government of Cristina Kirchner had colluded with Iran to conceal Iran's role in orchestrating that 1994 terrorist attack at the hands of the Iranian proxy in this case, Hezbollah.

Mr. Speaker, let me just mention another subject here. In South America, we are watching Venezuela lose any semblance of democracy or human rights. Last week, Venezuela's democratically elected National Assembly was dissolved. The Venezuelan people are greatly suffering. As Argentina has dropped its support of these authoritarians and stands with the rest of the region in strong condemnation of authoritarianism in Venezuela, the Venezuelan Government is now more isolated than ever.

Back to H. Res. 54. This reflects this body's support of and friendship with Argentina, and it reflects our gratitude for Argentine leadership in support of economic and democratic reform.

Again, I thank Mr. SIREs for this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution.

I would like to start by thanking Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and their staffs for working with me to bring H. Res. 54 to the floor. I would like to thank my friend from South Carolina, Chairman JEFF DUNCAN, who is in charge of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and led a delegation to Argentina last March to help restart relations with the Macri administration.

H. Res. 54 reaffirms the strong U.S. partnership with Argentina and acknowledges their President Mauricio Macri for his efforts to make the necessary changes and bring Argentina back into the international community. President Macri worked hard to stimulate growth and bring Argentina back as a powerful player in the region after years of isolationist views from the Kirchners.

I was pleased to visit Argentina last year and see, firsthand, the changes the new government was making, and it was refreshing to see the progress already being made. Most importantly, we received assurances from the Macri administration that they will restart the investigation into the horrific 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires, which left 85 dead and hundreds more injured, and the untimely and suspicious death of prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who was found dead on the eve of delivering his explosive report which outlined the connections between the bombing, Iran, and

former Argentina President Cristina Kirchner's efforts to cover up these links. Unfortunately, the victims of these attacks and their families still lack answers to what really occurred, and the troubling reports of Iran's role in the bombing deserves thorough investigation that finally brings the perpetrators to justice.

Argentina is a great partner and a friend, and I believe we must continue to support our friends and continue to grow this critical relationship. Once again, I thank my colleagues for their support of this resolution and urge Members of the House to support H. Res. 54 to further strengthen the great ties our country has with Argentina.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN), who chairs the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He is the primary cosponsor of this measure.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I briefly want to mention the country of Colombia. Tremendous flooding and mudslides there have taken more than 200 lives. Colombia is in my prayers, the prayers of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, and the prayers of all of America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 54, which reaffirms America's partnership with Argentina, and applaud the economic reforms undertaken in recent years.

I applaud Ranking Member SIREs for his leadership on this issue. Last year, he and I led a congressional delegation to Argentina to see the differences in the country under the new leadership of President Macri and to reextend a hand of friendship of the United States.

Though the previous government followed the path of ruinous economic and foreign policies, I saw new optimism that the new Macri administration would right these wrongs. For example, at the Organization of American States, Argentina has been supportive of the actions of OAS Secretary General Almagro, urging the Venezuelan Government to respect democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

In addition, President Macri is working to find justice for the 1994 AMIA bombing terrorist attack—the largest loss of life from an act of terror in this hemisphere prior to 9/11—and the murder of the AMIA special prosecutor, Alberto Nisman. It is my sincerest hope that he will find the perpetrators and hold them accountable for these heinous acts of terror.

In conclusion, the United States should be very clear that we are thankful for President Macri's courage and willingness to take unpopular but principled positions. I urge the new Trump administration to do all in its power to take the steps outlined in this legislation and advance a deeper bilateral relationship.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 54 and commend its authors and cosponsors.

With the new administration of President Macri, I think that there will be a deepening relationship between the United States and Argentina, and this resolution recognizes that. It also encourages the Argentine Government to continue to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the 1994 bombing of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association, located then in the center of Buenos Aires, and the death of Argentine special prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who died mysteriously 1 day before he was going to submit a report to the Argentine Congress regarding that 1994 bombing.

I think it is apparent that that 1994 bombing was conducted by Iran in cooperation with Hezbollah, and we all want to encourage the Argentine Government to find out whether there was foul play in the death of Alberto Nisman and, if so, who was behind what has all the hallmarks of an assassination designed to prevent that report from being submitted to the Argentine people and Congress.

I commend the authors of this legislation. I urge its adoption.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), chairman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and a cosponsor of this measure.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be standing here in strong support of the measure of my very good friend from New Jersey, Mr. ALBIO SIREs. H. Res. 54 is so important. It reaffirms the U.S.-Argentina partnership and recognizes Argentina's economic reforms. As Mr. ROYCE said, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of Mr. SIREs' important resolution.

Up until the recent election of President Macri, Argentina was going in the wrong direction. Since Macri came to office, he has made some tough but much-needed economic reforms. He has shown that Argentina is willing to be engaged in areas of mutual interest to our two countries and expand our bilateral relations. President Macri's commitment to these reforms should be commended.

But he hasn't just shown strong leadership on economic reforms. President Macri has shown strong character and leadership to the rule of law and pursuit of justice. He has done so by announcing his intention to continue to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the 1994 bombing of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association, AMIA, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Last month, we marked the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which was followed by the 1994 AMIA attack.

It is no secret that the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah was responsible for these attacks; yet, to this day, Mr. Speaker, Iran and Hezbollah have evaded justice.

□ 1745

The United States should support President Macri as he continues his investigation and seeks to hold those responsible accountable to make sure that he can bring them to justice for their deadly terror attacks.

We should also applaud and support his decision to investigate the suspicious circumstances involving the death of the special prosecutor of these cases, Alberto Nisman. Alberto had uncovered links between Hezbollah and these terror attacks, and I would speak with Alberto frequently about these troublesome ties.

Nisman was a good man and a strong supporter of human rights. We must help President Macri and the people of Argentina continue Nisman's work and legacy by bringing those responsible for his death and for those dastardly terrorist attacks to justice.

We can start by signaling to the people of Argentina that we support their government and that we value our bilateral relationship. Passing Mr. SIREs' resolution will do just that. We will send that message.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. SIREs' measure.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

In conclusion, let me say that the U.S.-Argentina relationship is critical, and I stand in strong support of H. Res. 54.

Argentina's new President, Mauricio Macri, has done a tremendous job reforming their outdated and isolationist economic policies. Most importantly, the Macri administration has renewed its efforts to find the long sought after justice for the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Cultural Center, whose perpetrators are still evading justice.

His efforts have improved the lives of countless Argentines, and I look forward to working with his government to continue building on the progress we have already made.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution and thank them all for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues; I want to thank Mr. SIREs, ranking member of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere; and I thank the chairman of that committee, Mr. DUNCAN, for their leadership in bringing this measure to the floor.

This important resolution reaffirms our relationship with the people and the government of Argentina. It calls on the State Department to develop an interagency strategy to maximize our

cooperation with Argentina as our countries work together to promote democracy, to promote human rights, and to promote economic freedom across the Americas.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 54, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTH KOREA STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM DESIGNATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 479) to require a report on the designation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 479

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF GOVERNMENT OF NORTH KOREA AS A STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States Government designated the Government of North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism on January 20, 1988.

(2) On October 11, 2008, North Korea's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism was rescinded, following commitments by the Government of North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. However, North Korea has failed to live up to these commitments.

(3) On October 22, 2015, the United States Special Representative for North Korea Policy with the Department of State, testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade that North Korea's "conduct poses a growing threat to the United States, our friends in the region, and the global non-proliferation regime" and the Deputy Coordinator for Homeland Security, Screening, and Designations with the U.S. Department of State noted that "weapons transfers that violate nonproliferation or missile control regimes could be a relevant factor for consideration, depending on the circumstances, consistent with the statutory criteria for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism".

(4) The Government of North Korea has harbored members of the Japanese Red Army since a 1970 hijacking and continues to harbor the surviving hijackers to this day.

(5) On July 16, 2010, in the case of *Calderon-Cardona v. Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (case number 08-01367), the United

States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico found that the Government of North Korea provided material support to the Japanese Red Army, designated as a foreign terrorist organization between 1997 and 2001, in furtherance of a 1972 terrorist attack at Lod Airport, Israel that killed 26 people, including 17 Americans.

(6) In the case of *Chaim Kaplan v. Hezbollah* (case number 09-646), a United States district court found in 2014 that North Korea materially supported terrorist attacks by Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization, against Israel in 2006.

(7) In June 2010, Major Kim Myong-ho and Major Dong Myong-gwan of North Korea's Reconnaissance General Bureau pled guilty in a South Korean court to attempting to assassinate Hwang Jang-yop, a North Korean dissident in exile, on the orders of Lieutenant General Kim Yong-chol, the head of North Korea's Reconnaissance General Bureau. The court sentenced each defendant to 10 years in prison.

(8) In March 2015, the Government of South Korea concluded that North Korea was responsible for a December 2014 cyber attack against multiple nuclear power plants in South Korea. The South Korean Government stated that the attacks were intended to cause a malfunction at the plants' reactors, and described the attacks as acts of "cyber-terror targeting our country".

(9) On December 19, 2015, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) concluded that North Korea was responsible for a cyber attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment and a subsequent threat of violence against theaters that showed the film "The Interview". The FBI concluded that the "Guardians of Peace", which sent the threat to Sony Pictures Entertainment, was a unit of North Korea's Reconnaissance General Bureau, its foreign intelligence service.

(10) Malaysian authorities have alleged that officials from North Korea's secret police and Foreign Ministry were involved in the poisoning and killing of the estranged half-brother of the country's leader, Kim Jong-nam, using the chemical weapon VX nerve agent, a substance banned for use as a weapon by the United Nations Chemical Weapons Convention, on February 13, 2017, in Kuala Lumpur.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Government of North Korea likely meets the criteria for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism and, if so should be so designated.

(c) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a determination as to whether the Government of North Korea meets the criteria for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

(d) FORM.—The determination required by subsection (c) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex, if appropriate.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) NORTH KOREA.—The term "North Korea" means the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

(3) STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM.—The term "state sponsor of terrorism" means a country the government of which the Secretary of State has determined, for purposes of section 6(j) of the Export Administration

Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. 4605(j)) (as in effect pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act), section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2371), section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2780), or any other provision of law, is a government that has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, last month, I was pleased to hear Secretary of State Rex Tillerson say that the State Department is considering a range of measures to respond to Kim Jong-un's dangerous provocations in Northeast Asia. One immediate step should be listing North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, a status it should have never lost.

In 2008, North Korea's designation as a state sponsor of terror was rescinded following the regime's promise to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Well, North Korea got its delisting, but it kept its nuclear program, as proven by its fourth test and as proven by its fifth test last year.

Since 2008, not only has North Korea's nuclear weapons program advanced, so too has its support for terrorism. Let me explain that. The Kim regime has continued to supply surface-to-air missiles and explosives to terrorist groups like Hezbollah. In addition to that, the actions taken by North Korea include the firing of repeated rounds on South Korean civilians on the island of Yeonpyeong and carrying out targeted assassinations of North Korean defectors, including the recent assassination of Kim Jong-un's half brother, who had been living in exile.

Recall that this murder, which took place in broad daylight at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, involved the use of VX nerve agent, which is a chemical weapon banned under international law. Now, a liter of this substance contains enough lethal doses to kill 1 million people. It has no other purpose than being an instrument of death. This they used to assassinate the President's own half brother.

Mr. Speaker, the Foreign Affairs Committee has focused extensively on the urgent threat by North Korea to

the U.S. and our allies in Asia. It is critical that we use every tool at our disposal to ramp up the pressure on the Kim regime.

I know just how aggressive North Korea can be. I saw a ship of the South Korean Navy that had been lifted from the bottom of the sea. It had been split in two by a torpedo fired by a North Korean submarine. Over 40 South Korean sailors were killed in that attack.

This is the kind of behavior we have seen from Kim Jong-un. This is why I rise in support of Judge TED POE's bill, H.R. 479, which pushes the State Department to relist North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism.

The state sponsor of terrorism label is a very powerful one. In addition to imposing sanctions and other restrictions, the designation itself earns a state pariah status internationally. And that is deserved. After all, these are countries whose governments backed the killings of innocent people, innocent civilians, as a matter of policy.

Frankly, the Department should never have removed North Korea's designation in the first place.

I am glad that this legislation demands a reevaluation. I think I know what that result will be.

I thank the bill's author, Judge TED POE, who has a deep sense, as a former judge, of justice and has pursued this issue for a long time. I also thank the ranking member for working with our offices on this important and timely measure. The flawed delisting of North Korea has also been a particular focus to the chairman emeritus of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Ms. ROSELEHTINEN, and so I want to recognize her contributions as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H.R. 479, the "North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017." As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions on which the Committee on Ways and Means has a jurisdictional interest, I will not request a sequential referral on this measure.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the

Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 479.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2017.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee on H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your declining to pursue a sequential referral in this case does not diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on this bill into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on Ways and Means as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017.

I want to associate myself with the chairman's remarks. He summarizes well the need to adopt this legislation. I want to commend Judge POE for introducing this legislation. I was very pleased to introduce it alongside him.

We earlier considered H. Res. 92. In that debate, we discussed the nuclear and missile program of North Korea. Now it is time to focus for the next few minutes on their use of terrorism.

We need to consider North Korea's obvious state support of terrorism around the world. North Korea has engaged in kidnappings, targeted assassination, cyber attacks, and support to terrorist organizations in various regions.

North Korea was designated as a state sponsor of terrorism in 1988, but it was taken off that list in 2008, following commitments by Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. We dismantled their status as a state sponsor of terrorism. North Korea certainly has not dismantled its nuclear program.

Kim Jong-un has only increased the pace of his nuclear ballistic missile testing and is nowhere near dismantling that program. So now it is time to focus again on North Korea's terrorist actions around the world.

We can go back several decades when the North Korean Government kidnapped Japanese civilians—some because of their talents in making movies; most in order to force them to

teach Japanese etiquette to North Korean spies.

Now, you may say: Well, that was decades ago. Why are we designating them as a state sponsor of terrorism now?

Well, those people still have not been released to this day. And, if they have passed on, their bodies have not been returned to their families.

We are all aware of how North Korea engaged in cyberterrorism against Sony Pictures because Sony Pictures made a movie they didn't like.

We know that, just a month or so ago, a North Korean agent killed Kim Jong-nam, the half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. This act of terrorism took place at the airport in Malaysia and was summarized by the chairman.

In the case of Chaim Kaplan v. Hezbollah, a United States District Court found that, in 2014, North Korea materially supported terrorist attacks by Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

And finally—and this list is incomplete but last on my list—is North Korea's assistance in helping Assad try to develop nuclear weapons of his own. We are aware that Assad's nuclear facility, built almost entirely based on North Korean technology and using North Korean equipment, was destroyed in 2007. Assad has murdered hundreds of thousands, it looks like the figure is now half a million, of his own citizens. Imagine the destruction Assad would have engaged in had he been able to develop nuclear weapons with the support and technology of North Korea.

H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act, expresses the sense of Congress that North Korea likely meets the criteria to be designated as a state sponsor of terrorism and requires a determination by the Secretary of State within 90 days as to whether or not North Korea meets that standard.

This bill is an important step in confronting North Korea's support for terrorism around the world and for the danger that it poses to the civilized world.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1800

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the contribution here of Mr. SHERMAN, who is the ranking member on the committee, and to acknowledge also the force of his argument.

Kim Jong-un is an individual who not only kidnaps his neighbors, but also, in the past, this rogue regime has become expert at transferring the methods to kill civilians to other rogue regimes around the world. And based upon his past behavior, it is only too plausible that if they get this weapon, they will do it again.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), the

chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, and the dogged author of this bill who has pushed this issue for a long time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member, Mr. SHERMAN, for his cosponsorship of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, North Korea was on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list for 20 years. It was taken off in 2008 for purely diplomatic reasons.

North Korea agreed to freeze and disable its nuclear program as the result of international efforts known as the Six-Party Talks. In exchange, the United States decided to remove North Korea from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

Fast forward 9 years later, North Korea remains off the list while it races toward the capability to send a nuclear warhead to American shores. There has been no secret about this. Little Kim has said he wants to send intercontinental ballistic missiles to the United States.

North Korea has conducted four nuclear tests since 2008. Recent satellite images suggest that it is preparing for yet another nuclear test.

North Korea is also doing all the things that got it placed on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list in the first place. North Korea harbored Japanese Red Army terrorists who participated in the hijacking of a jet in 1970. These terrorists are still living happily in North Korea today. Press reports suggest that little Kim is even arming and training Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists.

A U.S. district court actually found in 2014 that North Korea materially supported terrorist attacks by Hezbollah against Israel.

North Korea has also moved toward a new form of terrorism: cyber warfare. We all remember the 2014 North Korea cyber attack against Sony Pictures that included direct threats against its employees and a warning to "Remember the 11th of September 2001." In March of 2015, North Korea launched a cyber attack against nuclear power plants in South Korea.

North Korea is not just active over cyber. It has a long history of actually killing folks, dissidents in particular, all over the world. In February, North Korean agents killed little Kim's half brother in Malaysia using a chemical VX nerve agent.

North Korea has helped Assad develop chemical weapons. Thankfully, Israel took out those chemical weapons some time ago.

Mr. Speaker, North Korea's actions have not gotten any better. They have only become more dangerous and more treacherous. In addition, North Korea is working with Iran, the world's number one state sponsor of terror, on developing nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles.

It is clear that North Korea is a state sponsor of terrorism. At the very least,

the State Department should go back to the drawing board and assess whether or not North Korea meets the criteria for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. And that is what this bill does, H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act.

It is high time we call out little Kim, the loose cannon of East Asia, for what he is: a terrorist in a terrorist state.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would note that this bill passed our committee without any opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), and I thank the gentleman from Florida again for her contribution on this legislation.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I stand in full support of Judge POE's bill, H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017.

Over the years, as the chairman has said, I have repeatedly and explicitly called for Pyongyang to be redesignated as a state sponsor of terrorism, SST, country.

I stood in ardent opposition to the Bush administration's decision to remove North Korea from the SST list, and in the years past, I introduced similar legislation to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), which would see Pyongyang back on the list where it belongs.

The removal from the list was a failure of the nuclear negotiations with North Korea, a concession given for nothing but empty promises in return.

In much the same way that the Obama administration removed Cuba from the SST list 2 years ago, the Bush administration got empty promises in return for these terrible concessions, while the Obama administration couldn't even get empty promises.

These designations are much more important than just tools for negotiation, Mr. Speaker. They are there because these countries actively support terror or they support or facilitate countries that do support terror. They pose a very serious risk to U.S. national security and global stability. This is not something to take lightly, and removing North Korea from the SST list was a very serious error in judgment.

It is far past time, Mr. Speaker, to correct this mistake, and it has to start by having an honest and transparent determination made on Pyongyang, its support for terror, and its ties to other state sponsor of terrorism states like Iran.

I support Judge POE's bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, this bill is an important step in confronting North Korea's support for terrorism around the world. We should not stand idle while North

Korea engages in terrorism, including kidnappings, target assassinations, cyber attacks, support for other terrorist organizations, and nuclear proliferation.

I again call upon my colleagues to join me in passing this bill, H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017.

I note that this bill passed our full committee without a single opponent.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I again want to thank Judge POE for his determination to have North Korea labeled as a terrorist state. As Judge POE notes, that is just the way it is.

With the passage of this bill today, we are going to take another step, I think, toward pushing back on that regime's destructive ambitions.

I think also it is worth noting that we have a recently published U.N. panel of experts on North Korea. They put out this report that says that North Korea continues to illicitly ship dual-use items to both Syria and Iran. Now, those are two terrorist regimes.

So I hope that the new administration will move quickly to relist North Korea and continue to seek ways to increase pressure on the regime through the sanctions bill that we passed out of here today and other measures.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 479, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on April 3, 2017, at 4:32 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 544.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PRINCIPLES FOR REFORMING THE MILITARY SELECTIVE SERVICE PROCESS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-27)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith Principles for Reforming the Military Selective Service Process, in accordance with section 555 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328), which calls for the President to establish principles for reform of the military selective service process in support of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 3, 2017.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1343, ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP ACT OF 2017

Mr. BUCK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-75) on the resolution (H. Res. 240) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1343) to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise its rules so as to increase the threshold amount for requiring issuers to provide certain disclosures relating to compensatory benefit plans, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1304, SELF-INSURANCE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BUCK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-76) on the resolution (H. Res. 241) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1304) to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from the definition of

health insurance coverage certain medical stop-loss insurance obtained by certain plan sponsors of group health plans, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1219, SUPPORTING AMERICA'S INNOVATORS ACT OF 2017, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 7, 2017, THROUGH APRIL 24, 2017

Mr. BUCK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-77) on the resolution (H. Res. 242) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1219) to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to expand the investor limitation for qualifying venture capital funds under an exemption from the definition of an investment company, and providing for proceedings during the period from April 7, 2017, through April 24, 2017, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Res. 92, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 479, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

CONDEMNING NORTH KOREA'S DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIPLE INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 92) condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 398, nays 3, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 209]

YEAS—398

Adams	Arrington	Barragán
Aderholt	Babin	Bass
Aguilar	Bacon	Beatty
Allen	Banks (IN)	Bera
Amodei	Barr	Bergman

Beyer	Espallat	Lee	Roskam	Shuster	Valadao
Biggs	Esty	Levin	Ross	Sinema	Vargas
Bilirakis	Evans	Lewis (GA)	Rothfus	Sires	Veasey
Bishop (MI)	Farenthold	Lewis (MN)	Rouzer	Smith (MO)	Vela
Bishop (UT)	Ferguson	Lipinski	Roybal-Allard	Smith (NE)	Velázquez
Black	Fitzpatrick	LoBiondo	Royce (CA)	Smith (NJ)	Walberg
Blackburn	Fleischmann	Loeback	Ruiz	Smith (TX)	Walden
Blum	Flores	Lofgren	Ruppersberger	Smith (WA)	Walker
Blumenauer	Fortenberry	Long	Rush	Smucker	Walorski
Blunt Rochester	Foster	Loudermilk	Russell	Soto	Walters, Mimi
Bonamici	Fox	Love	Rutherford	Speier	Walz
Bost	Frankel (FL)	Lowenthal	Ryan (OH)	Stefanik	Wasserman
Boyle, Brendan	Franks (AZ)	Lowey	Sánchez	Stewart	Schultz
F.	Frelinghuysen	Lucas	Sanford	Stivers	Waters, Maxine
Brady (PA)	Fudge	Luetkemeyer	Sarbanes	Suozzi	Watson Coleman
Brady (TX)	Gabbard	Lujan Grisham,	Scalise	Swalwell (CA)	Weber (TX)
Brat	Gaetz	M.	Schakowsky	Takano	Webster (FL)
Brooks (AL)	Gallagher	Luján, Ben Ray	Schiff	Taylor	Welch
Brooks (IN)	Gallego	Lynch	Schneider	Tenney	Wenstrup
Brown (MD)	Garamendi	MacArthur	Schrader	Thompson (CA)	Westerman
Brownley (CA)	Garrett	Maloney	Schweikert	Thompson (PA)	Williams
Buchanan	Gibbs	Carolyn B.	Scott (VA)	Thornberry	Wilson (FL)
Buck	Gonzalez (TX)	Maloney, Sean	Scott, Austin	Tiberi	Wilson (SC)
Bucshon	Goodlatte	Marchant	Scott, David	Tipton	Wittman
Budd	Gosar	Marino	Sensenbrenner	Titus	Womack
Burgess	Gottheimer	Marshall	Serrano	Tonko	Woodall
Bustos	Gowdy	Mast	Sessions	Torres	Yarmuth
Byrne	Granger	Matsui	Sewell (AL)	Trott	Yoder
Calvert	Graves (GA)	McCarthy	Shea-Porter	Tsongas	Young (AK)
Capuano	Graves (LA)	McCaul	Sherman	Turner	Young (IA)
Carbajal	Graves (MO)	McCollum	Shimkus	Upton	Zeldin
Cárdenas	Green, Al	McEachin			
Carson (IN)	Green, Gene	McGovern			
Carter (GA)	Griffith	McHenry	Amash	Jones	Massie
Carter (TX)	Grothman	McKinley			
Cartwright	Guthrie	McMorris	Abraham	Gohmert	Roby
Castor (FL)	Hanabusa	Rodgers	Barletta	Grijalva	Rogers (AL)
Castro (TX)	Harper	McNerney	Barton	Gutiérrez	Simpson
Chabot	Harris	McSally	Bishop (GA)	Jenkins (WV)	Slaughter
Chaffetz	Hartzler	Meadows	Bridenstine	Kind	Thompson (MS)
Cheney	Hastings	Meehan	Butterfield	Lieu, Ted	Visclosky
Chu, Judy	Heck	Meeks	Clay	McClintock	Wagner
Ciçilline	Hensarling	Meng	Davis, Danny	Murphy (FL)	Yoho
Clark (MA)	Herrera Beutler	Messer	Engel	Palazzo	
Clarke (NY)	Hice, Jody B.	Mitchell	Faso	Richmond	
Cleaver	Higgins (LA)	Moolenaar			
Clyburn	Higgins (NY)	Mooney (WV)			
Coffman	Hill	Moore			
Cohen	Himes	Moulton			
Cole	Holding	Mullin			
Collins (GA)	Hollingsworth	Murphy (PA)			
Collins (NY)	Hoyer	Nader			
Comer	Hudson	Napolitano			
Comstock	Huffman	Neal			
Conaway	Huizenga	Newhouse			
Connolly	Hultgren	Noem			
Conyers	Hunter	Nolan			
Cook	Hurd	Norcross			
Cooper	Issa	Nunes			
Correa	Jackson Lee	O'Halleran			
Costa	Jayapal	O'Rourke			
Costello (PA)	Jeffries	Olson			
Courtney	Jenkins (KS)	Pallone			
Cramer	Johnson (GA)	Palmer			
Crawford	Johnson (LA)	Panetta			
Crist	Johnson (OH)	Pascrell			
Crowley	Johnson, E. B.	Paulsen			
Cuellar	Johnson, Sam	Payne			
Culberson	Jordan	Pearce			
Cummings	Joyce (OH)	Pelosi			
Curbelo (FL)	Kaptur	Perlmutter			
Davidson	Katko	Perry			
Davis (CA)	Keating	Peters			
Davis, Rodney	Kelly (IL)	Peterson			
DeFazio	Kelly (MS)	Pingree			
DeGette	Kelly (PA)	Pittenger			
Delaney	Kennedy	Pocan			
DeLauro	Khanna	Poe (TX)			
DelBene	Kihuen	Poliquin			
Demings	Kildee	Polis			
Denham	Kilmer	Posey			
Dent	King (IA)	Price (NC)			
DeSantis	King (NY)	Quigley			
DeSaulnier	Knizinger	Raskin			
DesJarlais	Knight	Ratcliffe			
Deutch	Krishnamoorthi	Reed			
Diaz-Balart	Kuster (NH)	Reichert			
Dingell	Kustoff (TN)	Renacci			
Doggett	Labrador	Rice (NY)			
Donovan	LaHood	Rice (SC)			
Doyle, Michael	LaMalfa	Roe (TN)			
F.	Lamborn	Rogers (KY)			
Duffy	Lance	Rohrabacher			
Duncan (SC)	Langevin	Rokita			
Duncan (TN)	Larsen (WA)	Rooney, Francis			
Dunn	Larson (CT)	Rooney, Thomas			
Ellison	Latta	J.			
Emmer	Lawrence	Ros-Lehtinen			
Eshoo	Lawson (FL)	Rosen			

NAYS—3

NOT VOTING—28

Ms. MOORE changed her vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 209.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUES- TION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, I rise to give notice of my intent to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that President Donald Trump shall publicly disclose his tax return information, which would conform with an important tradition connected to occupancy of the White House, as well as uphold his promise to the American people that he would release his tax returns.

Whereas, every President since Gerald Ford has disclosed his tax return information to the American people;

Whereas, in May 2014 Donald Trump stated during a television interview: “If I decide to run for office I’ll

produce my tax returns absolutely. I would love to do that”;

Whereas, in February 2015 Donald Trump stated during a radio interview: “I have no objection to certainly showing tax returns”;

Whereas, in February 2016 Donald Trump stated during a televised Republican Presidential debate: “I will absolutely give my returns, but I’m being audited now for two or three years, so I can’t do it until the audit is finished, obviously”;

Whereas, in May 2016 Donald Trump stated during a television interview: “I will really gladly give them. When the audit ends, I’ll present them. That should be before the election”;

Whereas, the IRS has made clear that any taxpayer, including Donald Trump, may release his tax returns at any time while under audit;

Whereas, the House of Representatives by constitutional design is the institution closest to the American people, and an overwhelming majority of the American people think Donald Trump should release his tax returns immediately;

Whereas, 17 different intelligence agencies in the United States have concluded that Vladimir Putin and his Russian regime interfered with our Presidential election for the purpose of helping Donald Trump;

Whereas, multiple high-level Trump associates were in regular contact with Russian operatives and intelligence agents during the same time that Russia was hacking into our democracy;

Whereas, multiple high-level Trump associates have financial ties to the Russian regime;

Whereas, Paul Manafort, Donald Trump’s former campaign chairman, engineered a pro-Russia change in the Republican Party platform in July 2016 and has received millions of dollars from pro-Russian oligarchs to advance Putin’s agenda;

Whereas, Michael Flynn, Donald Trump’s first National Security Adviser, resigned in disgrace for misleading to Vice President Mike Pence about potentially unlawful phone calls to the Russian Ambassador and failed to disclose financial compensation received from a Russian propaganda media outlet closely tied to Vladimir Putin;

Whereas, Carter Page, a top foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign, has now acknowledged visiting the Kremlin in the midst of the 2016 Presidential election;

Whereas, Jeff Sessions, Donald Trump’s Attorney General, misled the Senate under oath by failing to disclose his meetings with the Russian Ambassador that took place in July 2016 at the Republican National Convention and again in September of 2016;

Whereas, Michael Cohen, Donald Trump’s personal attorney, now acknowledges being in contact with Russian operatives at the same time the attacks on our democracy were taking place;

Whereas, Jared Kushner, a senior White House advisor and Donald Trump's son-in-law, now acknowledges previously undisclosed meetings with the Russian Ambassador;

Whereas, Roger Stone, a self-described political trickster and Donald Trump's long-time consigliere, now acknowledges being in contact with the Russian-aligned hacker Guccifer II and predicted during the campaign that John Podesta's emails would soon be exposed;

Whereas, Ian Fleming, the renowned British author has observed, "Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. Three times is enemy action";

Whereas, Donald Trump has shown an unrestrained willingness to criticize and insult allies of the United States of America;

Whereas, Donald Trump wrongly accused Great Britain, our closest ally, of wiretapping Trump Tower in New York City;

Whereas, Donald Trump declined to shake German Chancellor Angela Merkel's hand while seated together during their recent joint appearance at the White House;

Whereas, Donald Trump stated in a recent C-PAC speech that "Paris is no longer Paris";

Whereas, Donald Trump threatened to cancel a refugee transfer agreement with our ally Australia and reportedly hung up on the Prime Minister;

Whereas, Donald Trump told the President of Mexico that America would deploy military personnel to that sovereign nation if our southern neighbor does not deal with its "bad hombres";

Whereas, Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized our strategic and military alliance with Western European allies and called NATO "obsolete";

Whereas, Donald Trump refuses to say a negative word about Vladimir Putin or his corrupt Russian regime;

Whereas, Bill O'Reilly interviewed Donald Trump on Super Bowl Sunday and asked about Putin's brutal and murderous regime;

Whereas, Donald Trump responded, "There are a lot of killers. You think our country's so innocent?", suggesting a moral equivalence between the United States and Russia;

Whereas, Yogi Berra, the great Yankee catcher and philosopher-king, once observed "that's too coincidental to be a coincidence";

Whereas, Donald Trump tweeted on January 11: "I have nothing to do with Russia—no deals, no loans, no nothing"

Whereas, Donald Trump Jr. once stated: "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets. We see a lot of money pouring in from Russia";

Whereas, disclosure of Donald Trump's tax returns will help the American people and their elected Representatives in this House better understand Trump's financial ties, if any, to Putin's Russia;

Whereas, the American people have a right to know whether financial con-

flicts of interest exist between the President of the United States and a hostile foreign power;

Whereas, the chairmen of the House Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request Donald Trump's tax returns under section 6103 of the Tax Code; and

Whereas, the FBI is conducting a criminal and counterintelligence investigation into Russian interference with the recent Presidential election, including possible collusion between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the House of Representatives shall:

One, immediately request tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2007 through 2016 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives; and

Two, postpone consideration of comprehensive tax reform legislation until after the elected Representatives of the American people in this House have been able to review Trump's tax returns and ascertain how any changes to the Tax Code might financially benefit the President of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from New York will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

NORTH KOREA STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM DESIGNATION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 479) to require a report on the designation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 394, nays 1, not voting 34, as follows:

[Roll No. 210]

YEAS—394

Adams	Denham	Katko
Aderholt	Dent	Keating
Aguilar	DeSantis	Kelly (IL)
Allen	DeSaulnier	Kelly (MS)
Amash	DesJarlais	Kelly (PA)
Arrington	Deutch	Kennedy
Babin	Diaz-Balart	Khanna
Bacon	Dingell	Kihuen
Banks (IN)	Doggett	Kildee
Barr	Donovan	Kilmer
Barragán	Doyle, Michael	King (IA)
Bass	F.	King (NY)
Beatty	Duncan (SC)	Kinzinger
Bera	Duncan (TN)	Knight
Bergman	Dunn	Krishnamoorthi
Beyer	Ellison	Kuster (NH)
Biggs	Emmer	Kustoff (TN)
Bilirakis	Eshoo	Labrador
Bishop (MI)	Espallat	LaHood
Bishop (UT)	Esty	LaMalfa
Black	Evans	Lamborn
Blackburn	Farenthold	Lance
Blum	Faso	Langevin
Blumenauer	Ferguson	Larsen (WA)
Blunt Rochester	Fitzpatrick	Larson (CT)
Bonamici	Fleischmann	Latta
Bost	Flores	Lawrence
Boyle, Brendan	Fortenberry	Lawson (FL)
F.	Foster	Lee
Brady (PA)	Fox	Levin
Brady (TX)	Frankel (FL)	Lewis (GA)
Brat	Franks (AZ)	Lewis (MN)
Brooks (AL)	Frelinghuysen	Lipinski
Brooks (IN)	Fudge	LoBiondo
Brown (MD)	Gabbard	Loehsack
Brownley (CA)	Gaetz	Long
Buchanan	Gallagher	Loudermilk
Buck	Gallego	Love
Bucshon	Garamendi	Lowenthal
Budd	Garrett	Lowe
Burgess	Gibbs	Lucas
Bustos	Gonzalez (TX)	Luetkemeyer
Byrne	Goodlatte	Lujan Grisham,
Calvert	Gosar	M.
Capuano	Gottheimer	Luján, Ben Ray
Carbajal	Gowdy	Lynch
Cárdenas	Granger	MacArthur
Carson (IN)	Graves (GA)	Maloney
Carter (GA)	Graves (LA)	Carolyn B.
Carter (TX)	Graves (MO)	Maloney, Sean
Cartwright	Green, Al	Marchant
Castor (FL)	Green, Gene	Marino
Castro (TX)	Griffith	Marshall
Chabot	Grothman	Mast
Chaffetz	Guthrie	Matsui
Cheney	Hanabusa	McCarthy
Chu, Judy	Harper	McCauley
Cicilline	Harris	McCollum
Clark (MA)	Hartzler	McEachin
Clarke (NY)	Hastings	McGovern
Cleaver	Heck	McHenry
Coffman	Hensarling	McKinley
Cohen	Herrera Beutler	McMorris
Cole	Hice, Jody B.	Rodgers
Collins (GA)	Higgins (LA)	McNerney
Collins (NY)	Higgins (NY)	McSally
Comer	Hill	Meadows
Conaway	Himes	Meehan
Connolly	Holding	Meeks
Conyers	Hollingsworth	Meng
Cook	Hoyer	Messer
Cooper	Hudson	Mitchell
Correa	Huffman	Moolenaar
Costa	Huizenga	Mooney (WV)
Costello (PA)	Hultgren	Moore
Courtney	Hunter	Moulton
Cramer	Hurd	Mullin
Crawford	Issa	Murphy (PA)
Crist	Jackson Lee	Nadler
Crowley	Jayapal	Napolitano
Cuellar	Jeffries	Neal
Culberson	Jenkins (KS)	Newhouse
Curbelo (FL)	Jenkins (WV)	Noem
Davidson	Johnson (GA)	Nolan
Davis (CA)	Johnson (LA)	Norcross
Davis, Rodney	Johnson (OH)	Nunes
DeFazio	Johnson, E. B.	O'Halleran
DeGette	Johnson, Sam	O'Rourke
Delaney	Jones	Olson
DeLauro	Jordan	Pallone
DelBene	Joyce (OH)	Palmer
Demings	Kaptur	Panetta

Pascarell	Rutherford	Tiberi
Paulsen	Ryan (OH)	Tipton
Payne	Sánchez	Titus
Pearce	Sanford	Tonko
Perlmutter	Sarbanes	Torres
Perry	Scalise	Trott
Peters	Schakowsky	Tsongas
Peterson	Schiff	Turner
Pingree	Schneider	Upton
Pittenger	Schrader	Valadao
Pocan	Schweikert	Vargas
Poe (TX)	Scott (VA)	Veasey
Poliquin	Scott, Austin	Vela
Posey	Scott, David	Velázquez
Price (NC)	Sensenbrenner	Wagner
Quigley	Serrano	Walberg
Raskin	Sessions	Walden
Ratcliffe	Sewell (AL)	Walker
Reed	Shea-Porter	Walorski
Reichert	Sherman	Walters, Mimi
Renacci	Shimkus	Walz
Rice (NY)	Shuster	Wasserman
Rice (SC)	Sinema	Schultz
Roe (TN)	Sires	Waters, Maxine
Rogers (KY)	Smith (MO)	Watson Coleman
Rohrabacher	Smith (NE)	Weber (TX)
Rokita	Smith (NJ)	Webster (FL)
Rooney, Francis	Smith (TX)	Welch
Rooney, Thomas J.	Smith (WA)	Wenstrup
Ros-Lehtinen	Smucker	Westerman
Rosen	Stefanik	Williams
Roskam	Stewart	Wilson (FL)
Ross	Stivers	Wilson (SC)
Rothfus	Suozzi	Wittman
Rouzer	Swalwell (CA)	Womack
Roybal-Allard	Takano	Woodall
Royce (CA)	Taylor	Yarmuth
Ruiz	Tenney	Yoder
Ruppersberger	Thompson (CA)	Young (AK)
Rush	Thompson (PA)	Young (IA)
Russell	Thornberry	Zeldin

NAYS—1

Massie

NOT VOTING—34

Abraham	Duffy	Polis
Amodei	Engel	Richmond
Barletta	Gohmert	Roby
Barton	Grijalva	Rogers (AL)
Bishop (GA)	Gutiérrez	Simpson
Bridenstine	Kind	Slaughter
Butterfield	Lieu, Ted	Speier
Clay	Lofgren	Thompson (MS)
Clyburn	McClintock	Visclosky
Comstock	Murphy (FL)	Yoho
Cummings	Palazzo	
Davis, Danny	Pelosi	

□ 1915

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the world celebrated Autism Awareness Day.

Each year, Autism Speaks asks people across the Nation and around the globe to “Light It Up Blue” in an effort to increase understanding and acceptance.

Last night, right here in our Nation’s Capital, the White House joined hundreds of iconic landmarks as it illuminated the exterior blue. Individuals wore blue clothing or turned their on-line profile photos blue.

Autism spectrum disorders affect an estimated 1 out of every 68 children in

the United States. These families face enormous challenges in assisting their loved ones over the course of their lifetimes. Each year, an estimated 50,000 youth will turn 18 in the United States, and many face a services cliff when school-based programs end.

Men and women living on the autism spectrum have made incredible contributions to our society. We must continue to research the causes of autism and work to strengthen opportunities for individuals with autism to live full lives.

Together, we can increase understanding and acceptance as we celebrate and support so many Americans who live with autism.

GORSUCH NOMINATION

(Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, Judge Neil Gorsuch’s lifelong appointment to the Supreme Court would have serious consequences for all Americans, but especially the health and well-being of African-American women.

In 2013, by ruling that corporations have the right to deny access to contraceptives on employer-sponsored health insurance plans, Judge Gorsuch proved that he believes the reproductive decisions of women nationwide can and should impact their livelihood. This is problematic and troubling.

For Black women and so many women across the world, birth control is a matter of health and life. We rely on contraception to treat endometriosis, manage uterine fibroids, unplanned pregnancies, and quell PMS symptoms.

In 2013, Judge Neil Gorsuch made the decision that his overarching commitment to religious freedom as a constitutional and statutory right is more important than lifesaving reproductive care.

In 2013, he proved he should not be confirmed to the United States Supreme Court. For this reason and a host of others, I implore my colleagues in the Senate to take all available steps to oppose Judge Gorsuch’s nomination.

RECOGNIZING THE CITY OF WEST MIAMI ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to the city of West Miami in recognition of its 70th anniversary.

What began as a small town of 700 residents has flourished into a haven for nearly 7,000 south Floridians, including my constituents, Senator MARCO RUBIO and Miami-Dade County commissioners and former West Miami Mayor Rebeca Sosa, who are proud to call West Miami home.

While the city itself is less than 1 square mile, the tremendous growth that has graced West Miami in the past 70 years has led to the creation of some of the finest public parks and summer camps in our State.

To celebrate its founding, local officials, businesses, residents, and their families will gather together on Saturday, April 8, at Cooper Park, in celebration of this incredible milestone.

I am honored to represent the city of West Miami, and I thank all who have dedicated countless hours to making this corner of south Florida special for all of us to enjoy.

HONORING EQUAL PAY DAY

(Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in honor of Equal Pay Day, which is tomorrow.

Women in our country earn, on average, 78 cents for every dollar that a man makes. For women of color, that gap is larger. Even in my own district, the Eighth Congressional District of Illinois, where the overall disparity is smaller, women still only earn 83 cents on the dollar.

The pay gap is not simply a women’s issue, but a challenge for all Americans. Gender wage disparities are a fundamental obstacle to millions of families trying to make ends meet.

At a time when nearly two-thirds of mothers are primary, sole, or co-breadwinners for their families, the pay gap makes it that much harder to pay for groceries, housing, child care, and all the other necessities of daily life.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act and hope all my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill to address pay discrimination.

PROTESTING THE ARREST OF REVEREND CAO SAN QIANG

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shed light on the religious persecution of Christians by the Chinese Government.

On March 5 of this year, Reverend Cao San Qiang, also known as “Pastor John,” was arrested and is still behind bars in the Yunnan province of southwest China. I believe that his arrest and detention was for inflated charges leveled against him simply because he is a Christian.

Pastor John has been a permanent resident of the United States since 1990, where he attended seminary and became a pastor in Greensboro, North Carolina. He is married, with two children, and is kind and humble. Even though he was living a comfortable life in the United States, he kept his Chinese citizenship so he could continue to

travel there and spread the good word of Jesus Christ.

He has been ministering to the impoverished people of Myanmar and the Yunnan province of China for over a decade. In these last 3 years, he helped build and staff 16 schools in northern Myanmar.

For years, Pastor John regularly crossed the border on his small motorcycle loaded with food and medicine, without incident. For some reason, this time, he was arrested and charged as a smuggler.

Since his arrest, Chinese officials have raided and threatened a number of Christian churches in several provinces. I urge the State Department to seek Pastor John's immediate release from Chinese custody and to stop further raids before other innocent individuals become casualties of aggressive religious persecution.

CONGRATULATING FAIRMONT HEIGHTS HORNETS

(Mr. BROWN of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Fairmont Heights Hornets for winning their first State basketball championship in 36 years.

After trailing by as much as 9 points, the Hornets, under the leadership of Coach Chuck Henry, won the 1A boys State title by a score of 65-52. The team of young scholars was resilient, played hard, and never panicked.

Credit is due to Coach Henry, who has taken his team to the State championship after only 2 years on the job. He is a role model, had high expectations for his students, and constantly pushed them to play better on the court and achieve more in the classroom. Throughout the season, Coach Henry never lost faith in his young team.

Mr. Speaker, the students on the winning Fairmont Heights team may not go on to play in the NCAA or the NBA, but the memories of this moment, the bonds they have built, and the lessons they have developed will stay with them for a lifetime.

Fairmont Heights High School has a proud legacy. When it opened its doors in 1950, it was only one of two high schools in the State of Maryland for African Americans. Now, nearly 70 years later, the school has made history again. This team has made Prince George's County and the entire Fourth Congressional District very proud.

Go, Hornets.

PROTECTING OUR BORDER

(Mr. ROTHFUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, the past several days, I had my first-ever tour

of our southwest border. During my visit, I met with Border Patrol agents in New Mexico and Texas, as well as ranchers and business leaders on the border.

Border security was a significant issue in the last election, as Americans are concerned about the flow of illegal narcotics and aliens across the border. Although gaps in security remain, I saw an impressive array of assets, including drones and manned aircraft, walls, cameras, and other materiel.

More impressive, however, are the men and women who work for Customs and Border Protection, who, at no small risk to themselves, work to keep America secure. They are very encouraged lately as they see policy changes coming that will allow them to enforce our laws. Mr. Speaker, these individuals are literally on the front line defending our Nation and communities, and I thank them for their service.

I understand that there are job opportunities with Border Patrol. For those seeking a public service career doing something bigger than themselves, that is something to consider.

EQUAL PAY DAY

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, over 50 years ago, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act, landmark legislation which requires that men and women in the same workplace be given equal pay for equal work.

Unfortunately, equal pay for equal work has not become a reality. In fact, women are paid between 79 and 80 cents for every dollar that men are paid for doing the exact same job. In fact, it takes women until tomorrow, April 4, to earn what men were paid in the previous year.

For women of color, the gap is even wider. In 2015, African-American women made 65 cents for every dollar earned by their White male counterparts. For Hispanic women, it is even worse. They earn 58 cents for every dollar earned by their White male counterparts.

Women pay a huge price because of the wage gap. Today, families rely increasingly on women's wages to make ends meet; and with less take-home pay, women have less money to cover the everyday needs of their family.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to right the wrong. Let's pass the Paycheck Fairness Act and send it to the President's desk for signature.

□ 1930

END COMMERCIAL WHALING

(Mr. GAETZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, our great ally Australia has long been the lead-

ing voice in the world to end commercial whaling. I rise to let them know that they are not alone and to announce the filing of bipartisan legislation to support an end to commercial whaling.

Another of our valued allies, Japan, unfortunately continues this depraved practice. In fact, the Japanese whaling fleet has just returned home, having killed 333 Antarctic minke whales.

Despite the global ban on commercial whaling, Japan continues the slaughter on the seas under a thinly veiled claim of research. Research into whales is important, but all available science shows that this research can be conducted with nonlethal testing and biopsies.

The Japan whale hunt isn't about research. It is about whale meat. In 2012, a Japanese minister even commented that the minke whale offers great flavor and aroma as sashimi. I think that is disgusting.

The Japanese whalers shoot the world's majestic mammals with exploding harpoons and electric lances. Death can often take hours.

Commercial and fake research hunting of whales must end. I thank Australia for its leadership. I ask Japan to be honest with the world and end this barbaric practice.

JOBS SHOULD BE JOB ONE

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, the consensus for this Friday's Bureau of Labor Statistics jobs report is that it will show the economy added about 178,000 new private sector jobs in March. That is a good number, though not as good as the March numbers in recent years.

As *The New York Times* put it: "Growth in the first 3 months of the Trump administration is looking much the way it did" in the growth under President Obama.

But because of the current administration's inaction on vital economic issues, like infrastructure spending, right now about one in three market experts now think that a near-term stock market correction may be in the cards.

Instead of doing the things we need to do to rev up the economy, this body has been spending time trying to make it harder for women to access contraceptives, gutting our right to privacy on the internet, and trying to take health care away from millions of Americans. That is no way, Mr. Speaker, to create jobs.

How about we do what the President said he wanted to do? Let's make the investments that we need now that will stimulate the creation of good jobs—good-paying jobs for Americans. That should be job number one for this Congress.

HAPPY 108TH BIRTHDAY TO MARY COFFEY

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, 100 years is a century. It is a really long time. 108 years of life is a blessing.

A young lady I work for in the Texas 22nd Congressional District, who lives in my hometown of Sugar Land, is such a blessing. Her name is Mary Coffey, and she celebrated her 108th birthday on March 20.

In a recent article in the Fort Bend Star, Mary described her keys to being blessed: Number one, trust Jesus and lead several Bible studies with your friends; number two, get plenty of exercise; number three, eat healthy; and number four is about personal hygiene, have jar after jar after jar of Pond's cold cream available when you need it most.

For 108 years, Mary has inspired all of us.

Happy 108th birthday, Mary. Let's go out; maybe go out dancing if you promise not to wear me out.

INVESTIGATION INTO RUSSIAN CONNECTIONS IS LONG OVERDUE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today The Washington Post reported that the United Arab Emirates arranged a secret meeting in January between Blackwater founder and major Trump contributor Erik Prince and a Russian close to President Vladimir Putin. The meeting was an apparent effort to establish a back-channel line of communication between Moscow and President-elect Donald Trump, according to U.S., European, and Arab officials.

Erik Prince, by the way, is the brother to Betsy DeVos, the Secretary of Education. The UAE's incentive to broker this meeting comes from the deteriorating relationship between them and Iran. They wanted to drive a wedge between Russia, Iran, and Syria. Agreement on that deal would need a handsome reward, like the easing of U.S. sanctions on the Russian Federation for its invasion of Ukraine.

Blackwater is the private security firm that became infamous for U.S. abuses in Iraq after a series of incidents, including one in 2007 in which the company's guards were charged and criminally convicted of killing civilians.

"Officials said Zayed and his brother, the UAE's national security adviser, coordinated the Seychelles meeting with Russian Government officials with the goal of establishing an unofficial back channel between Trump and Putin." The UAE at one point paid Erik Prince's firm a reported half a billion dollars to consult on defensive security.

An independent bipartisan commission to investigate Trump officials and Russian connections is long overdue.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 3, 2017]

BLACKWATER FOUNDER HELD SECRET SEYCHELLES MEETING TO ESTABLISH TRUMP-PUTIN BACK CHANNEL

(By Adam Entous, Greg Miller, Kevin Sieff and Karen DeYoung)

The United Arab Emirates arranged a secret meeting in January between Blackwater founder Erik Prince and a Russian close to President Vladimir Putin as part of an apparent effort to establish a back-channel line of communication between Moscow and President-elect Donald Trump, according to U.S., European and Arab officials.

The meeting took place around Jan. 11—nine days before Trump's inauguration—in the Seychelles islands in the Indian Ocean, officials said. Though the full agenda remains unclear, the UAE agreed to broker the meeting in part to explore whether Russia could be persuaded to curtail its relationship with Iran, including in Syria, a Trump administration objective that would likely require major concessions to Moscow on U.S. sanctions.

Though Prince had no formal role with the Trump campaign or transition team, he presented himself as an unofficial envoy for Trump to high-ranking Emiratis involved in setting up his meeting with the Putin confidant, according to the officials, who did not identify the Russian.

Prince was an avid supporter of Trump who gave \$250,000 last year to support the GOP nominee's campaign, records show. He has ties to people in Trump's circle, including Stephen K. Bannon, now serving as the president's chief strategist and senior counselor. Prince's sister Betsy DeVos serves as education secretary in the Trump administration. And Prince was seen in the Trump transition offices in New York in December.

U.S. officials said the FBI has been scrutinizing the Seychelles meeting as part of a broader probe of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election and alleged contacts between associates of Putin and Trump. The FBI declined to comment.

The Seychelles encounter, which one official said spanned two days, adds to an expanding web of connections between Russia and Americans with ties to Trump—contacts that the White House has been reluctant to acknowledge or explain until they have been exposed by news organizations.

"We are not aware of any meetings and Erik Prince had no role in the transition," said Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary.

"Erik had no role on the transition team. This is a complete fabrication," said a spokesman for Prince in a statement. "The meeting had nothing to do with President Trump. Why is the so-called underresourced intelligence community messing around with surveillance of American citizens when they should be hunting terrorists?"

Prince is best known as the founder of Blackwater, a security firm that became a symbol of U.S. abuses in Iraq after a series of incidents including one in 2007 in which the company's guards were accused—and later criminally convicted—of killing civilians in a crowded Iraqi square. Prince sold the firm, which was subsequently rebranded, but has continued building a private paramilitary empire with contracts across the Middle East and Asia.

Prince would probably have been seen as too controversial to serve in any official capacity in the Trump transition or administration. But his ties to Trump advisers, experience with clandestine work and relation-

ship with the royal leaders of the Emirates—where he moved in 2010 amid mounting legal problems for his American business—would have positioned him as an ideal go-between.

The Seychelles meeting came after private discussions in New York involving high-ranking representatives of Trump, Moscow and the Emirates.

The White House has acknowledged that Michael T. Flynn, Trump's original national security adviser, and Trump adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner met with the Russian ambassador to the United States, Sergey Kislyak, in late November or early December in New York.

Flynn and Kushner were joined by Bannon for a separate meeting with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, who made an undisclosed visit to New York later in December, according to the U.S., European and Arab officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

In an unusual breach of protocol, the UAE did not notify the Obama administration in advance of the visit, though officials found out because Zayed's name appeared on a flight manifest.

Officials said Zayed and his brother, the UAE's national security adviser, coordinated the Seychelles meeting with Russian government officials with the goal of establishing an unofficial back channel between Trump and Putin.

Officials said Zayed wanted to be helpful to both leaders who had talked about working more closely together, a policy objective long advocated by the crown prince. The UAE, which sees Iran as one of its main enemies, also shared the Trump team's interest in finding ways to drive a wedge between Moscow and Tehran.

Zayed met twice with Putin in 2016, according to Western officials, and urged the Russian leader to work more closely with the Emirates and Saudi Arabia—an effort to isolate Iran.

At the time of the Seychelles meeting and for weeks afterward, the UAE believed that Prince had the blessing of the new administration to act as its unofficial representative. The Russian participant was a person whom Zayed knew was close to Putin from his interactions with both men, the officials said.

When the Seychelles meeting took place, official contacts between members of the incoming Trump administration and the Russian government were under intense scrutiny, both from federal investigators and the press.

Less than a week before the Seychelles meeting, U.S. intelligence agencies released a report accusing Russia of intervening clandestinely during the 2016 election to help Trump win the White House.

The FBI was already investigating communications between Flynn and Kislyak. The Washington Post's David Ignatius first disclosed those communications on Jan. 12, around the time of the Seychelles meeting. Flynn was subsequently fired by Trump for misleading Vice President Pence and others about his discussions with Kislyak.

Yousef Al Otaiba, the UAE's ambassador in Washington, declined to comment.

Government officials in the Seychelles said they were not aware of any meetings between Trump and Putin associates in the country around Jan. 11. But they said luxury resorts on the island are ideal for clandestine gatherings like the one described by the U.S., European and Arab officials.

"I wouldn't be surprised at all," said Barry Faure, the Seychelles secretary of state for foreign affairs. "The Seychelles is the kind of place where you can have a good time away from the eyes of the media. That's even

printed in our tourism marketing. But I guess this time you smelled something.”

Trump has dismissed the investigations of Russia's role in the election as “fake news” and a “witch hunt.”

The level of discretion surrounding the Seychelles meeting seems extraordinary given the frequency with which senior Trump advisers, including Flynn and Kushner, had interacted with Russian officials in the United States, including at the high-profile Trump Tower in New York.

Steven Simon, a National Security Council senior director for the Middle East and North Africa in the Obama White House, said: “The idea of using business cutouts, or individuals perceived to be close political leaders, as a tool of diplomacy is as old as the hills. These unofficial channels are desirable precisely because they are deniable; ideas can be tested without the risk of failure.”

Current and former U.S. officials said that while Prince refrained from playing a direct role in the Trump transition, his name surfaced so frequently in internal discussions that he seemed to function as an outside adviser whose opinions were valued on a range of issues, including plans for overhauling the U.S. intelligence community.

He appears to have particularly close ties to Bannon, appearing multiple times as a guest on Bannon's satellite radio program over the past year as well as in articles on the Breitbart Web site that Bannon ran before joining the Trump campaign.

In a July interview with Bannon, Prince said those seeking forceful U.S. leadership should “wait till January and hope Mr. Trump is elected.” And he lashed out at President Barack Obama, saying that because of his policies “the terrorists, the fascists, are winning.”

Days before the November election, Prince appeared on Bannon's program again, saying that he had “well-placed sources” in the New York City Police Department telling him they were preparing to make arrests in the investigation of former congressman Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) over allegations he exchanged sexually explicit texts with a minor. Flynn tweeted a link to the Breitbart report on the claim. No arrests occurred.

Prince went on to make a series of unfounded assertions that damaging material recovered from Weiner's computers would implicate Hillary Clinton and her close adviser, Huma Abedin, who was married to Weiner. He also called Abedin an “agent of influence very sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood.”

Prince and his family were major GOP donors in 2016. After the Republican convention, he contributed \$250,000 to Trump's campaign, the national party and a pro-Trump super PAC led by GOP mega-donor Rebekah Mercer. The Center for Responsive Politics reported that the family gave more than \$2.7 million to GOP candidates and super PACs, including about \$2.7 million from his sister, DeVos, and her husband.

Prince's father, Edgar Prince, built his fortune through an auto-parts company. Betsy married Richard DeVos Jr., heir to the Amway fortune.

Erik Prince has had lucrative contracts with the UAE government, which at one point paid his firm a reported \$529 million to help bring in foreign fighters to help assemble an internal paramilitary force capable of carrying out secret operations and protecting Emirati installations from terrorist attacks.

The Trump administration and the UAE appear to share a similar preoccupation with Iran. Current and former officials said that Trump advisers were focused throughout the transition period on exploring ways to get Moscow to break ranks with Tehran.

“Separating Russia from Iran was a common theme,” said a former intelligence official in the Obama administration who met with Trump transition officials. “It didn't seem very well thought out. It seemed a little premature. They clearly had a very specific policy position, which I found odd given that they hadn't even taken the reins and explored with experts in the U.S. government the pros and cons of that approach.”

Michael McFaul, former U.S. ambassador to Russia, said he also had discussions with people close to the Trump administration about the prospects of drawing Russia away from Iran. “When I would hear this, I would think, ‘Yeah that's great for you guys, but why would Putin ever do that?’” McFaul said. “There is no interest in Russia ever doing that. They have a long relationship with Iran. They're allied with Iran in fighting in Syria. They sell weapons to Iran. Iran is an important strategic partner for Russia in the Middle East.”

Following the New York meeting between the Emiratis and Trump aides, Zayed was approached by Prince, who said he was authorized to act as an unofficial surrogate for the president-elect, according to the officials. He wanted Zayed to set up a meeting with a Putin associate. Zayed agreed and proposed the Seychelles as the meeting place because of the privacy it would afford both sides. “He wanted to be helpful,” one official said of Zayed.

Wealthy Russians and Emirati royalty have a particularly large footprint on the islands. Signs advertising deep-sea fishing trips are posted in Cyrillic. Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov owns North Island, where Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, went on their honeymoon in 2011. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, president of the UAE, built a hilltop palace for himself with views across the chain of islands.

The Emiratis have given hundreds of millions of dollars to the Seychelles in recent years for causes including public health and affordable housing. But when the Emirati royal family visits, they are rarely seen.

“The jeep comes to their private jet on the tarmac and then they disappear,” said one Seychellois official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he did not want to be seen as criticizing the Emiratis.

Zayed, the crown prince, owns a share of the Seychelles Four Seasons, a collection of private villas scattered on a lush hillside on the main island's southern shore, overlooking the Indian Ocean, according to officials in the Seychelles. The hotel is tucked away on a private beach, far from the nearest public road.

Current and former U.S. officials who have worked closely with Zayed, who is often referred to as MBZ, say it would be out of character for him to arrange the Jan. 11 meeting without getting a green light in advance from top aides to Trump and Putin, if not the leaders themselves. “MBZ is very cautious,” said an American businessman who knows Zayed. “There had to be a nod.”

The Seychelles meeting was deemed productive by the UAE and Russia but the idea of arranging additional meetings between Prince and Putin's associates was dropped, officials said. Even unofficial contacts between Trump and Putin associates had become too politically risky, officials said.

Sieff reported from the Seychelles. Julie Tate, Devlin Barrett, Matea Gold, Tom Hamburger and Rosalind S. Helderman contributed to this report.

HONORING CHIEF CLINT GREENWOOD

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, early this morning, Precinct 3 Assistant Chief Clint Greenwood put on his uniform, secured his badge over his heart, and he headed off to work.

As he arrived at the courthouse at 7 a.m., shots suddenly rang out. After the smoke cleared, Chief Greenwood was shot in the neck. His fellow officers rushed to his aid, and he was airlifted to a nearby Houston hospital, but it was too late. Texas lost another one of its finest men in blue.

The suspect is still at large, but not for long. As the investigation develops, it is still unclear if Deputy Chief Greenwood was specifically targeted or if he was ambushed because he wore the uniform. Law enforcement will do everything in their power to find and apprehend the murderous outlaw.

Chief Greenwood dedicated 30 years of his life to the law. I knew Clint when I worked as a judge in Houston, Texas. He was a prosecutor. He was a defense lawyer. He worked for the sheriff's department, and now more recently as a member of the constable's office. He was of strong character and a proud Texas lawman.

Texas prays for Chief Greenwood's family and the Harris County, Texas, constable's office. Our men and women who wear the badge are the best we have. They protect and serve our communities. Chief Greenwood's life may be gone, but his memory serves as a reminder of all those who give their lives for the thin blue line. Back the blue, Mr. Speaker. Back the blue.

And that is just the way it is.

ELECTRIC UTILITY TRANSMISSION LINES IN NATIONAL FORESTS

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, tonight I am pleased to announce the Electric Reliability and Forest Protection Act of 2017, cosponsored by my colleague Representative SCHRADER of Washington.

Thousands of miles of electric utility transmission lines run through our national forests, key infrastructure that literally keeps the lights on across the West. Unfortunately, existing Forest Service rules hinder effective removal of hazardous trees and safe management of transmission rights-of-way. In too many cases, the inability to address hazards in a timely fashion results in blackouts, damaged infrastructure, and even forest fires, something we have too much of in the West, as you know. This all could be prevented if electric utilities were allowed to remove the dangers in a timely fashion.

This bill will reform that broken system by streamlining the process for

utilities to receive Forest Service approval for long-term transmission maintenance plans, allowing them to take immediate action to remove hazardous trees as soon as they are identified, before they cause a fire.

This is a widely supported rule by rural communities, rural electric cooperatives, and many others. It is a good bipartisan effort. Let's get it done.

THE SMITH FAMILY ACHIEVED THE AMERICAN DREAM THROUGH HARD WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last month I had the privilege of meeting Lisa and Chad Smith and their charming son Jamil during a visit to Newland, North Carolina, in the Fifth District.

The Smiths are the proprietors of Forage Soaps, which began in 2014 with a \$50 purchase of supplies and a trip to the Avery County Farmers Market to sell their first batch of wild-crafted soaps made in their kitchen. Wild-crafted refers to plants collected from their natural or indigenous habitat. The Smiths handpicked these botanicals fresh from the trail with minimal environmental impact to ensure long-term sustainability.

Well, that first batch turned into a second batch and a third batch, and so on. As they continued to make soap, they bought better equipment and invested in larger orders of supplies. Word spread about their soap, and before they knew it, the Smiths were receiving invitations to attend craft and artisan shows. They were invited to put their soap in several local galleries, and it wasn't long before they were filling their first wholesale order.

Today their business includes a retail location that also functions as their studio as well as several small satellite locations and an online store. Chad works for Mountain Electric Cooperative full time, and Lisa has a master's degree in organic chemistry and biology. She has been making soap for more than 20 years.

The Smiths adopted Jamil when he was 18 months old. They were told he would never be able to speak and may never be able to walk. Today he does both and is attending school and thriving with their loving care. He even helps out with the business, where he loves to mix oils and wild-craft herbs. Their older children help with deliveries and during special events, while their grandchildren like to come on weekends to help stock shelves and run the cash register. It is truly a family affair.

Lisa likes to say she and Chad built their business one bar of soap at a time. They didn't take out business loans or expect to be an overnight suc-

cess. Instead, they started small and grew a little bit at a time, working long, hard hours, and eventually reinvesting in their business.

The Smiths are living proof that one can achieve the American Dream through hard work. It is an honor to represent them in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise to speak on an issue important to so many Floridians, and that is the Florida Everglades. The Everglades are Florida. They are as iconic as the Blue Angels, the space shuttle, and even the orange. No one in Florida is unaffected by the fate of the Everglades. This is why I join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in encouraging President Trump to remain focused on Everglades restoration.

Congress has invested in these projects before, and the Everglades ecosystem is improving as a result. But there is debate about how to proceed. In short, the question is: Should the government buy more Everglades land?

I say no. Forty-two percent of the land in south Florida is already owned by the government. We should get the government out of the real estate business, not deeper into it.

Instead of a land buy, we must finish the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. Since 2000, this plan has enjoyed bipartisan support. Taxpayer dollars go toward important environmental work. The plan respects private property rights, doesn't harm agricultural communities who play a critical role in Florida's economies, and advances the cause of restoration.

Florida's Everglades are a national treasure. We can't afford to lose them. Finishing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan will ensure that our river of grass will be around for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I take particular pride in thanking both Congressmen ROONEYS from my State for their outstanding leadership.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1945

CONFIRMATION OF NEIL GORSUCH TO THE SUPREME COURT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to come to the floor this evening to coanchor the Congressional Black Caucus hour about the present nominee to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch.

I am very pleased that my good friend from Texas, Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE, a distinguished

member of the Judiciary Committee, has agreed to coanchor this hour with me.

Mr. Speaker, I am chair of the working group for the Congressional Black Caucus that looks at nominees for Federal courts. So, I have buried myself in the record of Neil Gorsuch and wrote the testimony that we submitted to the Senate.

What I will do is speak for a few minutes generally about the nominee, and then I will go to my good friend from Texas. I am very pleased that another good friend, Mr. DON PAYNE, Jr., is here from the State of New Jersey, and we will hear from him as well.

Now, just as the Congress has been polarized so has the court been polarized, if you look at the liberal and conservative blocks in that way. But, of course, since the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, there has been a 4-4 split. Justice Anthony Kennedy, who is still a Member of the Court is not always a predictable conservative, though he tends to vote with the conservatives.

What has happened in the Senate is entirely predictable, at least today. In an unprecedented move, the Senate refused to hear from or even meet the nominee of President Obama. There was almost a full year, yet the Senate refused to take up that nominee.

What happened today was not payback. If you listened to the testimony, you would see that there are good reasons why the Senate Democrats today decided to filibuster Judge Gorsuch.

I want to begin because I am speaking for the Congressional Black Caucus with his views as they affect African-Americans and, by definition, others who depend upon the antidiscrimination laws and the Constitution of the United States.

There is more than enough in the record on race related matters from Judge Gorsuch's 10th Circuit service to oppose his nomination. But let me focus for a moment on his pre-court service, which seems to have predicted what he would do in the court of appeals.

He was a principal deputy to the principal who had jurisdiction over the Civil Rights Division. We have to pay attention to the fact that the inspector general, during Judge Gorsuch's time in the Justice Department, found that the Civil Rights Division, where he had some oversight, had been politicized in order to stifle civil rights enforcement. As you might imagine, the Congressional Black Caucus had to pay attention to that finding by a neutral investigator.

We also are very concerned about how Gorsuch is a Justice Department Official treated a Georgia election law. As we know, election laws from the South—of course, there has been a historic decision that has made the Voting Rights Act far less effective than it was—but certainly during most of the time of the Act, Southern states had to go through the Justice Department to

see if the laws in southern States, that had kept African-Americans from voting for reasons of race, to see if newly enacted laws affecting voting rights, in fact, discriminated against African-Americans and others or not.

A Georgia election law was found by the Civil Rights Division to be discriminatory. Judge Gorsuch was part of the team that overturned the Civil Rights Division. That was, of course, challenged in the courts. And the ruling of the Justice Department that precluded the law—that said it was all right to go ahead with this law that the Civil Rights Division had found discriminated against Blacks—the court overturned that finding of the Justice Department.

It used quite pregnant language. The District Court said that the Georgia election law was reminiscent of Jim Crow laws. Those words have special meaning in our history—and I speak not here about African-Americans alone. But if you have found yourself in the minority on any issue—it could be a First Amendment issue, it could be a criminal justice issue—you want a court that will protect your rights, not only the rights of the majority.

But this nominee has shown a hostility to litigation in the courts that have been the primary ways we have vindicated constitutional rights and the rights of minorities of every kind. In a telling op-ed, this nominee, Mr. Gorsuch, said: “American liberals have become addicted to the courtroom, relying on judges and lawyers rather than elected leaders and the ballot box, as the primary means of effecting their social agenda.”

What? What else was there? The majority had enforced laws against the minority—in this case, African-Americans. He conceded that *Brown v. Board of Education* the school desegregation decision. But he went on to say that liberals should “kick their addiction” to constitutional litigation. This is a man who wants to get on the Court whose most important mission is constitutional litigation.

I submit to you that even the Justice who epitomized conservatism, Justice Scalia, never showed hostility coming to Court to vindicate the rights of people who felt themselves to be offended. So in that respect, I think it is clear that—and this is a very important respect—Judge Gorsuch is more conservative than Justice Scalia was on the Court.

Nothing could be more concerning than a Justice who says: Look, the preferred way to vindicate your rights is the political process.

Who would disagree with that?

It is the failure of the political process that sends people to the court.

It shows, it seems to me, little appreciation for the Bill of Rights itself. The entire Bill of Rights is about the rights of the minority. And again, the word “minority” means any of us could be in that minority at any given point. You could be in that minority when it

comes to religious rights. You could be in that minority because of a search and seizure case. You could be in that minority because of a free speech case. And, yes, you could be in that minority because you are part of a classic minority group.

That is why the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were added to the Bill of Rights. The Framers, of course, shared Gorsuch's preference for the political process. A Constitution is a, small D, democratic document. But they created a separation of powers government knowing full well that majoritarian democracy sometimes treads on the rights of minorities. That is why we have the Supreme Court of the United States which Mr. Gorsuch seeks a seat.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on to discuss some cases, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, (Mr. PAYNE), my good friend from New Jersey's 10th Congressional District.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia's leadership throughout the years on many of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, confirmation of Judge Gorsuch to the Supreme Court would be detrimental to the interests of working Americans, particularly African-Americans and other vulnerable communities.

Just as President Trump's agenda prioritizes special interests, Judge Gorsuch's record shows that he favors powerful interests and businesses over regular people. His hostility to class action lawsuits would threaten protections for workers, especially African-Americans and other minorities.

What is particularly of concern to me is Gorsuch's opinion in what is known as the “frozen trucker” case. Gorsuch ruled against an African-American truck driver who, after breaking down in freezing weather, ignored his supervisor by unhitching the broken trailer from his truck and driving away in search of assistance.

In freezing cold weather, the truck driver is nearly freezing to death. He has a truck that won't work with frozen brakes. They are telling him to move—to use the truck and drive away. If he takes his truck with frozen brakes, the harm potentially to other citizens is great. An 18-wheeler truck with no brakes, that doesn't seem logical.

Gorsuch believed that the employee should have followed the orders, even though the driver's life was at risk. Gorsuch was the sole vote against the driver, who was put in the position of having to choose between freezing to death, driving an unsafe vehicle and endangering the lives of others, or unhitching his trailer and seeking help.

□ 2000

Judge Gorsuch's record is also troubling when it comes to issues around police accountability. Gorsuch believes in granting police qualified immunity, which protects law enforcement from

being held liable for any excessive use of force. Now, this is deeply concerning given the widespread use of excessive force against African Americans by police and the increasing number of police shooting deaths of unarmed African Americans.

This is particularly concerning to me. I come from Newark, New Jersey, and the police department is being overseen by a Federal monitor following a 2014 review that determined officers repeatedly violated citizens' civil rights.

Additionally, Gorsuch's record on civil rights is deeply troubling. The National Bar Association, our Nation's oldest and largest national association of predominantly African-American lawyers and judges, notes that Gorsuch has shown a strong tendency to be biased in favor of powerful corporate interests and unapologetically biased against workers and victims of civil and human rights violations.

The confirmation of Gorsuch would threaten the protections and the rights of African Americans. Gorsuch is in lockstep with the President, favoring the wealthy over ordinary Americans. This is why I oppose his confirmation.

Even those who disagree that Gorsuch would bring a biased view to the Court should see the necessity in delaying consideration of Gorsuch, given the ongoing controversy over the Trump-Russia connection. It is inappropriate to rush forward with a lifetime appointment made by a President who is under investigation by the FBI and trapped in scandal. The Senate should delay consideration of Gorsuch until an independent commission investigates Russia's election interference and any ties between Trump and Russia.

Let me just say that Judge Gorsuch has put on a very good show in front of the Senate, seeming to be very confident and thoughtful, but never really answering a lot of the questions that were asked of him.

We feel that this jurist should not sit on the highest court in the land because of the bias that he has shown against working people and regular citizens in this country. Justice is supposed to be blind, but it seems that this jurist has a bias against the American working class person, the normal Joe, the minority looking for an equal break, and to have him sit on the highest court in the land would be a grave, grave mistake.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for those cogent remarks.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for his very careful scrutiny of Judge Gorsuch and for participating with us tonight.

It gives me great privilege to join with the distinguished Congresswoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) to be able to really articulate

what is at stake with the potential for Gorsuch to be the ninth member of the United States Supreme Court.

As I do that, allow me to offer a personal note of sympathy to my hometown, to the Constable's Office, in the shooting and death of Chief Clinton Greenwood, to his family for his tragic death, and to acknowledge the service that he has given in many, many ways as a law enforcement officer and attorney committed to the implementation of the law. My sympathy goes to his family and to his colleagues.

I also want to acknowledge the tragedy in Russia and the loss of life, which indicates how close all of us are around the world and that we should be committed to the fight against terrorism, wherever it may be.

If I might, I applaud the Democratic Senators, in this instance, in the other body to express my appreciation for taking a fight that many would be critical of. Now, that fight I don't put in the context of politics or partisanship. I have not heard one Senator who is opposing Judge Gorsuch and is not supporting or participating in the filibuster mention one word about the political elections or the process that occurred in 2016.

I have heard truly deliberative analysis that I think is important to recount, Congresswoman NORTON. I am delighted with the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia and the distinguished leadership that the gentlewoman gives us as the chair of the Judicial Nominating Committee for the Congressional Black Caucus, a position that the gentlewoman has served ably for years and has resulted in some outstanding jurists because of her leadership that the Congressional Black Caucus has been able to advocate for.

During the tenure of President Barack Obama, as the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia worked very closely on his nominees, distinguished jurists have been placed on the Federal bench and in the Supreme Court to no one's complaint. In addition, President Obama followed protocol and consulted with Members of the other party in the United States Senate.

Unfortunately, we are now ending this process with the nomination of Judge Gorsuch by the President of the United States, this President who announced it as a campaign trick by issuing a list of individuals that he had not vetted but had been given by those who were bartering: This is a list, and you will have our support in the election.

My fear is that that is not the context in which distinguished jurists should be appointed to the Supreme Court. There is no doubt that this was bait for voters to be able to fall in the column of this particular individual who now holds the office.

So no criticism should go to my colleagues in the other body who realize that this is about life-or-death matters. This is about the millions of

Americans who will suffer at the hands of Judge Gorsuch on the United States Supreme Court. I am more convinced now.

I am grateful for their debate because, as they have debated in a very detailed, passionate manner, I hope that they have been able to provide light and education to Americans who may be watching and trying to understand the "no" vote and the "yes" vote, the filibuster, that it is not in any way anyone's political desire to not have the Supreme Court working on behalf of the American people, adhering to the high calling and ultimate judgment of the Supreme Court, which is to recognize settled law and to be able to respect the rights of all Americans and not skew this Court to the point that some Americans will be left out in the hall of justice.

Why should my friends in the other body who have taken this courageous stand yield to false criticism and pontificating and grandstanding about they have never seen this before, the other persons who have voted "yes" have never seen this before, this is outrageous, a qualified individual.

I have no angst against the person. He has ascended to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. He has colleagues who respect him. He showed himself respectful before the Senate Judiciary Committee; in fact, some called him charming and engaging. Again, I make mention of the fact that this is about life and death.

So let me put in the context a very important statement made by Amanda Bronstad in the National Law Journal article, February 28, 2017: "Neil Gorsuch 'Piercingly Textual' and Often Pro-Defense on Class Actions and Arbitration."

"According to a careful review of Gorsuch's decisions, his textualist approach, more than ideology, is the common theme of his opinions on class actions, arbitration, and mass torts. And yet, though some of his decisions have favored plaintiffs, Gorsuch's careful judicial reasoning and parsing of statutory language has more often led him to side with the defense," leaving most others out in the cold.

In addition, Judge Gorsuch has a disdain for those who seek to redress their civil rights and other remedies of law.

In a 2015 article published in the conservative National Review, these are his words:

"American liberals have been addicted to the courtroom, relying on judges and lawyers rather than elected leaders and the ballot box, as the primary means of effecting their social agenda on everything from gay marriage to assisted suicide to the use of vouchers for private school education.

"This overweening addiction to the courtroom as the place to debate social policy is bad for the country and bad for the judiciary."

Well, Judge Gorsuch, let me tell you a thing or two. I grew up in a segregated America. At my birth, African

Americans were treated unequally in terms of education as well as accommodations, as well as the right to vote. We couldn't even march in some places in the Deep South without being shot at, losing our lives, being hosed at, and dogs making sure that our young kids were intimidated and even bitten.

Maybe he fails to remember the four little girls in the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, called the bombing in Birmingham, in 1963. Maybe he fails to remember the tragedy of the Edmond Pettus Bridge or Jimmie Lee Jackson shot dead in the streets of Selma. Or maybe he doesn't understand *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Roe v. Wade*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *New York Times v. Sullivan*, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, and *Shelby County v. Holder*. These cases are dealing with issues such as the right to vote, the right to an equal education, the Fourth Amendment interpretation of the right to be protected from unreasonable search and seizure, and the First Amendment right to freedom of the press.

□ 2015

Maybe he doesn't understand that these cases have brought to America the image and the recognition of justice. It doesn't seem that he has that interpretation.

So I just want to read another interpretation of his record by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

"Judge Gorsuch's decade-long record on the Federal bench, as well as his writings, speeches, and activities throughout his career, demonstrate he is a judge with an agenda."

What a frightening proposition, that he goes to the Supreme Court, having given the impression that he is just an open book, genuinely concerned.

"His frequent dissents and concurrences show he is out of the main stream of legal thought and unwilling to accept the constructs of binding precedent and stare decisis when they dictate results he disfavors."

Stare decisis is something that we learned in law school, but that is a very appropriate and important basis of decisions.

"If confirmed to the Supreme Court, which is closely divided on many critical issues, Judge Gorsuch would tip the balance in a direction that would undermine many of our core rights and legal protections. He lacks the impartiality and independence the American people expect and deserve from the Federal bench."

Let me make one or two other points that I think are so very important. I hope to put my entire statement into the RECORD, and we will be engaging, and I know that my colleague will have further comments, but I want to make sure that we point back to those who are criticizing a very courageous stance because they are taking the stance, my friends in the other body, in the backdrop of all these accolades and

how genuine and charming he is. I have said that before.

But he is going against the backdrop of protocol—no engagement with the Democratic Senators, no adherence to the President, when he was President-elect, who pledged to the Nation that he would be the President of all Americans—because it rings hollow to tens of millions of Americans.

My colleague from New Jersey mentioned the truck driver story. It was a 2-1 decision. He was dissenting. No person with common sense and knowledge of the law would reject the understanding that this individual acted not against the instructions of his employer in leaving a truck that—by the way, the cargo area of the truck—nothing was violated, no product was taken, with bad brakes, and in jeopardy of his life, if he had left the cargo portion of the truck and tried to drive away on this frozen night, after waiting 3 hours in a cabin where he was freezing to death, he would have died.

Yet Judge Gorsuch did not think that was important enough to rule in favor of this African-American who had a 2-1 decision. He thought that the employer could fire him; and there was no factual basis for that, that he did something when it was a balmy day, and he just went off recklessly because he didn't want to be bothered or he was tired or he was hungry. That was not the case.

That is cruel, Judge Gorsuch. Your conservative ideology and professed judicial philosophy of original intent has harmed many.

He is not an unbiased judge. At best, he is a younger, more charming version of Judge Robert Bork, who was rejected 58-42 by the Senate in 1987. So he has a history of ruling against people who have used the legal system to hold government officials accountable.

The gentleman who was fired was fired, I think, 7 years ago, and has not been able to find a job yet.

By the way, the truck's heater didn't work.

His words were—Judge Gorsuch dissented and said the employee should have followed orders, even at the risk of serious injury.

In *NLRB v. Community Health Services*, Judge Gorsuch again dissented from a majority opinion that found in favor of employees, where a hospital was required to award back pay to 13 employees whose hours had been reduced, in violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

As the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations, we are trying to find the right kind of balance between police and community. But Judge Gorsuch has ruled that there is no reason to give police any punishment, such as the case when an individual used a stun gun and the victim died.

Judge Gorsuch's judicial record on police accountability minimized the Fourth Amendment protections against warrantless search and seizure.

I will continue my discussions of Judge Gorsuch. I will come back again and finish my comments on issues dealing with, again, civil rights and the rights of women.

I am delighted to cohost and command this hour dealing with the nomination of Judge Gorsuch.

Ms. NORTON. I thank my friend for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I was the chair, before I came to Congress, in another life, of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, dealing with job discrimination in our country. I was interested, in my own research on Judge Gorsuch to find that he has written more opinions in discrimination cases than other cases.

Now, the Rocky Mountain States of the Tenth Circuit do not have large numbers of African Americans, but the way in which the Supreme Court has interpreted antidiscrimination laws doesn't, in fact, basically differ from one group.

The EEOC also has jurisdiction over disability discrimination. For example, the Court has always indicated that anti-discrimination laws should be read broadly in order to capture discrimination. Whether we are talking about the antidiscrimination laws as they affect women or racial or ethnic minorities or religious minorities, the Supreme Court simply will not read these laws narrowly.

But that is not how Judge Gorsuch has operated on the Tenth Circuit. He has given a cramped interpretation of the antidiscrimination laws, and yet it is interesting to note that, when there is a claim of discrimination based on religion, he gives a very broad interpretation.

He is perhaps best known for his opinion in the so-called Hobby Lobby case. This is the case in which he found that a closely held corporation was within its rights when it refused to adopt the Affordable Health Care Act's mandate that women and men be granted contraceptive protection as a part of health insurance. Judge Gorsuch found that this was a violation of the rights of the closely held corporation, the first time there has been such a holding.

It is very interesting also to note that right after that, there was a case called *Little Sisters of the Poor*. Now, the *Little Sisters of the Poor*, unlike the closely held corporation, is, in fact, a religious organization, and they too said they do not wish to have contraception be a part of any of the institutions that they govern.

Remember, we had a religious organization there, not a closely held corporation. The Court found that, to accommodate both women and the religious scruples of the *Little Sisters*, the *Little Sisters* had only to acknowledge that they did not desire to enforce the contraceptive mandate, and then it would be taken away from them and would be done by a third party, by the government. That was allowed as a

way to accommodate the *Little Sisters*. Judge Gorsuch opposed that and wrote an opposing opinion.

So to see this difference in the way he treats discrimination, reading antidiscrimination statutes affecting minorities of every kind in a narrow fashion; when he finds religious discrimination by statute, he reads those statutes very broadly.

His technical rulings are of statutes that the Supreme Court has broadly interpreted, would have made these statutes worthless. You simply cannot enforce antidiscrimination statutes by treating them as though they were technical statutes that, for example, govern financial dealings. And yet this nominee has brought that kind of interpretation of antidiscrimination statutes.

I was shocked at his holding in *Hwang v. Kansas State University*, which illustrates what I am saying. There, a professor brought a case because her university had refused to follow the guidance of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She was entitled to a 6-month leave to accommodate her condition. This is a statute involving disability rights. She took that 6-month leave and asked to have it extended until a day certain, not indefinitely, to recover further from cancer and a bone marrow transplant.

Now, the EEOC guidance said that an additional leave beyond 6 months was possible as an accommodation to an employee unless there was an undue hardship. There was no undue hardship.

But this nominee, Judge Gorsuch, found that the "6 months was more than enough to comply with the law in nearly every case"—yes, in nearly every case—but the EEOC guidance said that there obviously could be extensions. I can think of no case that would call for more of an extension than a professor who said: I will come back on a date certain, but I have a cancer diagnosis, and I have had a bone marrow transplant.

I hope that that case would give some pause to anyone who hears about it. The nominee has been quite consistent in how he has ruled in the Tenth Circuit, which gives every reason to believe that he is going to carry that consistency to the Supreme Court.

I was very interested to see how he ruled on a *Planned Parenthood* case where the Governor of Utah had seen these notorious false videos that purported to show the sale of fetal tissue.

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Now, those videos—every court that has considered those videos have found that they had nothing to do with *Planned Parenthood* and what it actually did. So this matter has been litigated in a number of circuits. It was litigated in the 10th Circuit in a case called *Planned Parenthood Association of Utah v. Herbert*; and the 10th Circuit found, as the other circuits have, that these videos were not, in fact, associated with *Planned Parenthood*—the false videos that surfaced.

Interestingly, the court, on rehearing, which Judge Gorsuch had sought, characterized his dissenting opinion as “mischaracterization of this litigation and the panel opinion at several turns.”

Here again, we see Judge Gorsuch going out of his way to rule in a fashion that he sees as necessary to sustain his broad views of religious claims. I am trying to give you an overview of Judge Gorsuch’s opinions in a number of different areas, and I am mystified by how he would reach the conclusions he has reached in discrimination cases.

Here is one that is very revealing: *A.F. ex rel Christine B. v. Espanola Public Schools*, where a student was found by Judge Gorsuch not to be able to sue for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act because she had earlier settled a suit for violations of another act, the so-called IDEA Act.

Well, she has a right under both laws. She would have obviously raised perhaps different claims, but his view was that she should not be in court. This closing of the courts must be taken seriously in evaluating Judge Gorsuch. Because if you can’t get into court in the first place, particularly if you are a member of a minority group, or for the moment find yourself in the minority on a particular issue, then you are out of court before you are in court. You have lost before you cross the threshold.

I can’t imagine why Judge Gorsuch didn’t allow a student to continue when she had, in frustration, left her school because of violations of her disability rights. That frustration, as far as he was concerned, closed the courthouse door to her.

Why would we want to interpret discrimination laws in a fashion that you can’t get into court to make your case?

A particularly cruel case, *Compass Environmental v. OSHRC*, a case where Gorsuch wrote the dissent, involved a worker who was electrocuted and died as a result. The corporation had trained its workers. This worker happened to be hired after the training had taken place; therefore, was not aware of all of the safeguards.

The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission found that the electrocution of the worker could have been avoided if the corporation, *Compass Environmental*, had provided the necessary training. So it cited *Compass* and it fined *Compass*. Gorsuch dissented. He found that the company had not violated the law. The company hadn’t provided the requisite training. The man was electrocuted, and it is very instructive what Judge Gorsuch said:

“Administrative agencies enjoy remarkable powers in our legal order. Their interpretations of ambiguous statutes control even when everyone thinks Congress really meant something else.”

He didn’t like the administrative ruling, so he dissented and would have ruled against the family of a man who was electrocuted.

That is not a man I want on the Supreme Court. This is not a man who knows how to interpret the discrimination statutes which have always been interpreted broadly by the Federal courts. This is not a man who should sit on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), my good friend who is co-anchoring this hour with me, who would like to say a few words.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for again articulating the really egregious opinions, judicial approach, and temperament of Judge Gorsuch.

I will conclude my remarks with a focus on the issues of women’s rights as well as some cases dealing with immigration.

Immigration, Mr. Speaker, is a crucial issue that we are addressing now. In fact, I will cite an incident that happened in our district—or in my district or in my community just a few days ago, which means, as we proceed, there may be a number of cases coming to the Federal courts and the district court because I think, as my colleague has indicated—both of us have indicated—that the courts are for petitioning. That is what the courts are for.

It seems that Judge Gorsuch wants to slam the door. And this is a—how should I say it—a metaphor. It is not a precise comment by the judge, but annoyed that people have to come and use the courts. As he has indicated, minorities and women and others want to use the court for their social agenda.

And for fear of being redundant, I feel moved—my passion is so strong because, Judge Gorsuch: Have you walked at any moment in your life in my shoes as a woman and as a minority?

Have you walked in the shoes of the little children who made the plaintiffs of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*?

Were you in any way discriminated against with respect to education?

Have you ever been a victim of stop and frisk?

Have you ever been incarcerated for something you did not do?

Have you ever been a woman who had been subjected to sexual harassment or discrimination?

Do you understand the purpose of title VII?

Do you understand the value of affirmative action both in policy and in law?

Just a few weeks ago we got an effective and important decision on affirmative action out of this Supreme Court, in a court that is 4–4.

I don’t think that is the case. And I just, again, want to take this as I cite these cases. I just want to, again, cite Amanda Bronstad, that some of his decisions may have favored one or two plaintiffs. I am not going to deny that. But Gorsuch’s careful judicial rea-

soning and parsing of statutory language has more than often led him to side with the defense.

That is not the role of a Supreme Court Justice. It is not to side with anyone. It is to have the view on the basis of the appeal within the context of precedence and others how a decision should be rendered.

So these are Judge Gorsuch’s decisions:

In *Strickland v. UPS*, Gorsuch dissented from a ruling giving a female UPS driver a chance to prove sex discrimination, arguing that the plaintiff had not provided evidence that she was treated less favorably than her male colleagues, even though in the documents submitted in the lower court, her coworkers testified and gave written testimony detailing the level of mistreatment they witnessed her receiving while employed by UPS.

In *Hwang v. Kansas State University* involved a professor employed by Kansas State University who was diagnosed with cancer, and after treatments, requested an extension of her disability—another woman—due to a flu outbreak on campus which could potentially compromise her health. And Judge Gorsuch talked about “showing up” as an essential job function, and that the Rehabilitation Act should not be used as a safety net for employees who cannot work. I think her request was an extension, not a forever.

Two women, among others, that he found no reason to be supportive of. He could not find no legal precedent, nothing that would give him the ability to make a decision that was within the law and humane, even though he was in the dissent.

And then in *Planned Parenthood Association of Utah v. Herbert*, the Governor of that State, again, he dissented against the court’s majority, impacting women’s health, to decline a full court review of the case—the court’s majority decision to decline a full court review of the case, in which Governor Herbert of Utah stripped Federal funding away from Planned Parenthood. Neither party requested a full court review; however, Judge Gorsuch decided to deviate from court practices and norms to signal his favor of Governor Herbert’s decision.

Other women—he continues to show hostility toward women’s rights and his willingness to overlook institutions that discriminate against women. His record indicates that.

Let me finish with this comment on immigration—and if I might, Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNN). The gentlewoman has 2 minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me finish quickly and let my colleague from the District of Columbia close.

Let me indicate an immigration case, and he voted to affirm the district’s court granting of summary judgment which blocked a title VII national origin discrimination case from going to

trial, despite evidence of animus, unlawful reverification and document abuse by the employer.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, and member of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, I rise today to express my views regarding the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to be Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land and the final arbiter of our Constitution and laws, and its rulings can impact the lives and rights of all Americans as shown in the cases of *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Roe v. Wade*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *New York Times v. Sullivan*, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, and *Shelby County v. Holder*, to name but a few.

Judge Gorsuch is a judge with an agenda, as demonstrated by his record on the federal bench, as well as his writings, speeches, and activities throughout his career.

Judge Gorsuch's frequent dissents and concurrences show he is out of the mainstream of legal thought and unwilling to accept the constructs of binding precedent and *stare decisis* when they dictate results he disfavors.

Judge Gorsuch's appointment to the Court would tip the balance in a direction that would undermine many of the core rights and legal protections Americans cherish.

For the reasons I will discuss in detail, the Senate should reject his nomination and not consent to his confirmation as the next Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

On Election Night the President-Elect pledged to the nation that he would be a president to all Americans.

That pledge will ring hollow to tens of millions of Americans in light of his nomination of Judge Neil M. Gorsuch to be an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Perhaps nothing would do more to reassure the American people that the President is committed to unifying the nation than the nomination and appointment of a person to be Associate Justice who has a record of championing and protecting, rather than opposing and undermining, the precious right to vote; the constitutionally guaranteed right of privacy; criminal justice reform, and support for reform of the nation's immigration system so that it is fair and humane.

That is not to be found in the record or character of Judge Gorsuch.

It should not be forgotten that the vacancy at issue was created in February 2016 by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia and should have been filled by the confirmation of the eminently qualified Judge Merrick Garland, Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

In fact, the only reason Judge Garland is not now on the Court is because Republican Senators disregarded a century of precedent and their constitutional oaths and refused to consider the nomination because it was made by President Obama.

Judge Gorsuch's conservative ideology and professed judicial philosophy of "original intent," which more accurately should be called the doctrine of predetermined result, has been at the core of his prior legal decisions.

He is not an unbiased judge; at best, he is a younger, more charming version of Judge

Robert Bork, who was rejected 58–42 by the Senate in 1987.

Unlike his predecessors, Presidents Obama, Clinton, Reagan, Eisenhower among them, the current President did not consult in advance with the bipartisan leadership of the Senate and its Judiciary Committee.

Instead, the President selected Judge Gorsuch from the list of names provided him by the right-wing legal group, the Federalists Society.

Judge Gorsuch's adherence to originalism is alarming and should raise concerns for all Americans because on a narrowly divided Court, his could be the deciding vote to dismantle many of the constitutional safeguards and protections upheld by the Court that have moved the country forward and made it better.

Judge Gorsuch has a history of ruling against people who have used the legal system to hold government officials accountable.

He has also used the bench to rule in favor of large corporations routinely and against the rights of workers.

He has been lenient on those that have used excessive force and police brutality.

His record demonstrates hostility towards equal opportunity, worker's rights, women's access to reproductive healthcare services, and protections for persons with disabilities.

For example, in *TransAm Trucking, Inc. v. Administrative Review Board*, the majority held that a trucking company unlawfully fired an employee in violation of federal whistleblower protections.

The employee, Alphonse Maddin, was a truck driver whose brakes broke down in the middle of a freezing January night in Illinois.

The truck heater didn't work either, and he got so cold that he couldn't feel his feet or torso, and he had trouble breathing.

Nonetheless, his boss ordered him to wait in the truck until a repairperson arrived.

After waiting for three hours, Mr. Maddin finally drove off in the truck and left the trailer behind, in search of assistance.

His employer fired him a week later for violating company policy by abandoning his load while under dispatch.

The panel majority said the firing was unlawful, but Judge Gorsuch dissented and said the employee should have followed orders even at the risk of serious injury.

In *NLRB v. Community Health Services, Inc.*, Judge Gorsuch again dissented from a majority opinion that found in favor of employees, where a hospital was required to award back pay to 13 employees whose hours had been reduced in violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

Judge Gorsuch's frequent and recurring dissents in workers' rights cases suggest a refusal to follow binding case law when it leads to results that favor workers rather than businesses and employers.

In *Strickland v. UPS*, Gorsuch dissented from a ruling giving a female UPS driver a chance to prove sex discrimination, arguing that the plaintiff had not provided evidence that she was treated less favorably than her male colleagues even though her coworkers testified and gave written testimony detailing the level of mistreatment they witnessed her receiving while employed by UPS.

Hwang v. Kansas State University involved a professor employed by Kansas State University who was diagnosed with cancer, and after treatments requested an extension for her dis-

ability due to a flu outbreak on the campus, which could potentially compromise her health.

Judge Gorsuch ruled that "showing up" for work is an essential job function and that the Rehabilitation Act should not be used as a safety net for employees who cannot work.

In Planned Parenthood Association of Utah v. Herbert, Judge Gorsuch dissented against the court's majority decision to decline a full court review of the case, in which, Governor Herbert of Utah stripped federal funding away from Planned Parenthood.

Neither party requested a full court review, however, Judge Gorsuch desired to deviate from court practices and norms to signal his favor for Governor Herbert's decision.

This particular case amplifies Judge Gorsuch's inability to remain impartial when deciding cases that may conflict with his personal beliefs.

Throughout his tenure as a Judge, Gorsuch's record indicates his hostility toward women's rights and his willingness to overlook institutions that discriminate against women.

Women will likely be disproportionately impacted by Judge Gorsuch's appointment to the United States Supreme Court and any decisions related to health, labor, and reproductive justice.

Judge Gorsuch's record shows that he believes police officers always should be granted qualified immunity, allowing police officers and other government officials to avoid being held accountable for the excessive use of force.

His record on police immunity aligns with President Trump's belief in police impunity.

In cases where victims of excessive force did not pose an imminent threat to police safety, Judge Gorsuch has a tendency to side with police.

Judge Gorsuch's judicial record on police accountability minimizes the Fourth Amendment protections against warrantless search and seizure.

In three separate cases, Gorsuch ruled in favor of police searches of vehicles without a warrant.

As an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Gorsuch would be one of the nine individuals tasked with one of the most critical systems of American democracy.

Because of the decisions rendered by the Supreme Court of the United States, women have been granted reproductive rights, de jure segregation and discrimination against African-Americans has been abolished and their right to vote protected, workers have been granted security from exploitative labor practices; and marriage equality is the law of the land.

If confirmed to a evenly divided United States Supreme Court, it is unlikely that Judge Gorsuch would have a balanced, unbiased view of important issues.

Judge Gorsuch's extreme judicial philosophy of original intent would likely lead him to cast decisive, out-of-the mainstream votes that reverse significant gains in the areas of police accountability, civil rights and liberties, women's reproductive rights, and workers' rights.

Judge Gorsuch's record in each of these areas should raise concerns for all Americans.

Opposing Judge Gorsuch is not a difficult decision; for members of the communities represented by CBC members, it is a matter of survival, of life and death.

An Associate Justice would be expected to be an independent jurist capable of rendering

judicial decisions that prevent executive overreach.

No senator should vote to confirm the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch as Associate Justice if he or she has the slightest doubt that he possesses the character, qualities, integrity, and commitment to justice and equality needed for this position.

There is so much to say about Judge Gorsuch, so much to say about the stance that is being taken by colleagues who are not being political, who are not talking about the 2016 election, who are simply talking about the courthouse door being slammed in the face of the most vulnerable.

I believe that this judge should not ascend to the United States Supreme Court.

Ms. NORTON. I thank my good friend for helping us document why we believe this is not the time for this Justice to be on the Supreme Court.

We recognize that it is not the House of Representatives that decides this matter, but the Congressional Black Caucus represents 17 million Americans who will be deeply affected by who sits on this Court. I appreciate that we have had this full hour to express our views.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of delayed by weather.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

953. A letter from the Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting the Bureau's Consumer Response Annual Report, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 5493(b)(3)(C); Public Law 111-203, Sec. 1013(b)(3)(C); (124 Stat. 1969); to the Committee on Financial Services.

954. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations; Tazewell County, IL [Docket No.: FEMA-2016-0002] received March 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

955. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations; Ot-

sego County, New York [Docket No.: FEMA-2016-0002] received March 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

956. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, transmitting the Council's 2016 Annual Report to Congress, pursuant to Sec. 1006(f) of the Financial Regulatory and Interest Rate Control Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3305); to the Committee on Financial Services.

957. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Reactor Pressure Vessel Internals [Section 3.9.5] received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

958. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Requirements to Submit Prior Notice of Imported Food; Technical Amendments [Docket No.: FDA-2017-N-0011] received March 31, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

959. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations (Mullin, Texas) [MB Docket No.: 16-362] (RM-11776) received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

960. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Control Rod Drive Systems [Section 3.9.4] received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

961. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final evaluation of vendor submittal — Safety Evaluation by the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation License Renewal Appendix A for "BWRVIP-241: BWR Vessel and Internals Project, Probabilistic Fracture Mechanics Evaluation for the Boiling Water Reactor Nozzle-to-Vessel Shell Welds and Nozzle Blend RADII", and "BWRVIP-108NP: BWR Vessel and Internals Project, Technical Basis for the Reduction of Inspection Requirements for the Boiling Water Reactor Nozzle-to-Vessel Shell Welds and Nozzle Blend" [Project No. 704] received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

962. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Dynamic Testing and Analysis of Systems, Structures, and Components [Section 3.9.2] received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

963. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Functional Design, Qualification, and Inservice Testing Programs for Pumps, Valves, and Dynamic Restraints [Section 3.9.6] received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

964. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau

of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Certain Persons from the Entity List [Docket No.: 170103009-7300-02] (RIN: 0694-AH28) received March 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

965. A letter from the General Counsel, Administrative Conference of the United States, transmitting the Conference's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

966. A letter from the Director, Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

967. A letter from the Director, Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

968. A letter from the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

969. A letter from the Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Programs, National Archives and Records Administration, transmitting the Administration's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

970. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

971. A letter from the Acting OEO Director, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

972. A letter from the Director, Congressional Affairs and Public Relations, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, transmitting the Agency's FY 2016, No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

[Omitted from the Record of 3/30/2017]

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 732. A bill to limit donations

made pursuant to settlement agreements to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 115-72). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

[Submitted March 31, 2017]

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. House Resolution 184. Resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to communications with the government of Russia, with an amendment; adversely (Rept. 115-74). Referred to the House Calendar.

[Submitted April 3, 2017]

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 240. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1343) to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise its rules so as to increase the threshold amount for requiring issuers to provide certain disclosures relating to compensatory benefit plans (Rept. 115-75). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BYRNE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 241. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1304) to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from the definition of health insurance coverage certain medical stop-loss insurance obtained by certain plan sponsors of group health plans (Rept. 115-76). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 242. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1219) to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to expand the investor limitation for qualifying venture capital funds under an exemption from the definition of an investment company, and providing for proceedings during the period from April 7, 2017, through April 24, 2017 (Rept. 115-77). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. WALDEN, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana):

H.R. 1848. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TROTT:

H.R. 1849. A bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to exclude law firms and licensed attorneys who are engaged in activities related to legal proceedings from the definition of a debt collector, to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to prevent the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection from exercising supervisory or enforcement authority with respect to attorneys when undertaking certain actions related to legal proceedings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. AMASH (for himself, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. TROTT, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. UPTON):

H.R. 1850. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at

907 Fourth Avenue in Lake Odessa, Michigan, as the "Donna Sauers Besko Post Office"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 1851. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and implement a fully automated electronic system for travel authorization for the Guam and Northern Mariana Islands visa waiver program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CORREA (for himself, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. TITUS, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. KIHUEN, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. BASS, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

H.R. 1852. A bill to require the White House and each agency to provide an official website in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CROWLEY:

H.R. 1853. A bill to authorize the Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, to carry out a pilot program in correctional facilities in order to provide mental health services and other social services to eligible individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia (for himself and Mr. RYAN of Ohio):

H.R. 1854. A bill to require the use of prescription drug monitoring programs and to facilitate information sharing among States; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JONES (for himself and Mr. MASSIE):

H.R. 1855. A bill to repeal the authorizations for office space, office expenses, franking and printing privileges, and staff for former Speakers of the House of Representatives; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. LYNCH:

H.R. 1856. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to certain tort claims arising out of the criminal misconduct of confidential informants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LYNCH (for himself and Mr. CUMMINGS):

H.R. 1857. A bill to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report to Congress serious crimes, authorized as well as unauthorized, committed by their confidential informants; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARINO (for himself, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. EVANS, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PERRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr.

SHUSTER, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. DENT, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1858. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4514 Williamson Trail in Liberty, Pennsylvania, as the "Staff Sergeant Ryan Scott Ostrom Post Office"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. MARINO:

H.R. 1859. A bill to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to designate a portion of United States Route 15 in Pennsylvania as part of the Interstate System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. MEEKS:

H.R. 1860. A bill to ensure fairness in the recoupment of certain Federal disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. RENACCI (for himself, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. ALLEN, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KIND, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. LANCE, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. SIREN, Mr. VALADAO, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. SOTO, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. KILMER, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. WELCH, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. RICHMOND, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. MENG, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. TURNER, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CLAY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. STEWART, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. LONG, Mr. OLSON, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. ISSA, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. PETERS, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WALKER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. MARINO, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. COOK, Mr. YODER, and Mr. BRAT):

H.R. 1861. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal in honor of Lawrence Eugene "Larry" Doby in recognition of his achievements and contributions to American major league athletics, civil rights, and the Armed

Forces during World War II; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. ROBY:

H.R. 1862. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to expand the scope of certain definitions pertaining to unlawful sexual conduct, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself and Mr. ENGEL):

H.R. 1863. A bill to designate the area between the intersections of Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Davis Street, Northwest and Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Edmunds Street, Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as "Boris Nemtsov Plaza", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself and Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER):

H.R. 1864. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to allow local educational agencies to use Federal funds for programs and activities that address chronic absenteeism; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. WAGNER (for herself, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. POE of Texas, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. KINZINGER, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 1865. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of such Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sexual exploitation of children or sex trafficking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WEBER of Texas:

H.R. 1866. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to disallow certain biodiesel and alternative fuel tax credits for fuels derived from animal fats; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1867. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona (for himself and Mr. ROYCE of California):

H.J. Res. 93. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to protect the rights of crime victims; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. BASS, and Mr. ELLISON):

H. Res. 239. A resolution supporting ongoing efforts by the United States Government, in concert with the United Nations and the donor community, to respond to drought and food insecurity in the Horn of Africa; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself and Mr. STIVERS):

H. Res. 243. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of "Financial Literacy Month"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GAETZ (for himself, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. TENNEY, and Mr. HASTINGS):

H. Res. 244. A resolution expressing support for Japan to end its whaling in all forms and to strengthen measures to conserve whale populations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on

Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GARRETT (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. BRAT, and Mr. TAYLOR):

H. Res. 245. A resolution expressing support for designation of April 23 as "Barbara Johns Day" to highlight the important role Ms. Barbara Rose Johns (Powell) played in the Civil Rights Movement, in Brown v. Board of Education and the desegregation of schools, and her role in the history of the United States and the lives of United States citizens; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

16. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 1014, expressing the strongest support for, and unity with, the State of Israel and recognizing Jerusalem, as Israel's undivided capital; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

17. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Nevada, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 2, ratifying the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

18. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 2, requesting the Congress of the United States call a convention of the states to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

19. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 2, requesting the Congress to enact legislation requiring revenues received by the federal government from wind and solar energy developments on lands of the United States be shared equally with the state in which those developments are located; jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and Agriculture.

20. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 8, urging Congress to ensure that the federal government upholds the federal trust responsibility to provide for the health care needs of American Indians by continuing access to adequate Medicaid resources with one hundred percent (100%) federal coverage; jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 1848.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TROTT:

H.R. 1849.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. AMASE:

H.R. 1850.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 states: "The Congress shall have Power . . . To establish Post Offices and post Roads."

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 1851.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted Congress under Article IV, Section 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CORREA:

H.R. 1852.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

(1) The U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. CROWLEY:

H.R. 1853.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia:

H.R. 1854.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 1855.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 5, and Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LYNCH:

H.R. 1856.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. LYNCH:

H.R. 1857.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. MARINO:

H.R. 1858.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 "The Congress shall have Power to . . . establish Post Offices and Post Roads."

By Mr. MARINO:

H.R. 1859.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. MEEKS:

H.R. 1860.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Necessary and proper clause, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution

By Mr. RENACCI:

H.R. 1861.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers

By Mrs. ROBY:

H.R. 1862.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 1863.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1864.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 1865.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Amendment XIII of the Constitution, which states that "Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Amendment XIV of the Constitution, which states that "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution, which states "To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes."

By Mr. WEBER of Texas:

H.R. 1866.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common defence and general Welfare of the United State; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1867.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.J. Res. 93.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V: "The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution"

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 19: Mr. FASO.
H.R. 24: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 31: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 36: Mr. ARRINGTON and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 37: Mr. ARRINGTON.
H.R. 44: Mr. PETERS and Mr. GARRETT.
H.R. 60: Mr. MARSHALL and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 91: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 111: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 147: Mr. ARRINGTON.
H.R. 198: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.
H.R. 253: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 299: Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. WALDEN, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 351: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 352: Mr. ARRINGTON.
H.R. 365: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.
H.R. 367: Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH.
H.R. 390: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 392: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. COOK, Mr.

RUTHERFORD, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. KILMER, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Mrs. LAWRENCE.

H.R. 421: Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.

H.R. 429: Mr. GALLAGHER.

H.R. 457: Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 465: Mr. UPTON.

H.R. 474: Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 477: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 530: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 553: Mr. RATCLIFFE.

H.R. 635: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 656: Mr. RATCLIFFE.

H.R. 664: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 669: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 671: Mr. PALLONE.

H.R. 672: Mr. SUOZZI.

H.R. 676: Mr. DEFazio, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 721: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.

H.R. 746: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 747: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. COOK, and Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.

H.R. 800: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 807: Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 813: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 820: Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 828: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER and Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 846: Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 849: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. LANCE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. LONG, Mr. HILL, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, Mr. KATKO, Mr. ROTHFUS, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 880: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 898: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 904: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 919: Mr. NEAL.

H.R. 930: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. MASSIE, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. PITTENGER, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. SOTO, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. PETERS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. CLAY, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. STEWART, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. NOEM, Ms. MENG, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. HASTINGS, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. FASO.

H.R. 941: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.

H.R. 959: Mr. ENGEL and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 977: Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 986: Mr. ISSA, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 1022: Mr. POCAN, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 1038: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1054: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1057: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. AGUILAR.

H.R. 1072: Mr. GAETZ.

H.R. 1099: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 1115: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1116: Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ARRINGTON, and Mr. DESANTIS.

H.R. 1120: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1136: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. JONES, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. BLUM, and Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 1143: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1144: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 1148: Mrs. DAVIS of California and Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 1155: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1175: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. SMUCKER.

H.R. 1192: Mr. ARRINGTON.

H.R. 1206: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 1222: Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 1223: Mr. BACON and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 1243: Ms. NORTON and Mr. KATKO.

H.R. 1251: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 1279: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1284: Ms. PINGREE and Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 1299: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1303: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 1318: Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 1326: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1334: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia and Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 1337: Mr. REICHERT.

H.R. 1361: Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 1380: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1384: Mr. BACON, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. EMMER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Mr. HARPER, and Ms. ROSEN.

H.R. 1399: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H.R. 1406: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 1409: Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 1426: Mr. COURTNEY and Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 1438: Mr. PETERS and Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1442: Ms. NORTON and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 1445: Mr. CORREA and Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 1454: Mr. PALMER and Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 1457: Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 1473: Ms. PINGREE and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1491: Mrs. TORRES, Mr. COOK, and Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 1494: Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1496: Mr. RUIZ and Mr. AGUILAR.

H.R. 1552: Mr. HUNTER, Mr. LONG, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. SMUCKER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 1563: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 1569: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 1584: Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 1589: Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. MATSUI and Ms. SPIER.

H.R. 1612: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 1626: Mr. ALLEN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. ARRINGTON.

H.R. 1627: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. VELA, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1639: Mr. RUSH and Mr. HECK.

H.R. 1644: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.R. 1661: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.

H.R. 1672: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1676: Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. DEFazio, Ms. SPIER, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. COHEN, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. BARR, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1694: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 1697: Mrs. LOVE, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. ROSS, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. NUNES, Mr. COFFMAN, Mrs. WAGNER,

Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. PERRY, Ms. CAS-
TOR of Florida, Mr. HILL, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio,
Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Ms.
BARRAGÁN.

H.R. 1698: Mr. CHABOT, Mr. SEAN PATRICK
MALONEY of New York, Mr. ROE of Ten-
nessee, Mr. PALLONE, Mrs. WAGNER, Ms. ROY-
BAL-ALLARD, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. PERRY, Mr.
CARBAJAL, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. JOYCE of
Ohio, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. MAST, Mr. DAVID
SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. BROWN of Maryland,
Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mex-
ico, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. BARRAGÁN,
Mr. KATKO, and Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 1701: Mrs. LOVE and Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 1711: Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. VEASEY, Mr.
PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. BEN RAY
LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 1716: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 1718: Mr. YOHIO, Mr. DUNCAN of South
Carolina, and Mr. GAETZ.

H.R. 1721: Mr. PITTENGER and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 1737: Mr. POE of Texas.

H.R. 1748: Mr. ESPAILLAT and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 1784: Mr. MOULTON.

H.R. 1794: Mr. BERA, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GON-
ZALEZ of Texas, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr.
COFFMAN.

H.R. 1810: Mr. POLIS, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr.
DEFazio, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. HECK.

H.R. 1828: Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 1832: Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. WASSERMAN
SCHULTZ, and Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 1847: Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr.
KATKO, Mr. HARRIS, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. DOG-
GETT, and Ms. STEFANIK.

H.J. Res. 33: Mr. CARBAJAL.

H.J. Res. 51: Mr. BOST and Mr. HARRIS.

H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. POCAN and Mr. RYAN of
Ohio.

H. Res. 15: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Penn-
sylvania, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. YODER, Ms.
JENKINS of Kansas, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr.
BROWN of Maryland, and Mr. CLEAVER.

H. Res. 30: Mr. ENGEL and Mr. KIHUEN.

H. Res. 43: Mr. GALLAGHER.

H. Res. 92: Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of Cali-
fornia.

H. Res. 129: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. TIP-
TON, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. JONES, Mrs. WAG-

NER, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr.
MEEHAN, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SINEMA,
Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. WEB-
STER of Florida, and Mr. SESSIONS.

H. Res. 140: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of
New York.

H. Res. 142: Mr. COSTA.

H. Res. 145: Mr. SUOZZI.

H. Res. 188: Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr.
PETERS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. COHEN, Mr.
DELANEY, Mr. COOK, and Mr. GARRETT.

H. Res. 214: Mr. HECK.

H. Res. 219: Mr. COMER.

H. Res. 220: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. FORTENBERRY,
and Mrs. LAWRENCE.

H. Res. 222: Mr. COLE.

H. Res. 232: Mr. MESSER and Mrs.
WALORSKI.

H. Res. 235: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. LAN-
GEVIN, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. KEATING, Mr.
PAYNE, Mr. VELA, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN,
Miss RICE of New York, Mr. CORREA, Mrs.
DEMINGS, and Ms. BARRAGÁN.



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No. 57

Senate

The Senate met at 3:01 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TODD YOUNG, a Senator from the State of Indiana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Beautiful Savior, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, and we are sustained by Your steadfast love. Today, surround our Senators with the shield of Your favor as they labor to keep our Nation strong.

Lord, this week our lawmakers must make critical decisions that may affect this legislative body for years to come. Teach them to be obedient to Your commands, doing Your will, and following Your leading. May they be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

Lord, manifest Your power through their labors so that this Nation will remain a shining city on a hill.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TODD YOUNG, a Senator from the State of Indiana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. YOUNG thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

OLD VESSELS EXEMPTION ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 89, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 89) to amend title 46, United States Code, to exempt old vessels that only operate within inland waterways from the fire-retardant materials requirement if the owners of such vessels make annual structural alterations to at least 10 percent of the areas of the vessels that are not constructed of fire-retardant materials and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

The Senator from West Virginia.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to express my strong support for the confirmation of Judge Neil Gorsuch to be the next Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Few individuals over the last century have impacted the American legal discourse

as profoundly as the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

In the wake of his untimely passing last February, Justice Scalia left behind a legacy of faithfully applying the law and upholding the principles of our Constitution. Judge Neil Gorsuch is a worthy successor to Judge Antonin Scalia.

Judge Gorsuch understands the protections granted in the Constitution, including the separation of powers, federalism, and the Bill of Rights. He knows that the Constitution provides Americans with an indispensable safeguard against government overreach.

His past opinions demonstrate that he will honor constitutional protections afforded through due process, the right to bear arms, equal protection under the law, and religious freedom.

Legal experts from across the political spectrum are very much in agreement with the Gorsuch nomination. The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously gave Judge Gorsuch the highest possible rating of "well qualified" for the Supreme Court. I couldn't agree more.

One of Judge Gorsuch's associates, the chief judge of the Tenth Circuit who served with Judge Gorsuch, has said about him:

Judge Gorsuch brings to the bench a powerful intellect combined with a probing and analytical approach to every issue. He brings to each case a strong commitment to limit his analysis to that case—its facts, the record, and the law cited and applicable. He does not use his judicial role as a vehicle for anything other than deciding the case before him.

President Obama's former Solicitor General Neal Katyal penned an op-ed in the New York Times supporting Judge Gorsuch and wrote:

I have no doubt that if confirmed, Judge Gorsuch would help restore confidence in the rule of law.

His years on the bench reveal a commitment to judicial independence—a record that should give the American people confidence

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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that he will not compromise principle to favor the president who appointed him.

Those are the words of the Solicitor General who argued on behalf of President Obama's administration in front of the Supreme Court.

Judge Gorsuch has been through the confirmation process before—as we have heard many times on this floor—when Senators, some of them in this body today, approved his nomination to the Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit without opposition.

I was privileged to meet with Judge Gorsuch several weeks ago, and it was clear to me through our conversation, a thorough examination of his record, and watching last week's hearing in the Judiciary Committee that Judge Gorsuch will decide cases fairly, based on our Constitution and laws. Isn't that the way it should be? This is what West Virginians expect from a Supreme Court Justice.

Newspapers in my State have recognized this nominee's strong qualifications of independence and respect for the rule of law. The Charleston Daily Mail editorialized:

Gorsuch has strong legal credentials and deserves to be confirmed.

He is the kind of pick that any president should make, Democrat or Republican, because of his proven qualities necessary for any justice: a strong understanding and respect for the nation's founding document, the U.S. Constitution.

The *Wheeling Intelligencer* and *News Register* wrote:

During hearings last week, Gorsuch's suitability for a high court post was made abundantly clear.

He is precisely the type of judge—faithful to the Constitution not ideology on specific issues—the nation needs.

And the *Martinsburg Journal* said:

Gorsuch seems to believe in using the plain language of the Constitution to decide cases, regardless of his own preferences.

That—someone who believes only the people not the courts can change the Constitution—is precisely the type of Supreme Court justice we Americans need.

The American people benefited from an open and transparent Supreme Court process that led to Judge Gorsuch being nominated.

During the 2016 Presidential election, both candidates were transparent about the type of Supreme Court Justice they would appoint if elected. President Trump released a list of 21 names, a list that included Judge Gorsuch, and promised voters that he would fill this Supreme Court vacancy with someone from that list. Voters paid attention.

According to an NBC News exit poll, 70 percent of voters said the selection of a Supreme Court Justice was either the most important factor in their vote for President or an important factor. Let me state that again—70 percent.

The American people weighed in, and President Trump acted wisely in selecting Judge Gorsuch. He is a mainstream judge who is well qualified for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, the Democratic leader has indicated that his party intends

to engage in an unprecedented partisan filibuster of this nomination. A filibuster of a nominee of this caliber would be a tremendous mistake, I believe, that would harm the Senate as an institution. There has never been a Supreme Court nomination that has been defeated by a partisan filibuster of the type that the Senate Democrats are telegraphing. It is one thing to vote against a nominee on whatever grounds a Senator may wish, but it is quite another to filibuster in an effort to block a nomination that has been submitted by a duly elected President who has the support of the majority of the Senate.

Senators have always enjoyed the ability to filibuster nominations. That ability has remained available because Senators have shown restraint in applying the power that comes along with requiring unlimited debate. The clear tradition of the Senate—and this is a body of tradition, I have learned—over the course of its 230 years of history is a confirmation by a majority vote. That tradition has been demonstrated in recent Supreme Court nominations.

President Obama nominated both Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court. Neither Justice Sotomayor nor Justice Kagan faced a filibuster in the Senate.

President George W. Bush nominated John Roberts as Chief Justice. There was no filibuster attempt against that nomination.

President Bill Clinton nominated Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer to the Supreme Court. Neither faced a filibuster.

President George H.W. Bush nominated David Souter and Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. Neither Justice faced a filibuster even though 48 Senators voted against the Thomas nomination.

One recent Supreme Court nomination did require a cloture vote when a group of Democrat Senators attempted to block a vote on the nomination of Justice Alito's nomination, but a large majority of Senators—72, in fact—invoked cloture, which preserved the bipartisan practice of rejecting filibusters against Supreme Court nominees. Among those who rejected the Alito filibuster in 2006 were the two Democratic Senators from my State—Senator Robert C. Byrd and Senator Jay Rockefeller. There were 72 Senators who voted to invoke cloture on Justice Alito's nomination, but only 58 ended up voting for the final confirmation.

The Senate has a very clear history of rejecting the use of the filibuster on Supreme Court nominations, but there is no justification for a filibuster on the Gorsuch nomination. Neil Gorsuch is a mainstream judge with the highest possible rating from the American Bar Association. He was confirmed by the Senate, without objection, in the year 2006. His service on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals has earned him the respect of his judicial colleagues, and

he has demonstrated the independence and respect for the law that the American people expect from a Supreme Court Justice. I hope that at least eight of my Democratic colleagues will join us regardless of how they, ultimately, will vote on Judge Gorsuch's confirmation. I hope they will recognize the need to invoke cloture on this nomination.

The Senate will confirm Judge Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. For the good of the Nation and for the good of the Senate, there should be no filibuster of this well-qualified nominee.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me thank my friend and colleague from Nebraska for her indulgence.

EXPLOSION IN SAINT PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

Before I begin, Mr. President, I want to express our concern here in the United States for our friends in Saint Petersburg, Russia, in the wake of an explosion on their subway system this morning. Russia has been in the news a lot recently, typically in adversarial terms. Today is a time to remember that, whatever our differences, we wish no ill to the people of any nation. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the Russians who were killed this morning. We wish a swift recovery to the injured and hope the perpetrators are soon brought to justice.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. President, I rise this afternoon on the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, which was just advanced by the Judiciary Committee.

This afternoon, it has become clear that Judge Gorsuch does not have the 60 votes that are necessary to end debate on his nomination. So now the focus is shifting away from the issue of whether Judge Gorsuch will get 60 votes on the cloture motion and toward the fundamental question before us: Will the majority leader break the rules of the Senate in order to get Judge Gorsuch on the bench?

My friend, the majority leader, has said several times that Judge Gorsuch will be confirmed by the end of this week one way or another. What he really means when he says that is, if Judge Gorsuch does not earn 60 votes in the Senate, which is now the likely outcome, the Republicans must—underline “must”—exercise the nuclear option to pass Judge Gorsuch on a simple majority vote.

I think the majority leader reasons that if he says it enough times, folks

will start believing it—that he has no choice—but they should not. It is a premise no one should swallow. The majority leader is setting up a false choice of supporting Judge Gorsuch or he will have no choice but to break the rules. Maybe, to the majority leader, the nuclear option is the only option, but there are many alternatives. The majority leader makes up his mind independent of what Democrats do on issue after issue, but on this one, he says he has no choice. Maybe he has no choice because the rightwing of the Republican Party—organizations like the Heritage Foundation—will go after him if he does not, but he certainly has a choice to do the right and courageous thing.

Instead, Republicans are playing the game of “they started it.” They say Democrats started this process by changing the rules for lower court nominees in 2013. They fail to mention the history that led to that change. The reason that Majority Leader Reid changed the rules was that Republicans had ramped up the use of the filibuster to historic proportions.

They filibustered 79 nominees in the first 4 years of President Obama’s Presidency. To put that in perspective, prior to President Obama, there were 68 filibusters on nominations under all other Presidents—from George Washington to George Bush. Under President Obama, exclusively, in the first 4 years of his administration, Republicans filibustered 79 nominees. They deliberately kept open the DC Court of Appeals because it has such influence over decisions that are made by the government.

We all know the hard-right Federalist Society and the hard-right Heritage Foundation want to limit what government can do. The deal we made in 2005—a group of Senators, the so-called Gang of 14—allowed several of the most conservative jurists in the land to become judges and be confirmed to that circuit court. Yet, when President Obama came in, our Republican colleagues insisted on holding three seats of that court open. They, literally, said that they would not allow the seats to be filled at all by President Obama.

Sound familiar? Merrick Garland knows it is.

At the time, I pleaded several times with Senator ALEXANDER, my dear friend from Tennessee, to let us vote on some of the judges for the DC Circuit. I asked him to go to Senator MCCONNELL and say that the pressure on our side to change the rules after all of these filibusters was going to be large. Let’s avoid it, I said. But Senator MCCONNELL said no.

Republicans had refused all of our overtures to break the deadlock that they had imposed. So if the majority leader wants to conduct this partisan “they started it” exercise, I am sure we could trace it all the way back to the Burr-Hamilton duel.

The fact is that the Republicans blocked Merrick Garland by using the

most unprecedented maneuvers. Now we are likely to block Judge Gorsuch, and that means neither party has gotten its party’s choice in the last 2 years.

We can go back and forth and blame each other, but in the recent history of the vacancy caused by Justice Scalia’s death, we have both lost. We lost Merrick Garland because of the majority leader’s unprecedented blockade, and Republicans will lose on Judge Gorsuch because we are doing something we think is reasonable in asking that he be able to earn 60 votes as so many others have. We think the two are not equivalent, but in either case, we have both lost.

We are back to square one, and Republicans have total freedom of choice in this situation. No one is forcing them to break the rules. They don’t have to treat the nuclear option as if it were their first and only option. It is a false choice.

To my friends on the other side, the answer isn’t to change the rules; the answer is to change the nominee. Presidents of both parties have done so in the past when Supreme Court picks failed to merit confirmation. Again, the answer isn’t to change the rules; the answer is to change the nominee.

The majority leader should have the vision and courage to see past this impasse, and I believe he should seriously consider a different option. The President, Senate Republicans, and Democrats should sit down together to come up with a mainstream nominee who can earn bipartisan support. We are willing to meet with them anywhere, anytime to discuss a consensus nominee.

Now, I know my colleagues on the other side will say Judge Gorsuch was a mainstream nominee and Democrats would never support any judge nominated by President Trump. We disagree. We probably can’t support any nominee whose sole vetting is by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. They were the sole gatekeepers for the Scalia vacancy, and each is well known to be a rightwing, wealthy special interest group dedicated to moving the bench way to the right. Their selection of Judge Gorsuch shows it. Both the New York Times and the Washington Post did analyses done by experts that showed that Judge Gorsuch would be a very, very conservative—many would say rightwing—Justice on the bench. The New York Times said he would be the second most conservative Justice on the bench—second only to Justice Thomas—and more conservative than the late Justice Scalia. The Washington Post actually said he would be the most conservative Justice on the bench, based on his record—even more conservative than the very, very conservative Justice Thomas.

In fact, we Democrats have never let special interest groups be the gatekeeper. We have never said to any special interest group, as President Trump

did: Give us a list, and we will choose from that list. That is what Republicans did. We have never done it.

In the past, Presidents have done just what we are suggesting for selecting Supreme Court Justices. President Bill Clinton sought and took the advice of Republican Judiciary Committee Chairman ORRIN HATCH in nominating Justices Ginsburg and Breyer instead of Bruce Babbitt. President Obama took the advice of Republican Senators when he picked Merrick Garland—a consensus, mainstream nominee.

President Trump, on the other hand, ignored the Senate and only sought the advice and consent of rightwing special interest groups when making Supreme Court picks. He was running. He had to shore up his support on the hard right. So he said: I am outsourcing the entire selection process to two groups—which, again, are not consensus groups. They would admit that themselves—the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. Lo and behold, the process didn’t produce a nominee who could earn 60 votes. By contrast, Justice Ginsburg earned 93 votes and Justice Breyer earned 87.

So we are offering President Trump and our friends on the other side a way forward. They don’t have to break the rules to get a Justice on the bench. They don’t have to break the Senate confirmation process, fundamentally weakening the constitutional principle of advice and consent, to get a Justice on the bench. President Trump could simply consult with Members of both parties to try and come up with a consensus nominee who could get approved and meet a 60-vote threshold.

The answer, again, isn’t to change the rules. It is to change the nominee.

We Democrats are not going to oppose every Republican nominee. Of course, we realize a nominee selected this way would not completely agree with our views, but Judge Gorsuch is so far out of the mainstream that he isn’t able to earn votes to pass the Senate. Even Justices Roberts and Alito—two very conservative judges—earned a bunch of Democratic votes, and each got more than 60—one, in his nomination, and the other, 72 votes in the cloture process.

So the Republicans are free actors. They can choose to go nuclear or they can sit down with Democrats and find a way forward that preserves the grand traditions of this body.

The majority leader himself has said the one thing the two leaders have always agreed upon is to protect the integrity of this institution. He continued, and this is a direct quote: “I think we can stipulate . . . that in the Senate, it takes 60 votes on controversial matters.”

MITCH MCCONNELL: In the Senate, it takes 60 votes on controversial matters. He has long stood for that proposition for the many years I have been here.

A Supreme Court seat, I believe, meets the majority leader’s standard

for 60 votes. I hope that instead of crippling the Senate in a partisan way—removing that 60-vote threshold for controversial matters like the Supreme Court—my Republican friends consider the option of working together to find a solution we can both accept. It may seem like a novel concept around here, but that option is always on the table. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

WORKPLACE ADVANCEMENT ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to discuss a true American value: equal pay for equal work. This is something that we all believe in, and tomorrow is National Equal Pay Day. It is a meaningful reminder that equal pay remains among the challenges before us.

Women make the world work. We are breadwinners for our families. We are also financial planners, nurses, and teachers. We have always been a powerful force, and our progress has been hard-earned.

Women today are managers, entrepreneurs, public servants, and CEOs, and our country is stronger for it. But despite these great strides, there is more work to do to encourage prosperity for America's families.

For nearly 4 years in this body, I have led discussions about equal pay. I am encouraged by the interest from the White House on addressing the workplace challenges that women face today. To that end, I have reintroduced a proposal I believe will make a real difference for families. It is called the Workplace Advancement Act.

The idea behind it is fairly universal and straightforward: equal pay through empowerment. The bill aims to empower employees—especially women—with information about wages so they can be informed advocates for their compensation. When it comes to discussing wages in the workplace, sometimes it can hurt to ask. A culture of silence and fear of retaliation can keep people in the dark about how their compensation compares to others. The Workplace Advancement Act would lift that fear, free up information, and create a more transparent workplace.

A simple principle is at play here. When workers, especially women, have more information, they can more confidently pursue favorable work and wage arrangements. Knowledge is power. With this flexibility, women can better negotiate arrangements that make sense for them. For example, they might be willing to accept less pay if they can have Fridays free for doctors' appointments or family time or simply as a day for self-care.

The Workplace Advancement Act contains language similar to an Executive order that President Obama issued in 2014. Many congressional Democrats requested this action, which is actually more limited in scope than my legislation. Some even praised it. Senator HEINRICH called the action "a critical step to ensure that every woman has a

fair shot at fairness and economic success." Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS of California said the action was a "historic step forward."

Importantly, for employers, the Workplace Advancement Act would not impose new Federal regulations, and no employer would be compelled to disclose salary information. It simply prevents retaliatory action against employees who ask after it.

Fifty-three Republicans and five Democrats in the Senate supported a version of the Workplace Advancement Act last Congress. With bipartisan support like this, this bill is possible.

Let's take advantage of this rare moment when we have common ground on a commonsense and straightforward solution. Let's come together so we can look families in the eye and say: We heard you. We have heard you on this issue, and we are going to take action on it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week is an important one for the American people, for the Supreme Court, and for the Senate. The Judiciary Committee just reported out Judge Neil Gorsuch's nomination—the next step in considering the Supreme Court nominee before the full Senate. It was unfortunate to see our Democratic colleagues on the committee break with recent precedent and not support this clearly well-qualified and widely respected Supreme Court nominee.

I would remind colleagues that in addition to simply agreeing to an up-or-down vote on their nominations on the Senate floor, Republicans offered each of the last four first-term Supreme Court nominees of Democratic Presidents Clinton and Obama at least some bipartisan support in the committee votes. Judge Gorsuch is no less qualified than those four nominees of Presidents Clinton and Obama, and it is disappointing he didn't get the same bipartisan support in the committee today.

It now seems apparent that this well-qualified and widely respected judge will be subject to the first successful partisan filibuster in the history of the Senate—the first successful partisan filibuster in the history of the Senate. This is a new low but not entirely surprising given that the Democratic leader announced before the nomination was even made that it was hard for him to imagine a nominee this President would nominate whom he could sup-

port. He even went so far as to say that he would be willing to fight the nomination "tooth and nail" and might even "keep the seat open" in perpetuity. It is not too late for our Democratic colleagues to make the right choice.

This week, the Senate will continue to debate Judge Gorsuch's nomination here on the floor. This is a matter of great importance, which is why we are planning to dedicate this week's floor time almost entirely to continued robust debate of this nomination rather than double-tracking it with legislative items, as has been done in the past. Already, several Members from both sides of the aisle have come to the floor day after day to offer their viewpoints on Judge Gorsuch. I would encourage Members to take advantage of this time to continue discussing his excellent credentials, judicial background, and broad support from across the political spectrum in our country.

Let me remind colleagues the many ways in which Judge Gorsuch has shown himself to be an outstanding nominee to serve on the High Court.

Judge Gorsuch was unanimously confirmed to his current position as a Federal judge. Not a single Democrat opposed him then, including Senators Obama, Clinton, Biden, LEAHY, and SCHUMER. He has participated in more than 2,700 cases since then. He has been in the majority 99 percent of the time. He has enjoyed the unanimous support of his fellow judges 97 percent of the time.

The American Bar Association—a group the Democratic leader called the "gold standard" for evaluating judicial nominations—awarded him its highest possible rating, unanimously "well qualified."

He has amassed a wide array of supporters, including Democrats and Republicans, current and former colleagues, the legal community, and editorial boards all across our country. They say Gorsuch is eminently well-qualified. As Judge John Kane, a Carter appointee, put it, "I'm not sure we could expect better [than Judge Gorsuch], or that better presently exists."

They say that Gorsuch is independent. Neal Katyal, President Obama's former Acting Solicitor General, said he has "no doubt that if confirmed, Judge Gorsuch would help to restore confidence in the rule of law" because Gorsuch's "years on the bench reveal a commitment—a commitment—to judicial independence."

They say Gorsuch is fair and impartial. The Denver Post editorial board noted that "Gorsuch is a brilliant legal mind and talented writer whom observers praise for his ability to apply the law fairly and consistently." They went on: "[W]e appreciate his desire to strictly interpret the Constitution," the paper continued, "based on the intent of our nation's founders, even when those rulings might contradict his personal beliefs."

They say Gorsuch is highly revered by Democrats and Republicans. As USA TODAY noted in its editorial endorsing Gorsuch's confirmation just today, "He has gotten an array of glowing references, including from some Democrats and liberals." I mentioned some this morning; there are many more.

Here is just one additional example of how praise for Judge Gorsuch has bridged the political divide: Despite their ideological differences, former Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, a Democrat, and former Colorado attorney general John Suthers, a Republican, agree that Judge Gorsuch should be confirmed. They said:

Gorsuch's temperament, personal decency and qualifications are beyond dispute.

It is time to use this confirmation process to examine and exalt the characteristics of a judge who demonstrates that he or she is scholarly, compassionate, committed to the law, and will function as part of a truly independent, apolitical judiciary. Judge Gorsuch fits that bill.

It reminds us of what David Frederick, a board member of the left-leaning American Constitution Society and longtime Democrat, recently said: "The Senate should confirm [Gorsuch] because there is no principled reason to vote no."

"There is no principled reason to vote no." He is absolutely right. So it goes without saying that there is no principled reason to block an up-or-down vote on this supremely qualified nominee, either.

I look forward to joining my Senate colleagues in supporting Judge Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court later this week.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDING THE VETERANS ACCESS, CHOICE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 544 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 544) to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 544) was passed, as follows:

S. 544

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. MODIFICATION OF TERMINATION DATE FOR VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM.

Section 101(p)(2) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended by striking "or the date that is 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, whichever occurs first".

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF REQUIREMENT TO ACT AS SECONDARY PAYER FOR CARE RELATING TO NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES AND RECOVERY OF COSTS FOR CERTAIN CARE UNDER CHOICE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(e) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "OTHER HEALTH-CARE PLAN" and inserting "RESPONSIBILITY FOR COSTS OF CERTAIN CARE";

(2) in paragraph (1), in the paragraph heading, by striking "TO SECRETARY" and inserting "ON HEALTH-CARE PLANS";

(3) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3);

(4) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (2); and

(5) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) RECOVERY OF COSTS FOR CERTAIN CARE.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—In any case in which an eligible veteran is furnished hospital care or medical services under this section for a non-service-connected disability described in subsection (a)(2) of section 1729 of title 38, United States Code, or for a condition for which recovery is authorized or with respect to which the United States is deemed to be a third party beneficiary under Public Law 87-693, commonly known as the 'Federal Medical Care Recovery Act' (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), the Secretary shall recover or collect from a third party (as defined in subsection (i) of such section 1729) reasonable charges for such care or services to the extent that the veteran (or the provider of the care or services) would be eligible to receive payment for such care or services from such third party if the care or services had not been furnished by a department or agency of the United States.

"(B) USE OF AMOUNTS.—Amounts collected by the Secretary under subparagraph (A) shall be deposited in the Medical Community Care account of the Department. Amounts so deposited shall remain available until expended."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (1) of such section is amended by striking "paragraph (4)" and inserting "paragraph (2)".

SEC. 3. AUTHORITY TO DISCLOSE CERTAIN MEDICAL RECORDS OF VETERANS WHO RECEIVE NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE.

Section 7332(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(H)(i) To a non-Department entity (including private entities and other Federal

agencies) that provides hospital care or medical services to veterans as authorized by the Secretary.

"(ii) An entity to which a record is disclosed under this subparagraph may not redisclose or use such record for a purpose other than that for which the disclosure was made."

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I want to thank Senator MORAN and members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for all their good work, Senator MCCAIN for his good work, and Chairman JOHN ISAKSON for his good work on this bill.

This Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act is an important piece of legislation that is going to really ensure that veterans can access care in their communities. It is a critically important piece of legislation that we should get done and get done now.

I think this body could learn from the work that was done on the Veterans' Affairs Committee under the leadership of Chairman ISAKSON for the veterans of this country. I don't think my home State of Montana is any exception. Veterans have been waiting far too long for an appointment at the VA and oftentimes had to drive 100 miles for an appointment. That is why we set up the Choice Program. It was supposed to allow these veterans to get their healthcare closer to home. Unfortunately, it did not work the way it should have. And we were inundated with redtape and a government contractor that struggled to schedule appointments with providers on time.

This Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act is not the end all. It is not what is going to fix the Choice Program in its entirety, but it certainly is a step in the right direction, a step that needed to be taken, and I commend the body for allowing this step to be taken.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Montana for his efforts to see that this legislation gets passed. I am pleased to see that we have been joined in a unanimous way by the Senate, Republicans and Democrats working together to see that our veterans receive better care.

In addition to the Senator from Montana, I thank Mr. MCCAIN, the Senator from Arizona, who is joining us on the floor. I also thank Senator ISAKSON in particular, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, for his leadership in seeing that we are here today to bring this legislation across the finish line.

The House passed legislation similar to this, so this is an opportunity for us to get an accomplishment—not for a pat on our backs but for the improvement in the care of those who served

our Nation. I asked this question on the Senate floor before: Of all the people in the United States, who would you expect to get the best care possible? While we want every American to have high-quality care and access to medical treatment, we certainly want to make certain those who served our country and to whom a commitment was made that they would receive care—we want that commitment fulfilled, and we want it done in a way that is advantageous and easy for our veterans.

The Senator from Montana is correct. The Choice Act is a significant improvement, in my mind, for accessing care. Kansas is not quite as large as the State of Montana, but we are a large rural State, and it is a long distance to a VA hospital. So Choice was brought into play to try to alleviate the backlog, the lack of providers within the VA, and the wait times that veterans faced, but also to try to satisfy the needs of veterans who live long distances from a VA facility.

So Choice is in place, but it still has been a difficult time for many veterans across the country and certainly at home. It is the most common conversation I have when I am back in Kansas. In fact, I had a townhall meeting in southwest Kansas, in Dodge City, and it is veterans who, in the public forum, will tell me about the problems with the VA and particularly with Choice, or they will line up after or before that meeting to tell me in person that they need help.

This legislation does three significant things. More is to come. We need a permanent act. This is an extension of the Choice Act that expires on August 7, so continuing the program is the first step while we work out the desired outcome of a long-term permanent program.

Secondly, it provides the money through that period of time. It allows the expenditure of dollars to pay for Choice.

Third, it eliminates the intermediary—somebody separate from the VA in paying the bills—and that reduces the bureaucracy and burden on our veterans.

I was just looking through what we call casework, things Kansans bring to our office to try to get solved. Front and center is the number of veterans who are being harassed by collection agencies for bills they thought would be paid by the VA through the Choice Program, and they are not being paid in a timely fashion. This eliminates the intermediary—the manager of the program—from paying the bills and restores that authority to the VA to write out the checks with the goal of reducing the bureaucracy and paperwork for the veterans. It also increases the timeliness for the payment that is due the healthcare provider—the doctor, the pharmacy, and the hospital.

Again, as a rural American, many of our providers are struggling. Hospital doors are a challenge to remain open in

rural communities across my State. And that long wait for a reimbursement check for services provided months ago also creates a burden on that hospital, that healthcare provider. So timely payment certainly will benefit the veterans, but it also increases the chances of the stability of healthcare providers in rural communities across my State and around the country.

Finally, it increases the ability for the sharing of medical records between the VA and that community healthcare provider.

Choice is in place to help those veterans who need to have care more quickly and who need to have care closer to home. This bill improves that program and extends it, and that is a significant development. I appreciate the opportunity I have had to work with the Senators from Arizona, Montana, and Georgia to make sure we got to the point we are today. I appreciate my colleagues' unanimous support for the passage of this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from Kansas for all the hard work he has done, and the Senator from Montana. On the rare occasion I come to praise him, I would like to give him my deep and heartfelt appreciation for his work in a bipartisan fashion on this issue. I mean that with all sincerity. I also thank our distinguished chairman, Senator ISAKSON. I also think I share with my colleagues an appreciation for Dr. Shulkin, the new Secretary of the Veterans' Administration, who has been an active and helpful participant in this effort.

Most everything has been said except that I would like to remind my colleagues that we now have—since the enactment in 2014, over 7 million appointments have been made using the Choice Program. Now, over 30,000 appointments are successfully made each week under the Choice Program.

The programs are set to expire in a few months, and, as pointed out by my colleagues, the VA has already begun to limit care for pregnant mothers, as well as cancer patients, because their treatment would extend beyond August. Soon all veterans will be kicked off the Choice Program.

I would just like to point out to my colleagues, if I could, that this crisis started in Phoenix, AZ, where 15,000 veterans were put on a wait list and over 40 veterans died while awaiting care. That is not acceptable in this Nation.

I believe the Choice Program is a major step forward. The truth is, the VA has a lot more to do to provide for the care we have obligated this Nation to on behalf of those who have fought and sacrificed for our Nation. The Choice Card has made a major step forward. I hope we can consider removing any geographic or other limitations as-

sociated with it. But what the Senators from Kansas and Montana have done today is to make sure this program continues and why it is important to pass it today—not one dollar Congress authorized to care for veterans under the Choice Program should go unused.

Let me mention what we have done. There are 7 million additional appointments for veterans in their communities, and over 1.5 million veterans have benefited from using the Choice Card that they would not have had otherwise. Some 350,000 more doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants are available to treat veterans. There are 235,000 appointments per month through Veterans Choice—more than 10,000 per workday. The Veterans Choice Program more than doubles the number of medical providers nationwide that treat veterans. In Arizona, 11,700 medical providers in veterans communities have treated over 100,000 disabled veterans.

The Veterans Choice Card is being used at 700 hospitals and nearly 10,000 clinics nationwide. The Western Region is paying more than 90 percent of Veterans Choice doctors in less than 30 days and answering 900,000 phone calls per month, with an average time to answer of under 25 seconds. Over 3,000 veterans received hepatitis C treatments due to Veterans Choice funding.

There are still kinks in the operation. There are still bottlenecks. There are still times when veterans' payments, particularly, have not been done in a timely fashion, as the Senator from Kansas mentioned. Hopefully, that will change now. As with any program, it had its difficulties in its beginning. But I want to tell my colleagues that we should make the Choice Card available for any veteran, no matter where they happen to reside. It should be, I believe, the basis of our next effort. But in the meantime, I want to thank again the Senator from Kansas for his hard work.

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. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OLD VESSELS EXEMPTION ACT— Continued

UVALDE COUNTY, TEXAS, BUS ACCIDENT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I wanted to come to the floor to talk about the important work for the Senate this week, now that the Judiciary Committee has voted on the Judge Neil Gorsuch nomination and he is available for floor consideration. But I wanted, first, to extend my deepest condolences to the families and friends of those tragically killed in an automobile crash near New Valley, TX, last week.

A bus carrying a group of 14 members of the First Baptist Church in New

Braunfels collided with a pickup truck on Highway 83. Thirteen people were killed and two others, including the driver of the other vehicle, were injured. You can imagine how heart-breaking this has been to everyone involved. I can't begin to imagine the pain and the grief felt by their loved ones, their church family, and their entire close-knit community of New Braunfels, TX, just north of San Antonio.

I had the opportunity to speak with the pastor of First Baptist of New Braunfels, Pastor McLean, the day after the accident. He is leading his congregation and that community during this very difficult time. He is shepherding his flock, though, with grace and strength. There is a phrase I am reminded of in times like this. After the terrible explosion in West Texas, I had a county commissioner from that area tell me: Being a Texan doesn't describe where you are from, it describes who your family is.

Today, our family is mourning. But I know Pastor McLean and all of my fellow Texans and all Americans really lift up this community in prayer, along with the families and friends of those we lost.

I am grateful to the first responders and medical professionals who were first to arrive at the scene of the accident and lent a hand to those in need.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Separately, Madam President, as I have indicated, this is an important week for the American people. Earlier today, the Judiciary Committee voted to send Judge Gorsuch's nomination to the Senate floor for full consideration. Later this week, he will be confirmed as the next Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. For the past several weeks and through 20 grueling hours of questioning before the Judiciary Committee, Judge Gorsuch has proven to be one of the most qualified nominees to the Court in modern history.

Republicans in the Senate said we would give the American people a voice in who would select the next Supreme Court Justice. In a sense, we had a referendum of whether it would be a nominee selected by Donald Trump or by Hillary Clinton. On November 8, we saw the outcome of that election. This week, that referendum will be answered when the country will have its ninth Justice on the Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues are doing their very best to decide that they should mount the first partisan filibuster of a Supreme Court nominee in American history. This is truly unprecedented. I know sometimes people want to talk about 1968 and the Abe Fortas nomination, but not even then was there a partisan filibuster that successfully blocked the confirmation of a Supreme Court Justice.

What I am talking about is blocking the ability to have an up-or-down vote. I am not talking about how people vote on the confirmation vote. I am talking

about allowing us to have a vote—that up-or-down vote—or denying it by virtue of the filibuster. I, for one, have been encouraged to see people from across the country speaking out and urging our colleagues to drop their obstruction and to allow such an up-or-down vote on an incredibly qualified, upstanding, and brilliant judge.

Editorials from all over the country have registered their opposition to the idea of a filibuster and have done so rather bluntly. The Chicago Tribune, for example, said: "Neil Gorsuch earns his Supreme Court seat." The Boston Herald says: "Shame on Senate Dems." The Boston Herald specifically said that those going along with the strategy were "blindly partisan for whom any nomination made by President Trump would never be qualified."

The Denver Post, in the home State of Judge Gorsuch, urged Senators to confirm Judge Gorsuch to the Supreme Court and specifically urged the senior Senator from Colorado, Senator BENNET, not to cooperate with this blind partisanship and this filibuster but rather to allow the judge an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

Their editorial title made that much clearer. They said: "Michael Bennet should buck Democrats and speak up for Neil Gorsuch."

The Billings Gazette in Montana had this to say: "Democrats refuse to rise above petty partisan politics."

The Richmond Times-Dispatch took the junior Senator from Virginia to task and said: His opposition to Judge Gorsuch, "suggests he can't come up with a defensible reason to oppose the nomination."

Finally in New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Union Leader editorial last week was titled: "Confirm Gorsuch: Dems plan pointless filibuster." "Pointless" about sums it up. There is no doubt that Judge Gorsuch is qualified. He has received the highest rating from the American Bar Association, which reportedly interviewed 500 leading lawyers and practitioners in the country, and the ratings system of the American Bar Association has been called by many of our Senate Democratic colleagues the "gold standard" when it comes to confirmations.

Among the legal and local communities, Judge Gorsuch enjoys broad bipartisan support, but that seems to make no difference to our friends across the aisle who voted on a party-line vote not to send his nomination from the Judiciary Committee. Of course, their minority position lost when the majority of the committee voted today to send that nomination to the floor.

I can't help but think that they are in an unenviable position, torn by their desire to do what they know is the right thing when it comes to confirming a good judge, and, on the other hand, being attacked by their own party's political base, telling them that if they vote to confirm this judge, they are somehow going to suffer some political damage.

Of these newspapers I mentioned, not one of them endorsed Donald Trump for President—not one. But unlike some of our Senate colleagues, they are able to distinguish between President Trump and Judge Neil Gorsuch, instead of using Donald Trump as a proxy not to vote to confirm Neil Gorsuch.

These newspapers are urging Senate Democrats to drop this pointless filibuster because they understand that it will not be President Trump we will be voting on next week. It is Judge Neil Gorsuch. Now, after repeatedly moving the goalposts for this nominee, my Democratic friends are saying that he has to pass the "traditional" threshold of 60 votes. Well, that is a made-up standard.

Throughout our Nation's history, the Senate has not had a tradition of filibustering judges. It was a strategy cooked up by Senator SCHUMER, Laurence Tribe from Harvard Law School, and other liberal activists to try to block President George W. Bush's judges when he was President of the United States. So there is no 60-vote threshold in Senate tradition. Actually, there have only been four cloture votes for a Supreme Court nominee—only four—and none of them for a partisan filibuster that actually succeeded in blocking an up-or-down vote for a nominee.

One of the newspaper fact checks concluded with this. They said: "There is no traditional 60-vote 'standard' or 'rule' for Supreme Court nominations, no matter how much or how often Democrats claim otherwise." This should be a time when the Senate should come together in a bipartisan fashion and do what it is supposed to do when we receive the nomination of such a highly qualified person.

Judge Gorsuch has won bipartisan approval. People across the country understand that, as do a number of independent Democrats here in the Senate, and they understand the dangerous path the minority leader is setting us and them on. Unfortunately, the Democratic leader wants to mount the first successful partisan filibuster of a Supreme Court nominee in our history.

But I would point out that no Republican Senator in the Senate has ever voted to filibuster a Supreme Court nominee, including those nominated by Democratic Presidents. As a matter of fact, Justice Clarence Thomas was confirmed with 52 votes. If the threshold were really 60, then he would not currently be serving on the Supreme Court of the United States. Even such polar opposites as Justice Scalia and Justice Ginsburg were confirmed by virtually unanimous votes because people understood that once the President was elected, that the President's choice should matter, and the Senate should not artificially try to lift up a 60-vote threshold in order to block, effectively, the will of the voters in choosing the president.

A few years ago, when we considered the nominations of Justice Sotomayor

and Justice Kagan, we gave both nominees a simple up-or-down vote. So our friends across the aisle have a simple but very important decision to make. They can listen to the extremist groups on the left that are urging them to resist at all costs or they can assert some of their independence.

As of today, several of our Democratic colleagues have done exactly that. I congratulate them. I am glad Senator HEITKAMP, Senator MANCHIN, and Senator DONNELLY have said they will assert their prerogative, as Senators, to allow an up-or-down vote for this nominee and actually vote for them. I hope they stand firm, but I hope, more importantly, more of their colleagues will demonstrate the same sort of independence from the radical base of the Democratic Party that says no to everything this President does. I hope they at least afford Judge Gorsuch an up-or-down vote because, if the Democrats successfully block Judge Gorsuch, there is literally no nominee from this President who they will not block—plain and simple.

So as we have been saying, Judge Gorsuch will be confirmed at the end of this week, but it is up to the Democrats as to how that happens.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I wish to express my opposition to S. 89 because it exempts certain vessels—actually one specific vessel called the *Delta Queen*—from current fire retardant construction standards and, according to the U.S. Coast Guard, represents “an unacceptable degree of fire safety risk. . . .”

Maritime history has numerous examples of catastrophic on-board fires followed by the passage—or attempted passage—of laws designed to improve safety and protect passengers and crew.

In response to the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*, in 1914, the International Maritime Organization, IMO, prescribed emergency equipment and safety procedures IMO-flagged ships were required to have in place.

The 1934 fire on the SS *Morro Castle* prompted the adoption of multiple Federal safety regulations, including the use of fire retardant construction materials.

A series of fires aboard international passenger ships in the early 1960s prompted the U.S. to enact the Safety of Life at Sea Act, SOLAS, which mandated that “no passenger vessel of the United States shall be granted a certificate of inspection [. . .] unless the vessel is constructed of fire-retardant materials.”

Congress delayed the implementation of the SOLAS mandate first until 1968, then until 1970, then again until 1973, but only for U.S. passenger vessels operating on inland rivers.

In 1973, Congress again delayed the effect of the mandate, but this time EXPRESSLY for one ship—the *Delta Queen*—and only for one 5-year period “while a new [overnight passenger] riverboat is being constructed.”

Despite the clear intent of Congress in 1973, the various owners of the *Delta Queen* successfully secured exemptions from SOLAS for the *Delta Queen* in 1986, 1991, and 1996.

Their attempts to seek a 10-year extension in 2007 and a 15-year extension in 2013 were unsuccessful, so they made another run in the 114th Congress and now in the 115th Congress with S. 89.

Current law requires passenger vessels with overnight accommodations for 50 or more passengers to be constructed of fire-retardant materials, unless an exemption is made, but in the case of the *Delta Queen*, the U.S. Coast Guard has consistently opposed legislation to provide the *Delta Queen* an exemption to remain in service as an overnight passenger cruise vessel.

A Coast Guard Special Inspection Report on the *Delta Queen* in 2008 found “an unnecessary and unacceptable accumulation of combustible fire load.” In a January 8, 2016, letter to Senator BILL NELSON, the Coast Guard’s then-Assistant Secretary of Legislative Affairs wrote “the Department of Homeland Security is resigned to oppose continuously any legislation that would provide any form of statutory relief for the steamer *Delta Queen*.”

S. 89 is contrary to public safety. It is contrary to the Safety of Life at Sea Act regulations which have been in full force in the U.S. since 1966, and it is contrary to the guidance of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The *Delta Queen* is an old ship made of wood. The boilers are original and open to the wood superstructure. There are no structural boundaries to contain a fire and only one means of egress.

I understand that supporters of S. 89 are concerned about the historic preservation of this ship and the economic opportunities that operation of the ship could bring to its homeport.

We should first and foremost be concerned with the safety of the people who will work on the ship and vacation on the ship and that they can have the same opportunities and experiences on a ship that is compliant with the reasonable safety standards that have been in place in this country for more than 50 years.

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

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

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, as I have done from the time he was nominated and as I will continue to do until he is confirmed, I rise to support the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to serve on the Supreme Court. Judge Gorsuch is an accomplished, mainstream jurist. I look forward to helping make sure he can receive a vote here on the Senate floor.

In the weeks since his nomination, I have spoken at length about his qualifications to serve on the Supreme Court. I have recognized him as a conservative champion of religious liberty, a defender of the separation of powers, and a westerner who will bring some much needed geographic diversity and a regional perspective to the Court.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Judge Gorsuch showed the country what it means to be a judge.

Big or small, popular or unpopular, powerful or powerless, Judge Gorsuch promised to render judgments based on the facts of the case, nothing else. He also has a remarkable record of respectful cooperation with judges appointed by Presidents of both parties.

During his decade-long tenure on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Gorsuch participated in more than 2,700 appeals. These comprised some of the most difficult cases across six States. Of those cases, 97 percent of them were decided unanimously—97 percent.

Judge Gorsuch was in the majority 99 percent of the time. He was in the majority on those cases 99 percent of the time. This is a testament to Judge Gorsuch’s ability to consider other points of view and to seek out consensus, where possible. To try to paint Judge Gorsuch as an ideologue simply doesn’t work. Those are essential qualities for any prospective Supreme Court Justice.

Now that we have reported Judge Gorsuch out of committee as of today, I would like to say a few words on the obstacles that stand in the way of his being considered here on the Senate floor.

As we proceed with Judge Gorsuch’s confirmation, I would like to explain my support for confirming him in light of what transpired in the waning months of the previous administration.

For nearly 230 years, Presidents have been making nominations to the Supreme Court. According to the Congressional Research Service: “From the appointment of the first Justices in 1789 through its consideration of Nominee Elena Kagan in 2010, the Senate has confirmed 124 Supreme Court nominations out of 160 received.”

I would like to reiterate that number. Out of 160 Supreme Court nominations in our Nation’s history, 124 were confirmed.

The Congressional Research Service goes on to state: “Of the 36 nominations which were not confirmed, 11 were rejected outright in roll-call votes by the Senate, while nearly all of the rest, in the face of substantial committee or Senate opposition to the nominee or the President, were withdrawn by the President, or were postponed, tabled, or never voted on by the Senate.”

The manner in which the Senate decides to provide its constitutional advice and consent on Presidential nominations has varied over the centuries

with respect to nominations. This includes decisions not to take up Supreme Court nominees.

As Jonathan Adler put it in his article in the *George Mason Law Review*:

Much as the Senate may reject a legislative proposal that originated in the House of Representatives by voting it down, killing it in committee, or simply refusing to take up the measure, the Senate may withhold its consent by voting against confirmation of a nominee, rejecting the nominee in committee, or simply refusing to act.

Is refusing to act the preferred outcome? I can certainly see where some would say no, as would I.

However, the history of the Senate demonstrates that to do otherwise in similar circumstances, as we just experienced is, in fact, a rare exception.

To cite Adler's law review article again, he states: "The last time a Supreme Court vacancy arose in the calendar year of a Presidential election and was filled prior to [the] election was in 1932."

President Obama nominated Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court in the heat of the 2016 Presidential election. When he was nominated, I understood the frustration of those on the other side of the aisle over the fate of that nomination.

I met Judge Garland. He is a good man and a good judge, but the decision by the majority not to take up Judge Garland's nomination was not inconsistent with a longstanding practice of filling Supreme Court vacancies after elections.

This brings us today to why I support confirming Judge Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. There is no question about the appropriateness of confirming Supreme Court nominees during the first years of the President's term, let alone the first 3 months. In fact, there is absolutely no justification for filibustering a highly qualified Supreme Court nominee put forward by the President who was just elected. That is just unprecedented.

There was an attempt to use this tactic in 2006 with Justice Samuel Alito's nomination to the Supreme Court, but he garnered sufficient bipartisan support so that cloture was invoked.

Today, it appears that we will not enjoy that same rational support. My preference would be to change the behavior of Senators rather than change the rules of the Senate. But here we are, where a nominee who would have received unanimous or nearly unanimous support just a few years ago is about to be filibustered.

My question is this: If we can't confirm a judge like Judge Gorsuch under contemporary use of Senate rules, who can we confirm?

It looks as if we will move forward later this week and make the rest of the Executive Calendar subject to the same simple majority threshold. Again, a change in Senate rules is not my preferred outcome, but this rule change will simply make de jure what was de facto prior to 2003, when filibusters

were virtually never used on the President's Executive Calendar.

Now, I want to make clear my steadfast support to preserve the legislative filibuster. We need to distinguish between the President's Executive Calendar, which has traditionally never been filibustered or subject to filibuster, and the legislative filibuster, which is used frequently here to ensure that we work across the aisle.

The Framers of our Constitution had the wisdom to create a Senate with a strong minority to serve as a check on runaway power. If we were to eliminate the legislative filibuster, we would cease to be that check, and, indeed, the Senate would cease to be the Senate.

We have a qualified mainstream jurist before us. That is Judge Gorsuch. I encourage all of my colleagues to give him fair consideration and to advance his nomination to an up-or-down vote. I will be voting to confirm him, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

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.

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

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

Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, I rise to ask my colleagues to support the bill that is in front of us, S. 89, which will allow the historic *Delta Queen* paddle wheeler to return to operation on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

This bill is supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Seafarers International Union of North America, along with a whole lot of excited people who live in Kimmswick, MO, where this boat will have its home base.

The *Delta Queen* is an important piece of history. The vessel connects us to a time before railroads and highways, when rivers were key arteries of travel and commerce in this country. It was first placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and was designated as a national historic landmark in 1989.

The *Delta Queen*'s steel hull was originally built in pieces in Scotland and then was assembled in Stockton, CA, in 1926, until the beginning of World War II, when it ferried passengers between Sacramento and San Francisco. During the war, she was acquired by the U.S. Navy to support its operations in the San Francisco Bay. Following the war, she was taken to Cincinnati, where she took passengers up and down the river system for the next 60 years.

Three different U.S. Presidents have sailed on the *Delta Queen*—Herbert Hoover, Missouri's own Harry Truman, and Jimmy Carter. In fact, President

Carter went on a week-long campaign tour on the vessel in 1979, along the Upper Mississippi.

For years, this vessel was homeported in Cincinnati and was later used as a hotel in Chattanooga. Should the bill before us be enacted, the *Delta Queen* will be homeported in Kimmswick, MO, just south of St. Louis. There, its operations will create more than 170 jobs and have an economic impact of more than \$36 million, which is a big impact for one boat in a small community.

The bill before the Senate today would reinstate the exemption that the *Delta Queen* repeatedly received in the past when it was grandfathered from regulations that occurred in 1966, which prevented wooden boats from having passengers overnight. Congress repeatedly renewed this waiver from 1968 to 2008 and recognized that these regulations were primarily designed for ships on the high seas and that this ship was a link to an important time period in American history.

Over the 40 years that the *Delta Queen* had its exemption, it operated without incident, but the exemption was allowed to expire in 2008. S. 89 adds a new number of safety provisions as a condition of the waiver, making it a very strong improvement over every previous waiver that was issued by Congress during that time period.

I will not go through the long list of safety requirements that are contained in this legislation. Suffice it to say that they must alter the boat; they must protect the engine and boiler systems with non-flammable materials, and they must receive special training.

The owner cannot disclaim any liability for any crewmember's or passenger's injury or death.

The Coast Guard has to conduct an annual audit and inspection of the vessel. In order to receive the waiver, the vessel must have the boilers and generators that meet current Coast Guard standards, which means that the current owners of the boat are going to invest millions in order to bring it up to the safety standards that are necessary for today's traveling public. It has to have noncombustible enclosures that are equipped with fire suppression systems, and multiple forms of egress are provided off the vessel's bow and stern.

It is also reiterated in this legislation that the Coast Guard has the authority to immediately withdraw its certification of inspection for the owners' failure to comply with any requirement in this bill, in addition to other penalties permitted by law.

In short, we have taken important steps to make this historic piece of riverboat history safe for the traveling public. Frankly, I think people need to remember the lengths to which we go in restoring and preserving historic buildings in this country. We do not make them tear them down. Rather, we make them comply with certain safety standards. We treasure the fact that we are saving historic buildings all over this country.

This is saving a historic vessel. It is very important that we save this vessel not only for what it represents to our country but also for what it means in jobs and economic activity to an important area of the State that I love to call home.

I thank Senators BROWN, BLUNT, BOOZMAN, CASSIDY, COTTON, KENNEDY, and PORTMAN, who joined me in introducing this legislation, and Chairman THUNE and Ranking Member NELSON, who have been so helpful in moving it through the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee.

I know it is a phrase that we like to use around here and that sometimes it is not true, but this really is a bipartisan effort. This really is an example of people coming together who have common sense in order to put a boat back on the river that means a lot to history, that means a lot to the traveling public, and that uses common sense in addressing safety concerns that are necessary because of the historic nature of the boat.

I ask that all of my colleagues support this bill and return the *Delta Queen* to her rightful place on the Mighty Mississippi.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

All time has expired.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 85, nays 12, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Leg.]

YEAS—85

Alexander	Booker	Carper
Baldwin	Boozman	Casey
Barrasso	Brown	Cassidy
Bennet	Burr	Cochran
Blunt	Capito	Coons

Corker	Hirono	Roberts
Cornyn	Hoeben	Rounds
Cortez Masto	Inhofe	Rubio
Cotton	Johnson	Sanders
Crapo	Kaine	Sasse
Cruz	Kennedy	Schatz
Daines	King	Schumer
Donnelly	Klobuchar	Scott
Duckworth	Lankford	Shaheen
Enzi	Leahy	Shelby
Ernst	Lee	Stabenow
Feinstein	Markey	Strange
Fischer	McCain	Sullivan
Flake	McCaskill	Tester
Franken	McConnell	Thune
Gardner	Merkley	Tillis
Graham	Moran	Udall
Grassley	Nelson	Warner
Harris	Paul	Warren
Hassan	Perdue	Whitehouse
Hatch	Peters	Wicker
Heinrich	Portman	Young
Heitkamp	Reed	
Heller	Risch	

NAYS—12

Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murphy
Cardin	Manchin	Murray
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Cantwell	Isakson	Toomey
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The bill (S. 89) was passed, as follows:
S. 89

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FIRE-RETARDANT MATERIALS EXEMPTION.

Section 3503 of title 46, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 3503. Fire-retardant materials

“(a)(1) A passenger vessel of the United States having berth or stateroom accommodations for at least 50 passengers shall be granted a certificate of inspection only if—

“(A) the vessel is constructed of fire-retardant materials; and

“(B) the vessel—

“(i) is operating engines, boilers, main electrical distribution panels, fuel tanks, oil tanks, and generators that meet current Coast Guard regulations;

“(ii) is operating boilers and main electrical generators that are contained within noncombustible enclosures equipped with fire suppression systems; and

“(iii) has multiple forms of egress off the vessel's bow and stern.

“(2) Before December 1, 2028, this section does not apply to any vessel in operation before January 1, 1968, and operating only within the Boundary Line.

“(b)(1) When a vessel is exempted from the fire-retardant standards of subsection (a)—

“(A) the owner or managing operator of the vessel shall—

“(i) notify in writing prospective passengers, prior to the sale of any ticket for boarding and to be affirmatively recognized by such passenger prior to purchase, and any crew member that the vessel does not comply with applicable fire safety standards due primarily to the wooden construction of passenger berthing areas; and

“(ii) display in clearly legible font prominently throughout the vessel, including in each state room the following: ‘THIS VESSEL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH SAFETY RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD.’;

“(B) the owner or managing operator of the vessel—

“(i) may not disclaim liability to a passenger or crew member for death, injury, or any other loss caused by fire due to the negligence of the owner or managing operator; and

“(ii) shall acquire prior to entering service, and maintain, liability insurance in an

amount to be prescribed by the Federal Maritime Commission;

“(C) the penalties provided in section 3504(c) of this title apply to a violation of this subsection;

“(D) the owner or managing operator of the vessel shall—

“(i) make annual structural alteration to not less than 10 percent of the areas of the vessel that are not constructed of fire retardant materials;

“(ii) prioritize alterations in galleys, engineering areas of the vessel, including all spaces and compartments containing, or adjacent to spaces and compartments containing, engines, boilers, main electrical distribution panels, fuel tanks, oil tanks, and generators;

“(iii) ensure, to the satisfaction of the Coast Guard, that the combustible fire-load has been reduced pursuant to clause (i) during each annual inspection for certification; and

“(iv) provide advance notice to the Coast Guard regarding the structural alterations made pursuant to clause (i) and comply with any noncombustible material requirements prescribed by the Coast Guard;

“(E) the Coast Guard, in making the determination required in subparagraph (D)(iii), shall consider, to the extent practicable, the goal of preservation of the historic integrity of the vessel in areas carrying or accessible to passengers or generally visible to the public;

“(F) the owner or managing operator of the vessel shall annually notify all ports of call and State emergency management offices of jurisdiction that the vessel does not comply with applicable fire safety standards due primarily to the wooden construction of passenger berthing areas;

“(G) the crews manning such vessel shall receive specialized training, above minimum standards, in regards to shipboard firefighting that is specialized for exempted vessels and approved by the Coast Guard; and

“(H) the owner or managing operator of the vessel shall, to the extent practicable, take all steps to retain previously trained crew knowledgeable of such vessel or to hire crew trained in operations aboard exempted vessels.

“(2) The Secretary shall conduct an annual audit and inspection of any vessel exempted from the fire-retardant standards of subsection (a).

“(c) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section. Such regulations shall include the manner in which prospective passengers are to be notified.

“(d) In addition to other penalties permitted by law, the Secretary is authorized to immediately withdraw a certificate of inspection for a passenger vessel that does not comply with any requirement under this section.”.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 24, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. JOHNSON. 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.

NOMINATION OF ELAINE DUKE

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Elaine Duke's nomination to be the seventh Deputy Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary serves as the chief operating officer of the Federal Government's third largest agency. The Deputy Secretary manages 240,000 men and women responsible for securing our borders and aviation system, enforcing immigration laws, defending cyberspace, preparing for disasters, assisting in counterterrorism efforts, and preventing terrorist attacks. In short, the Deputy Secretary is critically important to our homeland security.

On March 15, Ms. Duke was approved by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs by a voice vote. She has overwhelming bipartisan support.

I want to remind everyone of Ms. Duke's qualifications and, particularly, of her dedication to public service through both Republican and Democratic administrations. Ms. Duke is no stranger to this body. In 2008, she was confirmed by a voice vote to be the Department's Under Secretary for Management. As a testament to her character and dedication, she was asked by President Obama to stay on when he came into office. She served in the Obama administration for a year and a half before retiring from Federal service. In total, Ms. Duke has been a public servant for 28 years.

It is also noteworthy that Ms. Duke has been endorsed by at least the last five Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretaries, from both Democratic and Republican administrations. This is what they had to say about her:

For this job, the Nation needs someone with impeccable integrity, strong management and leadership skills and experience in protecting the safety, security, and resilience of our Nation. This person must be able to collaborate routinely . . . and ensure that every Congressionally-appropriated dollar is well and wisely spent.

Together, we respectfully attest that Elaine is extraordinarily well qualified to serve in the position for which she has now been nominated. Elaine knows DHS. She has been a senior leader at DHS under two presidents. She sets an unwavering standard of excellence for all who consider themselves committed to public service.

As chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I worked hard to move 30 of President Obama's nominees through

the committee on a bipartisan basis. I am pleased that we will be sending to DHS a career public servant whose experience and management skills will immediately assist Secretary Kelly and the mission of the Department to defend our homeland.

For the sake of our national and homeland security, I encourage my colleagues to support Ms. Duke's nomination to be the next Deputy Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like to use my remaining time to voice my strong support of Judge Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court. Let me stress that Judge Gorsuch won my vote when I first heard his definition of the role of a judge. Let me quote:

It is the role of a judge to apply, not alter, the work of the people's representatives. A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge, stretching for results he prefers rather than those the law demands.

That is the quintessential definition of the role of a judge. I met with Judge Gorsuch last Tuesday morning, and in that meeting he further reinforced my support. I asked Judge Gorsuch and voiced my concern that far too often we have seen judges evolve into super-legislators—judicial activists on the court. I asked the judge: How can I be assured that won't happen with you? To paraphrase his response to me, he said: Senator, I am going to follow the law; you will not like some of my decisions.

That was music to my ears. I realize there is a lot of bad law, and we have a judge who follows the law and applies it. Sometimes I am not going to like those decisions, but that is OK. That is the role of a judge.

He went on to say: I am not itching to be anything other than a good judge. He further said that legislative power cannot be delegated. Judge Gorsuch gave me a great deal of confidence that he is well qualified and that he deserves to fill some pretty big shoes—Justice Scalia's seat on the Supreme Court.

It is not just I who considers Judge Gorsuch well qualified. The ABA has given Judge Gorsuch their "well qualified" rating, which is the highest possible rating. Of course, Democratic Leader SCHUMER, in a Washington Post article from March 18, 2001, said: "The ABA'S evaluation is the gold standard by which judicial candidates are judged."

Vice President Biden, back in 1994, talking about the ABA rating system said:

I look at no other recommendation more closely. I value no recommendation more highly.

So the ABA says Judge Gorsuch is highly qualified, and I agree. Judge Gorsuch also has bipartisan support. I

am heartened by the fact that three of our Democratic colleagues in the Senate have already voiced their support for Judge Gorsuch. Of course, President Obama's Solicitor General, Neal Katyal, also said:

Judge Gorsuch is one of the most thoughtful and brilliant judges to have served our Nation over the last century. As a judge, he has always put aside his personal views to serve the rule of law. To boot, as those of us who have worked with him can attest, he is a wonderfully decent and humane person. I strongly support his nomination to the Supreme Court.

Again, that is a quote from President Obama's Solicitor General. My final comment has to do with the fact that this is the will of the American people. In my lifetime, I really cannot remember when a Presidential election elevated the issue of Supreme Court nominations to as high a level as it was elevated in this election. As a matter of fact, this election, point blank, elevated this particular vacancy.

So many of my Republican colleagues said exactly what I said: It is so close to the election; so why don't we let the American people decide not only the direction of this country but the composition of the Supreme Court. The American people spoke. The voters in my State of Wisconsin spoke. They voted for the 10 electoral votes in support of President Trump, and they voted to elect me to confirm President Trump's nominee to this Supreme Court vacancy.

I believe it is our duty to listen to the voices of the voters, the American people, the voters of Wisconsin. I am hoping that my junior Senator colleague from Wisconsin will listen to the voices of Wisconsin voters and vote at least for cloture. Maybe you don't have to vote for confirmation, but let's vote for cloture so this good, fine, decent, humane, high-integrity, well-qualified judge—Judge Neil Gorsuch—will be the next Supreme Court Justice of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

U.S.-CHINA RELATIONSHIP

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wisconsin for his remarks on Judge Gorsuch. I look forward to this debate this week as we work to confirm Judge Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court in a bipartisan fashion.

This evening, though, I come to the floor to talk about another very important issue that is happening in this country this week; that is, the U.S.-China relationship that will be highlighted this week as President Trump prepares to meet with President Xi for the first time later this week.

This summer presents a tremendous opportunity for President Trump to expressly state our hope for the relationship, while also elucidating the valid concerns and questions we have about

some of China's policies and its future directions.

I am also leading a bipartisan letter with Senator SCHATZ, and I hope my colleagues will join me in expressing our thoughts about this important relationship.

The U.S.-China relationship is the most consequential relationship in the world. We must get it right. Beijing must also get it right. So today I will address what I hope President Trump will focus on in his conversation with President Xi and also outline a legislative initiative that I am leading in Congress to strengthen our policies in the Asia-Pacific region.

I believe the most urgent challenge between our two nations is the coming nuclear crisis on the North Korean Peninsula. Last year alone, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and a staggering 24 ballistic missile launches. Kim Jong Un is committed to developing his nuclear missile program with one goal in mind—to have a reliable capability to deliver a nuclear warhead to Seoul, Tokyo, and, most importantly, to the continental United States.

President Trump has said that the United States will not allow that to happen. I am encouraged by the President's resolve. However, the road to stopping Pyongyang undoubtedly lies through Beijing. Beijing is the reason the regime acts so boldly and with relative few consequences.

China is the only country that holds the diplomatic and economic leverage necessary to put the real squeeze on the North Korean regime. So while the United States argues over strategic patience or measured resolve, China must go beyond mere articulation of concern and lay out a transparent path forward on how they will work to denuclearize North Korea.

For our part, President Trump must lay out a simple calculus for President Xi: The United States will deploy every economic, diplomatic, and, if necessary, military tool at our disposal to deter Pyongyang and to protect our allies. China has a responsibility globally to do the same. As part of our toolbox, the administration should tell China it will now significantly ramp up the sanctions track. Last Congress, I led the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act, which passed the Senate by a vote of 96 to 0.

This legislation was the first stand-alone legislation in Congress regarding North Korea to impose mandatory sanctions on the regime's proliferation activities, human rights violations, and malicious cyber behavior. The administration must fully enforce this legislation, including imposing secondary sanctions on any Chinese entities that are aiding Pyongyang.

In addition, China must faithfully implement all United Nations Security Council resolutions with regard to North Korea, particularly resolutions 2270 and 2321, negotiated last year, which require China to drastically re-

duce coal imports from North Korea. China's record in this has been lackluster so far. China should stop being complicit in the labor abuses of Pyongyang and shut off avenues of cyber attack, as well, that are being perpetrated by North Korea through Chinese channels.

Two weeks ago, China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, called on the United States and South Korea to halt their annual joint military exercises in exchange for North Korea's suspending its missile and nuclear activities, a deal that the Trump administration rightfully rejected. We should let Beijing know that the United States will not negotiate with Pyongyang at the expense of the security of our allies.

Moreover, before any talks, we must demand that Pyongyang first meet the denuclearization commitments it had already agreed to and subsequently chose to discard. President Trump should unequivocally condemn the economic pressure exerted by Beijing on Seoul over the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, on South Korean territory. THAAD is a defensive system that in no way threatens China, and Beijing knows this.

Most importantly, President Trump should indicate to President Xi that a denuclearized Korean Peninsula is in both nation's interests. But to achieve this goal, Beijing must be made to choose whether it wants to work with the United States as a responsible leader to stop the madman in Pyongyang or bear and acknowledge the consequences of keeping him in power.

Another looming crisis in U.S.-China relations is the escalation of tension in the East and South China Seas. China's recent destabilizing activities and actions in the East China Sea and the South China Sea are contrary to international law, pose an increased risk of future conflict, and necessitate a strong U.S. and regional response.

Their actions seem at odds with their words. China has declared an illegitimate air defense identification zone in the East China Sea, has dramatically expanded its land reclamation activities in the South China Sea, and has clearly added a military element to it. Since 2013, according to the Department of Defense, China has reclaimed over 3,200 acres of artificial features in the South China Sea.

On July 12, 2016, an international tribunal in the Hague ruled that China violated the sovereignty of the Philippines with regard to maritime disputes between the two nations. Since 2015, China has also built facilities with potential military uses on the artificial islands, including three airstrips—two more than 10,000-foot long, and one nearly 9,000-foot long—hangers that can shelter jet fighters, harbors, anti-aircraft batteries, radars, and structures that could house surface-to-air missiles.

This last week, the Center for Strategic and International Studies Asia

Maritime Transparency Initiative reported that major construction of military dual-use infrastructure on the "Big 3"—Subi, Mischief, and Fierly Cross Reefs—is wrapping up, with naval, air, radar, and defensive facilities largely complete.

Beijing can now deploy military assets, according to AMTI, including combat aircraft and mobile missile launchers to the Spratly Islands at any time.

The United States must have consistent and assertive diplomatic engagement with China to reinforce that these rogue activities fall outside of accepted international norms. The U.S. defense posture in this region should remain exactly what Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter said at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on May 30, 2015. I quote Secretary Carter:

The United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, as U.S. forces do all over the world. America, alongside its allies and partners in the regional architecture, will not be deterred from exercising these rights—the rights of all nations.

A consistent, deliberate, and assertive policy to do just that is imperative for the United States. During the upcoming summit, I hope that President Trump can set an agenda for positive economic engagement with China and recognize that this is a two-way street. As the top two economies in the world, our nations are inextricably linked, and we must continue to build a trade partnership that benefits the United States, our companies, and U.S. exporters. However, this engagement also means ensuring that China plays fair.

First and foremost, China must stop its state-sponsored and state-endorsed theft of foreign intellectual property. According to a report by the Intellectual Property Commission, chaired by ADM Dennis Blair, the former U.S. Commander of the Pacific Command, and John Huntsman, the former Ambassador to China, the theft of U.S. intellectual property is estimated at over \$300 billion annually, and China accounts for about 50 to 80 percent of that amount.

China must understand that this behavior with regard to the massive and well documented theft of foreign intellectual property is unacceptable and antithetical to international norms. China also needs significant improvement to its legal system and to further open its economy to foreign and private investment.

China must understand that new regulations that seek to discriminate against American companies, anti-market policies that favor state-owned enterprises, lack of transparency, and other policies that create an uneven playing field for the United States and our enterprises in China are not acceptable, and that those protectionist behaviors will only further isolate China or hurt their global competitiveness, if they are adopted globally, as they seek to engage further in the world's economy.

While many American firms still look to China as a top priority to grow and succeed in the global marketplace, without tangible economic and legal reforms within China, I fear that these opportunities will be more limited in the future and seriously jeopardize the bilateral commercial relations between our two nations. But if Beijing changes course, the upside of these reforms for China and the United States can be enormous.

A pillar of any nation that seeks a prosperous future and a future with a strong relationship with the United States must be international freedoms. As President Kennedy once stated: "The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened."

President Trump should heed President Kennedy's wise words and raise China's deplorable human rights record with President Xi. Chinese authorities are intensifying human rights abuses and cracking down on civil society. According to the State Department's 2015 Human Rights Report on China: "Repression and coercion markedly increased during the year against organizations and individuals involved in civil and political rights advocacy and public interest and ethnic minority issues."

According to the State Department's 2015 International Religious Freedom Report on China: "Over this past year, there continued to be reports that the government physically abused, detained, arrested, tortured, sentenced to prison, or harassed adherents of both registered and unregistered religious groups for activities related to their beliefs and practices."

We simply cannot and will not accept this type of behavior from a nation that wants to be thought of as a genuine global partner of the United States. I believe that China's rise can only be peaceful and balanced with a vigorous U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific region that is able to check Beijing's worst impulses.

Last May, while attending the Shangri-La Dialogue, I heard a tremendous amount of concern from the region's top leaders about U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific region and our commitment to remaining engaged in this critical part of the world. The Trump administration is inheriting a flawed Asia rebalance policy from the previous administration, which was right in rhetoric but ultimately came up short in meaningful action. The new administration and the new Congress ushers in a new era of opportunities with regard to U.S. policy toward the Asia Pacific.

But despite the political changes in Washington, U.S. policy imperatives will remain the same. The Asia-Pacific region has been and will be crucial and critical to U.S. economic and national security interests for generations to come. By 2050, experts estimate that Asia will account for over half of the global population and half of the world's gross domestic product.

We cannot ignore the fundamental fact that this region is critical for the U.S. economy to grow and to create jobs through export opportunities. Last week, I held a committee hearing with Ambassador Bob Gallucci, former Ambassador to South Korea, and Congressman Randy Forbes, from Virginia, who was the chairman of some key committees as they dealt with Asia and our naval forces.

In Congressman Forbes' testimony, he also expressed the importance of this region, the Asia Pacific, in these terms: In the coming decades, this is the region where the largest armies in the world will camp. This is the region where the most powerful navies in the world will gather. This is the region where over one-half of the world's commerce will take place and two-thirds will travel. This is the region where a maritime superhighway—transporting good or bad things—linking the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, Australia, Northeast Asia, and the United States begins. This is the region where five of America's seven defense treaties are located. This is the region where two superpowers will compete to determine which world order will prevail. This is the region where the seeds of conflict that could most engulf the world will probably be planted.

This is why I am pursuing legislation called the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, ARIA, a new approach that will put American interests first by reassuring our allies, deterring our adversaries, and securing U.S. leadership in the region for future generations.

The ARIA will pursue three broad goals.

First, it will strengthen U.S. security commitments to our allies and build partner capacity in the Asia Pacific to deter aggression, project power, and combat terrorism. To do so, the ARIA legislation will authorize funds to bolster U.S. military presence in the region, grow partner nation maritime capabilities to deter aggression in their territorial waters, and build new counterterrorism partner programs in Southeast Asia to combat the growing presence of ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

ARIA will also enshrine a policy of regularly enforcing U.S. freedom of navigation and overflight rights in the East and South China Seas.

We will reaffirm our longstanding treaty alliances with Australia, South Korea, and Japan, and call for building new regional security partnerships. We will unequivocally back our ally Taiwan, including authorizing new arms sales and providing for enhanced diplomatic contacts with Taipei.

Second, ARIA will promote diplomatic engagement and securing U.S. market access in the Asia Pacific region as essential elements for the future growth of the U.S. economy and success of American businesses. To do so, ARIA will also require that the Trump administration find new and innovative ways to economically engage

the region. We will require the U.S. Government to enhance our trade facilitation efforts and increase opportunities for U.S. businesses to find new export markets in the Asia Pacific. U.S.-made exports to Asia will mean more good-paying American jobs at home, which is a great situation for this country.

Third, it will enshrine promotion of democracy, human rights, and transparency as key U.S. policy objectives in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in Southeast Asia. From Manila to Rangoon, we should advocate for principled policies that emphasize accountability and transparency as indispensable elements of building any security or economic partnerships with the United States.

To inform this initiative, I have met with numerous key stakeholders in Congress and the administration. I am also holding a series of hearings in my subcommittee, the first of which took place last week.

I look forward to working with the Congress and all of our colleagues as we work to advance this initiative. I welcome the input of my colleagues as well.

There is no doubt that the rise of China over the last 30-plus years has been remarkable. China has lifted 500 million people from poverty since Premier Deng Xiaoping began his economic reforms in 1979, and it is now the second largest economy in the world. In that time, our relationship with China has emerged as perhaps the world's most important bilateral relationship, both from an economic and security perspective.

I believe that a mature, productive, and peaceful relationship with Beijing is in the national security and economic interests of the United States. For both nations, the importance of this relationship can make a significant difference for the world.

While the United States can and should seek to engage China, we must do so with a clear vision of what we want from Beijing, not just over the next 4 years but also over the next 40 years. So it is my sincere hope that President Trump leads with this sense of strategy and purpose when he meets President Xi later this week.

I know my colleague from Ohio has joined us, so I again want to express my appreciation to my colleague from Ohio for his leadership on a number of issues, including the opiate epidemic that has struck so many of our communities and States. It is so terrifying.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Colorado. He does chair a subcommittee that I am a part of. We had a great hearing last week, talking about China and the South China Sea issues, as he mentioned. We did talk about North Korea and the need for this summit between President Xi and President Trump to

include a discussion of how China could be more constructive, including the possibility of additional sanctions on North Korea to try to get some sort of pressure on the North Koreans to do the right thing and back off their nuclear program.

We also talked about trade. To level the playing field, we need trade, particularly allowing U.S. companies to have the ability to do what Chinese companies can do here in this country. And my colleague talked a little about that this evening.

I will say—because he mentioned the issue of opioids—there is another topic that I hope President Trump will raise with President Xi, and that is this issue of synthetic heroin being produced in China, which actually comes into our communities. In Denver, CO, or in Columbus, OH, we have through the mail system these poisons coming in, synthetic heroin coming through the mail from China.

We are told by law enforcement officials that most of these laboratories are in China. These are evil scientists in China who are making this incredibly potent, dangerous drug. It is 30 to 50 times more powerful than heroin. Three flakes of it can kill you. They are putting it into packages and sending it into our communities through the mail.

It is a topic that I hope comes up—in addition to the very important ones that my colleague has raised and we talked about in the hearing last week—which is: How do you get China to actually crack down on these laboratories? And how do you get them to schedule these drugs so that they are illegal in China, to ensure the inputs into the laboratories and the final drug itself?

By the way, the Chinese should have a strong interest in this because, I will guarantee you, there are people in China who are also becoming addicted to opioids because of this inexpensive, incredibly dangerous synthetic heroin that is being promoted by these Chinese scientists.

My hope is that this will be a successful summit and among the very important issues raised is this opioid issue, which is so important to our communities.

THE “DELTA QUEEN”

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I also wanted to talk briefly, if I could, about the legislation we just passed, S. 89. It has to do with the *Delta Queen*. The *Delta Queen* is a wooden ship that is very important to my community of Cincinnati. It is part of our Queen City heritage.

The boat was actually in Cincinnati during my childhood. From 1946 until 1985, it called Cincinnati home. It is a beautiful paddle wheeler, and people love to get on it and go down the Mississippi River.

It is no longer docked in Cincinnati, which is why the folks in Missouri were

interested in this legislation tonight too. We just had a big vote, over 80 votes in favor of simply saying, for the first time since 2008: Let's allow people to spend the night on this boat and go overnight on this boat, despite the fact that there is legislation called the 1966 Safety at Sea law, which prohibits wooden boats of a certain size from carrying overnight passengers. Let's make an exception here because the *Delta Queen* is willing to undergo the kind of renovations that are necessary to make it safe. It also requires new safety requirements for the *Delta Queen* going forward.

So I really appreciate the fact this vote was taken tonight. It is about a treasured part of our history. It is also about the economy because it will produce tourism and economic advancements all along the river everywhere the river stops, including in my hometown of Cincinnati. We are going to welcome the *Delta Queen* back if this legislation can be enacted into law.

It is now going over to the House. It is in committee there. We hope that the House will do as the Senate did tonight and pass this legislation.

This is my button. It says “Save the Delta Queen,” which I am not going to wear on the floor of the Senate because of the rules. It doesn't mean I don't care.

I thank my colleagues tonight for helping us to be able to get this legislation through.

NOMINATION OF ELAINE DUKE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to talk briefly about a nomination that is coming before us this week. This is for Elaine Duke to be the Deputy Homeland Security Secretary.

This is an incredibly important job. Some of you remember the Homeland Security Department was made up of about 23 different departments and agencies coming together. It is a huge management challenge. The key job of the Deputy Secretary is to try to manage all of that.

We are very fortunate that Elaine Duke is willing to step forward and take on this responsibility. My hope is that we will have a bipartisan vote here on the floor of the Senate for her confirmation and that we do it quickly this week because they need her there.

She came before our Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs last month. We had a very productive hearing. I had the honor of introducing her to the committee because she has Ohio roots. We are very proud of those Ohio roots.

She has had a long, distinguished career all across the country in the Federal Government, but she still calls Ohio home, and much of her family continues to reside in Ohio. Her dad, Frank Costanzo, is a first-generation American who still lives in Cleveland, OH. I have also known her uncle, Dominick Costanzo, for over 25 years. He is a friend and a neighbor. Boy, he

is very proud of his niece, as is her whole family.

This family has instilled in her a midwestern work ethic that you see in the great work she has done for the Federal Government over the past 28 years. She has worked as a senior member of various administrations. We are really fortunate that she is willing to now continue to serve.

She started her career as a GS-7 contract specialist for the U.S. Air Force. Over the next 28 years, she assumed bigger and bigger responsibilities in the Air Force, the Navy, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Smithsonian, and finally, the Department of Homeland Security.

In 2008, she was confirmed unanimously by this Senate to serve as the Under Secretary for Management at DHS. In this latest role, she, of course, was a key member of the DHS leadership team for both Secretary Chertoff and Secretary Napolitano, and they strongly support her.

She has earned a reputation for being an expert on issues of contracting, on acquisitions, on procurement, on property management, on organizational change, and on human resources. All of these, as I said earlier, are key issues right now at the Department of Homeland Security, so she will help it to be managed better, which will protect all of us.

Serving in these administrations—both Republican and Democrat—she did earn the respect of folks from both sides of the aisle. I find it interesting that all five previously confirmed DHS Deputy Secretaries have unanimously and strongly recommended her confirmation—all five of the previously confirmed ones. They said in their letter:

Elaine is extraordinarily well-qualified to serve in the position for which she has now been nominated. . . . Elaine knows DHS. She has been a senior leader at DHS under two presidents. She sets an unwavering standard of excellence for all who consider themselves committed to public service.

I look forward to having this vote. I hope we will have resounding support on a bipartisan basis for the nomination.

Secretary Kelly is doing a good job. General Kelly has an incredibly distinguished career. We are fortunate that he has stepped up as Secretary also. He needs her. He needs his deputy in place to help him run the Department, and the men and women serving in DHS today need her on the job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MAIN STREET FAIRNESS ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I wish to speak in support of the Main Street Fairness Act, which will help to create tax parity for passthrough companies, the significant majority of which are small businesses. I was very pleased to be joined by my friend and colleague from Florida, Senator NELSON, in introducing this bipartisan bill.

Small businesses are our Nation's job creators. According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses employ more than half of all workers and have generated two-out-of-three net new jobs since the 1970s.

Small businesses also make an outsized contribution to our Nation's economy, generating half of our Nation's GDP, 54 percent of all U.S. sales, 41 percent of private sector payroll, and one-third of our Nation's export value. Their success is critical to the health of our economy.

Unfortunately, our Nation's small businesses face a higher tax burden that affects their ability to compete with large firms in the marketplace. In fact, a recent survey by the National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB, found that concerns about Federal taxes on business income ranked third on the list of the top 10 problems facing small businesses.

Nearly all of our Nation's small businesses are organized as passthroughs, meaning that their profits are passed on to their owners and reported on individual income tax returns. This means that small business income is subject to taxation at individual rates, which can be as high as 39.6 percent at the Federal level and can exceed 50 percent in some States. If we want our small businesses to grow and create jobs, we must reduce these high marginal rates.

I believe Congress should undertake comprehensive tax reform to make our Tax Code simpler, fairer, and more pro-growth. As we do so, we must make sure American businesses of every size are given the opportunity to compete. Aligning the tax rate for passthroughs with our corporate tax rate will ensure small businesses are not left behind. That is why Senator NELSON and I introduced the Main Street Fairness Act, which will link the tax rates of passthrough entities and large corporations, to ensure that small businesses never pay a higher tax rate than large companies.

This simple change will help make sure that small businesses remain healthy and strong, so they can continue to serve as our Nation's job creators, as they have for so many years. I would note that the Main Street Fairness Act has been endorsed by the NFIB, the leading voice for America's small businesses, and I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting it.

I ask unanimous consent to have a letter of endorsement from the NFIB printed in the RECORD.

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

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
INDEPENDENT BUSINESS,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2017.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senate, Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BILL NELSON,
U.S. Senate, Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS COLLINS AND NELSON: On behalf of the National Federation of Inde-

pendent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, we write in strong support of S. 707—The Main Street Fairness Act. This legislation would reduce taxes on pass-through businesses and make them more competitive, and ensure that all businesses, large and small alike, compete on a level playing field going forward.

The vast majority of small businesses are organized as pass-through entities, which pay tax on business income at the individual tax rates, which are currently as high as 39.6 percent, and not at the corporate tax rate, which is currently as high as 35 percent. Such entities include any company organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or S-Corporation. The Main Street Fairness Act would ensure that those pass-through businesses never pay a higher tax rate than businesses organized as C-Corporations, and immediately reduce the tax rate on pass-through businesses currently paying more than 35 percent.

Small businesses are the major source of growth and job creation in our economy. In fact, according to the Small Business Administration (SBA), small businesses account for 64 percent of the net new private sector jobs created in America and make up 99.7 percent of U.S. employer firms. The high tax burden currently facing small businesses holds back investments, growth, hiring, and entrepreneurship. One in five small businesses struggles with cash-flow, which is needed to not only run their businesses but also support their families. Specifically, after-tax income is an especially important source of capital for small businesses. High tax rates mean less money that small business owners have to reinvest back into their business.

Because of this, small businesses strongly support tax reform that simplifies the tax code, lowers tax rates on businesses, and promotes economic growth. The Main Street Fairness Act will help ensure that all businesses, regardless of how they organize, enjoy the benefits of any reduction in tax rates that would be included in tax reform. We appreciate your continued leadership on this key issue and look forward to working with you as Congress considers tax reform.

Sincerely,

JUANITA D. DUGGAN,
President & CEO.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, today I want to join my friend SUSAN COLLINS and talk about why I support the Main Street Fairness Act. I am glad to partner on this bill with the Senator from Maine.

The bill does one simple thing: It ensures small businesses don't have to pay higher taxes than the largest corporations. This is the type of common sense that we need more of in Washington.

There are 2.3 million small businesses in Florida, employing around 43.2 percent of the State's workforce. They are the primary engine of job growth in the country, and are a proven means for economic mobility.

Under most circumstances, small businesses are subject to the same rules as large corporations but are treated differently under the Tax Code. They already have a hard enough time competing with large multinational corporations, which can hire an endless stream of high-priced tax lawyers to shift their income abroad and avoid U.S. taxes.

We should be doing all we can to put small businesses on a more level play-

ing field. Part of that starts with this bill, but it doesn't end here. We need to do comprehensive tax reform.

This bill should be part of that conversation, as one way we could help small businesses. It is not the only way, and I am certainly open to other ideas, but we need to have a serious talk about how we are going to freshen up the Tax Code and help the economy grow.

I know a lot of my colleagues have different ideas about what tax reform should look like, but I think we should all be able to agree that it needs to be real reform, not just a temporary tax cut. It needs to support a technology-driven economy and help us transition to a greener, fairer economy—with a lot less disparity.

Tax reform should also generate enough added revenue to pay for the infrastructure we desperately need. That includes the crumbling roads and bridges that threaten the safety of millions of Americans and are a tax on small businesses. We also need to invest in our water infrastructure, energy infrastructure, ports, railways, public schools, and affordable housing infrastructure.

At the same time, tax reform needs to be deficit neutral. You might ask, how are we going to pay for all this? Well, we can start by getting rid of outdated special interest tax breaks that are no longer needed or don't make sense in the 21st century.

We can also eliminate tax loopholes that allow companies to shift profits abroad and lead to corporate inversions.

This bill, the Main Street Fairness Act, is a good start, but it shouldn't end here. We need to have a serious, deliberative effort to develop a bipartisan tax reform package.

TRIBUTE TO WAYNE KINNEY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the retirement of my friend Wayne Kinney.

Wayne is retiring as my central Oregon field representative after more than two decades of outstanding service to our State—and more specifically serving at one point or another the residents of Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wheeler, and Wasco Counties.

Suffice to say, Wayne knows everyone, and most of those folks could spend hours recounting their own tales of this quintessential public servant.

Simply put, he will be deeply missed.

But before Wayne takes his well-deserved retirement to his native New England—where he can be nearer to family and maintain closer supervision of his beloved Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots—I want to share my personal appreciation for this exemplary public servant, all-around good guy, and wonderfully avuncular curmudgeon.

Wayne can forever lay claim to a significant piece of Oregon history. He opened Oregon's first Senate field office east of the Cascades shortly after I first took office in 1996.

Wayne opened and ran my eastern Oregon office in La Grande before moving to Bend.

In his service to Oregonians, he has put more miles than anybody I know on Oregon roads, at all hours, in all kinds of weather, to towns where there often are more cows than people.

Wayne's fierce sense of loyalty and commitment to public service has driven him to cover all the ground he has over the years from Wasco to Wagontire, Ontario to Olene, Joseph to John Day, Bend to Burns, Madras to Mitchell, and all points in between.

That loyalty extends to the rural communities he serves and the Oregonians in those communities who might not otherwise have a voice.

Wayne always keeps the door open for cattlemen, farmers, and countless others who often feel the government is removed from their struggles.

It is Wayne's ability to reach out and make connections with all of those folks that played such a large part in ensuring "every nook and cranny" in Oregon gets a voice.

Wayne is not just a champion in general for rural Oregon communities. He has also proven to be an able advocate for creating opportunities for rural women that allows them to bring their voices into statewide discussions.

Let me tell a couple of anecdotes about Wayne to provide a glimpse into this wonderful character—and all that he has meant to Oregon.

For my colleagues who have not been to central and eastern Oregon, I would only note that the distances between towns can be great, but Wayne never let those long drives be a roadblock.

In fact, his goal was to be anywhere and everywhere. He achieved that goal by—I believe in his words—making sure that, if anybody was so much as dedicating a new soda machine, he would be there to put in the first dollar.

Just as great at times as the challenges of distance in his area are the weather challenges. Again, Wayne never let that be a roadblock.

I remember well flying into rural Condon, OR, for a townhall in the snow, and who should I see with the local police chief sweeping the runway of snow? Wayne.

It has been said by some that there is an unbridgeable urban-rural divide in Oregon. I know from more than 800 townhalls in every part of Oregon, that is untrue.

In fact, I have come to use the term "the Oregon way" to describe how it is in our State's DNA to put aside partisanship in favor of civil conversations to find the best solutions.

Among the many tributes in recent days in Oregon to my friend, I was struck by something I read about Wayne that captures how he "lived and breathed" the Oregon way.

On Wayne's Facebook page recently, a Republican posted this powerful praise: "Had lunch today with a good friend. Politically, Wayne and I are polar opposites. He is a Democrat, an officer with the Oregon Democratic Party and staff member with Senator Wyden, and I have served on the Executive Committee of the Oregon Republican Party, as well as County Central Committee Chairman. Over the years, we have had some great discussions, even disagreements about some very important issues, but we have handled our disagreements respectfully and remained friends. Wayne has announced his retirement and is also leaving our great state to move back east so he can be near family. The Oregon Democrats, and Senator Wyden are losing a tremendous asset, and a great leader of their Party."

Oregon truly is losing a tremendous asset, and so am I.

I will miss Wayne tremendously, but I take heart that his work will live on in the issues he has resolved for Oregon and the relationships he has deepened among Oregonians.

As Wayne begins his well-earned retirement, he has my eternal gratitude, and he has Oregon's.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO PRINCIPLES FOR REFORMING THE MILITARY SELECTIVE SERVICE PROCESS—PM 5

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith Principles for Reforming the Military Selective Service Process, in accordance with section 555 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328), which calls for the President to establish principles for reform of the military selective service process in support of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 3, 2017.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1161. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Wireline Competition Bureau, Fed-

eral Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Connect America Fund; Universal Service Reform—Mobility Fund" ((WC Docket No. 10-90, WT Docket No. 10-208) (FCC 17-11)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1162. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), FM Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations (Mullin, Texas)" ((MB Docket No. 16-362) (DA 17-237)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1163. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Functional Design, Qualification, and Inservice Testing Programs for Pumps, Valves, and Dynamic Restraints" (NUREG-0800, Section 3.9.6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1164. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Control Rod Drive Systems" (NUREG-0800, Section 3.9.4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1165. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Dynamic Testing and Analysis of Systems, Structures, and Components" (NUREG-0800, Section 3.9.2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1166. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Reactor Pressure Vessel Internals" (NUREG-0800, Section 3.9.5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1167. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Evaluation by the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation License Renewal Appendix A for 'BWRVIP-241: BWR Vessel and Internals Project, Probabilistic Fracture Mechanics Evaluation for the Boiling Water Reactor Nozzle-to-Vessel Shell Welds and Nozzle Blend Radii,' and 'BWRVIP-108NP: BWR Vessel and Internals Project, Technical Basis for the Reduction of Inspection Requirements for the Boiling Water Reactor Nozzle-to-Vessel Shell Weld and Nozzle Blend' Project No. 704" (BWRVIP-241, appendix A and BWRVIP-108NP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 29, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1168. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Corporation's fiscal year 2016 report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1169. A communication from the General Counsel, Government Accountability Office, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's fiscal year 2016 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1170. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Internal Control Weaknesses Found in Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1171. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "DCHD Should Improve Management of the Housing Production Trust Fund to Better Meet Affordable Housing Goals"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Rod J. Rosenstein, of Maryland, to be Deputy Attorney General.

Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. CRAPO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 801. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide compensatory time for employees in the private sector; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 802. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal in honor of Lawrence Eugene "Larry" Doby in recognition of his achievements and contributions to American major league athletics, civil rights, and the Armed Forces during World War II; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 803. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny tax deductions for corporate regulatory violations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 804. A bill to improve the provision of health care for women veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 805. A bill to impose a tax on certain trading transactions to invest in our families and communities, improve our infrastructure and our environment, strengthen our financial security, expand opportunity and reduce market volatility; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MURPHY, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 806. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act to ensure College for All; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 108. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to the United States-Egypt partnership; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 89

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 89, a bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to exempt old vessels that only operate within inland waterways from the fire-retardant materials requirement if the owners of such vessels make annual structural alterations to at least 10 percent of the areas of the vessels that are not constructed of fire-retardant materials and for other purposes.

S. 175

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 175, a bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to transfer certain funds to the Multiemployer Health Benefit Plan and the 1974 United Mine Workers of America Pension Plan, and for other purposes.

S. 178

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases.

S. 198

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 198, a bill to require continued and enhanced annual reporting to Congress in the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to

partner with European governments, the European Union, and civil society groups, to combat anti-Semitism, and for other purposes.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 339, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) were added as cosponsors of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 413

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 413, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA-PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies.

S. 430

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 430, a bill to provide for compliance enforcement regarding Russian violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and for other purposes.

S. 445

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 473

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Washington

(Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 473, a bill the amend title 38, United States Code, to make qualification requirements for entitlement to Post-9/11 Education Assistance more equitable, to improve support of veterans receiving such educational assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 544

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 544, a bill to amend Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes.

S. 583

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 583, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds to hire veterans as career law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 593

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 593, a bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to facilitate the establishment of additional or expanded public target ranges in certain States.

S. 616

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 616, a bill to amend section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 to include the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services as members of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States and to require the Committee to consider the security of the food and agriculture systems of the United States as a factor to be considered when determining to take action with respect to foreign investment, and for other purposes.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 623, a bill to enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality basic education in devel-

oping countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, and for other purposes.

S. 655

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 655, a bill to exempt certain 16- and 17-year-old individuals employed in logging operations from child labor laws.

S. 681

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to women veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 692

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 692, a bill to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance.

S. 733

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 733, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

S. 751

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 751, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 774

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 774, a bill to address the psychological, developmental, social, and emotional needs of children, youth, and families who have experienced trauma, and for other purposes.

S. 792

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 792, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish an H-2B temporary non-agricultural work visa program, and for other purposes.

S. 796

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend

the exclusion for employer-provided education assistance to employer payments of student loans.

S.J. RES. 11

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 11, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation".

S. RES. 54

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 54, a resolution expressing the unwavering commitment of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 803. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny tax deductions for corporate regulatory violations; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing, along with Senator GRASSLEY, the Government Settlement Transparency and Reform Act. This bill closes a loophole in the Tax Code that allows corporations to claim tax writeoffs for payments made at the direction of the government to settle investigations into illegal and abusive corporate behavior.

Corporations accused of illegal activity routinely settle out of court with government agencies because it allows all parties to avoid the time, expense, and uncertainty of going to trial. While there is nothing wrong with settlements that correct wrongful corporate practices and compensate for the resulting harm caused by a corporation, the Tax Code often permits offending companies to claim a business tax deduction for any portion of a settlement that is not paid directly to the government as a penalty or fine for a violation of the law. The Tax Code on this point is vague, and big businesses exploit this by characterizing settlement penalties as tax-deductible business expenses.

Illegal corporate behavior is not an ordinary business activity, and it shouldn't be subsidized by taxpayers. Yet, according to a 2015 study by U.S. Public Interest Research Group, PIRG, corporate settlements over a single 3-year period totaled nearly \$80 billion, and corporations could claim business deductions for at least \$48 billion of that amount. Moreover, there is no consistent, transparent way to track how these settlements can and will be treated by businesses for tax purposes.

The Reed-Grassley bill addresses these problems by amending the Tax

Code to require the government and the settling party to reach clear agreements on how settlement payments should be treated for tax purposes. It also clarifies which settlement payments are punitive and therefore non-deductible. It increases transparency by requiring the government to file a return at the time of settlement that accurately states the tax treatment of amounts to be paid by offending businesses. Last Congress, it was estimated that this legislation would raise \$218 million in revenue over a ten-year budget window.

When a major corporate scandal breaks national news, Rhode Islanders and all Americans deserve to know that Federal regulators are protecting their interests by handing down punishments that deter future illegal and abusive business practices. That deterrent effect is undermined if corporations can claim a deduction for any penalty and build the cost of breaking the law into their business models.

I want to thank Senator GRASSLEY for working with me again on this legislation and for being a champion for reform in this area. I urge our colleagues to join us by cosponsoring this legislation and seeking its passage.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 108—RE-AFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE UNITED STATES-EGYPT PARTNERSHIP

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 108

Whereas after almost four decades of close cooperation, the United States-Egypt partnership has been built on shared objectives and interests with enduring bipartisan support in Congress;

Whereas the Government and people of Egypt play a critical role in global and regional politics;

Whereas the United States-Egypt partnership is vital for the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Middle East;

Whereas Egypt has been an intellectual and cultural center of the Arab world, and continues to be an important country based on its geography, demography, and historic leadership role;

Whereas Egypt remains one of the top recipients of United States foreign assistance worldwide, having received \$77,000,000,000 in bilateral foreign aid from the United States, including \$1,300,000,000 per year in military aid;

Whereas Egypt's 1979 peace treaty with Israel remains one of the most significant diplomatic achievements for the promotion of Arab-Israeli peace;

Whereas for almost forty years, Egypt, Israel, and the United States have collaborated to counter terrorism, prevent illicit smuggling, and enhance regional stability;

Whereas the United States has welcomed Egypt's participation in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS;

Whereas Egypt and the United States held a Strategic Dialogue in Cairo, Egypt on August 2, 2015, based on the shared commitment to deepen the bilateral relationship;

Whereas Egypt can play an important role in facilitating negotiated settlements to end the conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, re-starting the Middle East Peace Process, and defeating ISIS;

Whereas the Egyptian people continue to be the victims of heinous terrorist attacks, including the December 11, 2016, ISIS bombing of the Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, which killed 28 people including women and children;

Whereas the Government of Egypt reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund in November 2016 to take important steps toward economic stabilization, such as liberalizing its foreign exchange system and reducing costly fuel subsidies;

Whereas President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, in a televised interview on September 16, 2016, said that he is very committed to preserving human rights in Egypt and that Egypt will not return to tyranny;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices notes, with respect to Egypt, that—

(1) “[t]he most significant human rights problems were excessive use of force by security forces, deficiencies in due process, and the suppression of civil liberties”;

(2) “[t]here were numerous reports that the government [of Egypt] or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings while making arrests or holding persons in custody”;

(3) “[c]onditions in the prisons and detention centers were harsh and potentially life-threatening due to overcrowding, physical abuse, inadequate medical care, poor infrastructure, and poor ventilation”;

(4) “[s]everal international and local human rights groups . . . reported a spike in enforced disappearances [in Egypt], alleging authorities increasingly relied on this tactic to intimidate critics”;

Whereas credible local organizations estimate that thousands of people are detained solely for political reasons in Egypt, including for peacefully protesting or calling for a change in government;

Whereas in March 2017, President el-Sisi pardoned 203 prisoners many of whom had been jailed for taking part in protests;

Whereas United States citizen Aya Hijazi, her husband Mohammed Hassanein, and other members of the Belady Foundation have been unjustly imprisoned in Egypt since May 2014;

Whereas the Parliament of Egypt's passage of legislation restricting the work of non-governmental organizations undermines Egypt's stated commitment to protecting constitutionally guaranteed rights and to furthering Egypt's democratic transition;

Whereas the media is regularly harassed by Egyptian authorities and Egypt was the world's third-highest jailer of journalists in 2016, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists;

Whereas respect for democracy, inclusive governance, human rights, and civil liberties have been core pillars of United States foreign policy since at least the 1970s;

Whereas Egypt will ensure its security, economic prosperity, and transition to democracy by protecting the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all Egyptians;

Whereas the last official visit to the United States by an Egyptian head of state was in August 2009;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) welcomes Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to the United States;

(2) expresses hope that President el-Sisi's visit will open a new chapter in United States-Egyptian relations as both sides pledge to work toward greater cooperation based on shared interests and values;

(3) acknowledges the central and historic importance of the United States-Egypt partnership in advancing the common interests of both countries;

(4) hopes that President el-Sisi will highlight in public statements the value of ties between the United States and Egypt;

(5) recognizes that Egypt faces legitimate security threats and expresses condolences for the loss of life suffered by the Egyptian people in attacks by violent extremist organizations;

(6) stands with the Egyptian people as they confront violent extremism and threats on land and sea borders;

(7) appreciates Egypt's regional role as a partner and mediator;

(8) recognizes the necessity for Egypt's leaders to take steps toward genuine political reform that prioritizes human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law;

(9) demands the immediate release of unjustly imprisoned American citizens, including Aya Hijazi, who has been detained in Egypt since May 2014 on unsubstantiated charges;

(10) demands an immediate end to the harassment and interference in the operations of independent civil society and media organizations in Egypt, including the closure of Case 173 and the revision of Egypt's non-governmental organization law in accordance with international best practices;

(11) encourages the United States and Egypt to increase cooperation—

(A) to combat terrorism in a manner consistent with international human rights law;

(B) to promote principles of good governance; and

(C) to ensure respect for the universal rights of the Egyptian people;

(12) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to support the Government of Egypt with assistance, training, and other resources as it combats terrorism, addresses security in the Sinai Peninsula, and enhances Egypt's border security and maritime security while recognizing the need to monitor security assistance to ensure accountability and due process of law;

(13) clarifies that any proposed restructuring of United States assistance to Egypt, which is subject to the approval of Congress, will take into account progress on meaningful political reform, human rights, and fundamental freedoms;

(14) congratulates the Egyptian government on their engagement with the International Monetary Fund and their difficult, but necessary, steps to stabilize the economy;

(15) supports Egypt's economic reform efforts;

(16) calls on the United States Government to develop a new strategy for joint efforts—

(A) to bolster trade between the United States and Egypt and investment in the Egyptian private sector;

(B) to combat corruption; and

(C) to promote higher education; and

(17) urges the President of the United States and the Secretary of State to engage the Egyptian Government on new ways to advance the bilateral relationship economically, militarily, diplomatically, and through cultural exchanges, while ensuring respect for the universal rights of the Egyptian people.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO
MEET

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I have one request for a committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on April 3, 2017, at 10 a.m., in SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 4,
2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 4; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume executive session to consider the nomination of Elaine Duke, with the time until 12 noon equally divided in the usual form; further, that at 12 noon, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Duke nomination with no intervening action or

debate; finally, that following the disposition of the Duke nomination, the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:02 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REMEMBERING DR. CHARLES
LEMAISTRE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Dr. Charles LeMaistre after he passed away this January at 92.

Charles was the president of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center until 1996 when he retired. He was a charismatic physician and educator who focused much of his career on cancer prevention. Charles emphasized the dangers of smoking and served on the first U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health. He was also the national president of the American Cancer Society. Ronald DePinho, the current president of MD Anderson, described Charles as "one of the giants of cancer medicine." Charles' legacy will live on and continue to save lives. His dedication to healthcare innovation will be greatly missed.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, we mourn the loss of Dr. Charles LeMaistre. He truly was a beloved Texan. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING THE BATANGAS AND SOUTHERN TAGALOG ASSOCIATION OF GUAM ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions and achievements of the Batangas and Southern Tagalog Association (BASTA) of Guam to the Guam community for the past forty years. The small organization was established on July 16, 1977 as the Batangas Association by Eddie Espina, Rey Gonzalves, Marcy Manipol, and Ronnie Saludo. Over the past forty years, the group has worked hard to fulfill its mission as a non-profit, civic club promoting friendship and understanding among the Batanguenos community and other residents of Guam.

The organization grew steadily over the years, and in 1984 the board opened its membership to embrace Filipinos in the club from surrounding provinces and soon became the Batangas and Southern Tagalog Association. BASTA membership is now open to a wider group of people from various islands in the Philippines including Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Aurora, Quezon, Palawan, Mindoro Occidental, Mindoro Oriental, Marinduque, and Romblon. Members of BASTA have chosen to make Guam their home and have positively contributed to the

growth of Guam as educators, nurses, entrepreneurs, skilled workers, engineers, and every other profession.

Over BASTA's forty years of service to Guam, the organization has contributed to many non-profit and charitable organizations. BASTA has given generously to causes such as the Guam Lytico-Bodig Association, American Red Cross, Catholic Social Services, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Alee Shelter, Guam Diabetes Association, American Cancer Society and many others. BASTA also contributes to many causes in the Philippines during times of need and natural disaster, and supporting education efforts through the building and maintenance of school facilities.

A unique feature of BASTA is the youth branch of the organization. The BASTA Youth are made up of the children and young relatives of its members and are active in carrying out the mission of the organization. The BASTA Youth have raised funds to support the club through song and dance productions, which later morphed into what is now BASTA's annual Christmas caroling fundraising. BASTA has become a very popular group during the holiday season, performing their lively carols at venues across Guam to support their mission.

I congratulate the Batangas and Southern Tagalog Association of Guam on the occasion of their 40th Anniversary of serving the people of Guam. I join the people of Guam in thanking them for their contributions to our island.

ERIN TORMEY, FARMER OF THE
YEAR AWARD

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special spirit that glides along the coast of San Mateo County throughout the year. Her name is Erin Tormey and she is being honored by the Half Moon Bay Chamber of Commerce as Farmer of the Year. For all the farmers who have been recognized, Erin Tormey is certainly an awardee who stands out. She is an exceptional leader, inspirational personality, and an outstanding businesswoman. She is also deeply admired by all who know her, and for good reason.

Erin is the founder of the Half Moon Bay Farmers Market and the Pacifica Farmers Market. Since 2002 in Half Moon Bay, and 2007 in Pacifica, Erin has orchestrated a nutritious public health extravaganza for coastal residents. Her market draws producers and shoppers from distant points to offer quality fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices to local residents and to visitors.

By county standards, Erin Tormey is relatively new to agriculture, starting the Irish Ridge Ranch in 1996. She raises Heritage Layer hens and operates an apple orchard that grows Rare Pioneer and Heritage Apples.

Once established, Erin branched out to establish the farmers market and became active in community improvement through her advocacy for healthy farm products.

She recognized that many families did not know about the benefits of fresh produce and vegetables. Working with the State of California, her market was selected to participate as a pilot site for MARKET WATCH, a program to encourage low income families and seniors to shop at farmers markets. The market promotes nutrition education and was a statewide leader in participating in the WIC program. Low income families of our coastal communities count on Erin and her fellow farmers to balance their diets and to help them maintain healthy eating habits.

Erin's dedication to the coastsides extends beyond farming to education and to public engagement. She was the inaugural executive director of the Cabrillo Education Foundation. Imagine rising before the sun, harvesting eggs for the day, getting your children ready for school, and then raising your hand to raise money for their education. I note that she doesn't rise with the sun. That would be too late. Erin Tormey challenges the sun to rise and to keep up with her while she powers through her day.

In addition to her other accomplishments, Erin is a founding Director of the HEAL Project, an award-winning curriculum that teaches math and science through lessons drawn from agriculture. She is also a founding member of the San Mateo Food Systems Alliance. Among its many purposes, the group encourages gardens in schools to teach students about nutrition, cooperates with our local food bank, and encourages non-farmers to educate themselves about farming and its challenges.

California's agricultural leadership has recognized Erin's talents. She was appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to a Direct Marketing Ad-hoc Committee, as an alternate, to help rework legislation governing certified Farmers Markets. She was also appointed to a 3-year term on the steering committee of the California Alliance of Certified Farmers Markets.

Finally, I know Erin well because we co-operate annually in producing one of the high points of the year for 700 seniors in San Mateo county and San Francisco: My annual Seniors on the Move conference held in San Mateo includes a segment to teach attendees about fresh food preparation and eating well to enhance their health and well-being. Erin's cheerful face and enthusiastic promotion of fresh fruits and vegetables are the highlight of this day. Seniors run or walk as swiftly as possible to where the free bags of fresh fruit and vegetables are dispensed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members of the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Erin Tormey on the occasion of her selection as Farmer of the Year. Her hens know her as the careful steward of their production but we know Erin as the thoughtful steward of our health and community spirit. May both her

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

flock and we, her friends, neighbors and customers, thrive in the years ahead.

HONORING MICHAEL MAYFIELD

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a public servant, Michael Mayfield. Mr. Mayfield has shown what can be done through tenacity, dedication and a desire to serve the City of Vicksburg.

Mr. Mayfield is a graduate of the Vicksburg Public School System. He is also a graduate of Hinds Community College where he graduated with high honors in Basic Electronic and Electricity. He is also certified with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Michael Mayfield was elected to the North Ward Alderman position in July 2005. Prior to this election, he served 10 years on the Warren County Board of Supervisors as Supervisor of District 2. The North Ward Alderman represents the citizens of the northern district of Vicksburg.

Mr. Mayfield is a member and deacon at the Mt. Zion No. 4 Baptist Church. He is a member of the Warren County Children Shelter, the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District and a member of the Steering Community for Warren Yazoo Mental Health.

Mr. Mayfield is the father of three children and has two grandchildren. He has been married to the former Bertha McCalpin for thirty-three years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Alderman Michael Mayfield for his services to the City of Vicksburg and Warren County.

ASHLEY MEDINA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ashley Medina for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Ashley Medina is a 6th grader at Pinnacle Charter School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ashley Medina is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ashley Medina for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING ALEXANDRIA'S 67 VIETNAM WAR FALLEN HEROES ON THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA'S WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor the 67 men from Alexandria who made the ultimate sacrifice in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War for our freedoms and liberties. Those men include forty-four Soldiers, fifteen Marines, five U.S. Air Force pilots and three Sailors. Their combat duty in Southeast Asia extended over an eleven-year period from May 1962 to June 1973. Their heroism and meritorious service resulted in the award of: one Medal of Honor; one Navy Cross; five Silver Stars; five Distinguished Flying Crosses; twenty-seven Bronze Star Medals; one Prisoner of War Medal; one Soldier's Medal; fifty-one Purple Heart Medals; and forty-four Air Medals. Six families await the return of the remains of those who are still missing in action in a far-off land.

All the families mourn the loss of their loved ones. Their fellow citizens salute these men for their service and honor their sacrifices.

The names of all 67 men are on the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial located in Alexandria, VA.

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO LOIS WILLIAMS

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Lois Williams, of Burbank, California, who passed away on March 21, 2017.

Lois Tuttle was born on February 25, 1921 in Kansas City, Missouri where she was raised with her brother Karl. In 1947, Lois married Bill Williams and they moved to California in 1951, settling in the Burbank area of southern California.

With a passion for social justice, Lois was an ardent advocate for the rights of workers to organize and join in the democratic political process. A staunch defender of the union movement, she assisted in writing curriculum for teaching union history in schools, worked on labor law negotiations, and was a founding member of Citizens for Utility Rate Balance. Ms. Williams was Executive Secretary and Treasurer of the Council of the Engineers and Scientists Organization and an officer at the Engineers and Scientists Guild-Lockheed Section, where she helped advance many progressive programs, and was an early proponent of portable pensions, health care for all, conversion policy in the defense industry and child care in the workplace.

Affiliated with the Democratic Party since she first voted for Harry Truman, Lois was active in many democratic organizations and clubs where she held leadership positions. She served as President of the Verdugo Hills Democratic Club, President of the MidValley

Democratic Club, Regional Vice President and Chair of the Endorsements Committee of the California Democratic Council, a Steering Committee member of the Stonewall Democratic Club, Secretary and Treasurer of the 43rd Assembly District Committee, and a member of Democrats for Neighborhood Action. In addition, Lois was a long-serving member of the California Democratic Party State Central Committee and the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee, and was a founding member of the 27th Congressional District Democratic Club. In 2012, Lois was honored with the Action Democrats of the San Fernando Valley's Mimi and Lou Robins Distinguished Achievement Award.

Preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, Bill Williams, Lois is survived by her daughter, Lyn Shaw and son-in-law, Jim Hilfenhaus.

Lois was an irreplaceable part of the local community, and she will be greatly missed. I ask all members to join me in remembering Lois Williams.

IN HONOR OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE ALBERT H. MALDONADO

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Monterey County Superior Court Judge, Albert H. Maldonado for his 22 years of service in Monterey County courts.

In 1969, Judge Maldonado received his bachelor's degree from the University of Redlands. In 1974, he earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of California, Boalt Hall School of Law in Berkeley. Prior to finishing law school, Judge Maldonado served the U.S. Army from 1970–1971 where he received a number of awards, including: the Bronze Star, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

In 1995, Judge Maldonado was appointed to the bench in the Municipal Court at the Monterey Judicial District, becoming the second Mexican-American to be appointed since 1836. In 2000, Judge Maldonado became a Superior Court Judge for the state of California. During his twenty-two years of service, Judge Maldonado worked to solve a range of social and legal issues on behalf of Monterey County, including drug treatment, criminal and civil mental health, and criminal matters.

Judge Maldonado has been an exemplary figure for social change through the framework of public and legal service. A proud Mexican-American, Judge Maldonado is the first person of Mexican descent to be appointed to the bench by a California governor in 150 years. My congressional district is a heavily Mexican populated district, and Judge Maldonado's mark in Monterey County's legal field history will undoubtedly continue to be a seed of inspiration for generations to come.

As someone who has dedicated their career to public service, it is an honor to recognize Judge Albert Maldonado for his many years in the legal field and his unending efforts to create a positive impact for the lives in Monterey County. On behalf of California's District 20, I would like to thank Judge Maldonado for the many years of service and positive involvement in our community, and wish him a wonderful retirement. There is no doubt that Judge

Maldonado's commitment to social justice inside and outside the courtroom will continue to be an inspiration to us all.

BETSABE ABIGAIL TORRES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Betsabe Abigail Torres for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Betsabe Abigail Torres is a student at Vantage Point High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Betsabe Abigail Torres is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Betsabe Abigail Torres for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. GEORGE D. VERMEIRE

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. George D. Vermeire for his exemplary medical care in Pennsylvania. In recognition of his dedication and involvement in the osteopathic medical profession, Dr. Vermeire was named the 106th President of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.

Dr. Vermeire is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and later achieved his D.O. from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his postgraduate training at Zieger-Botsford Hospitals in Farmington Hills, Michigan, and he has served as a member of the board of trustees. Shortly thereafter, he was elected vice president and president-elect of the Association. He also serves as a delegate of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association and the American Osteopathic Association.

He has distinguished himself as a dedicated family physician and leader of the osteopathic profession, and I honor all of the work Dr. Vermeire accomplished in our community.

I congratulate him on his installation as the 106th President of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association, and wish him the best for a successful and rewarding tenure.

SYLVIE MEI LIM'S ARTWORK SELECTED FOR NASA SPACE CALENDAR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sylvie Mei Lim of Katy, TX, for having her artwork selected by NASA's Commercial Crew Program to be featured in a calendar.

Fulfilling her dream of sending something to space, this sixth grade Katy Junior High student's artwork will have the first spot in NASA's Children's Artwork Calendar for the month of January 2017. Her piece will be featured alongside drawings from all over the world, such as Spain, Romania, India, Portugal and London. The calendar will be sent to space for astronauts to enjoy while in the International Space Station. Sylvie's artwork will be the only one from Texas. Way to go.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Sylvie for having her artwork selected for NASA's Children's Artwork Calendar. We are proud to have her artwork represent TX22 in space.

HONORING REVEREND ISAC JACKSON, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Isac Jackson, Jr., who began his formal education at Rogers High School in Canton, Mississippi, receiving his high school diploma in 1965. He attended Prentiss Junior College for two years and completed his undergraduate education at Alcorn State University where he attained a Bachelor of Sciences degree in Elementary Education in 1973.

Before becoming a Minister of the Gospel, Rev. Jackson taught in the Canton Public School System for years. Other experiences consists of: working as Supervisor I, Madison County Food Stamp Office; Instructor at the Mississippi Baptist Seminary Extension and served for one year as Justice Court Judge, in Canton, Mississippi; Drug Coordinator for Canton Public School System; Moderator in the Madison Baptist Association; Executive Secretary of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Mississippi, Inc., served as President of the Mississippi Baptist Seminary and was elected President of the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi, Inc. in the July 2010 session.

Reverend Jackson is the Pastor of Liberty Missionary Baptist Church in Canton, MS. He is married to Ora Jackson and they have three children: Michal, Ghika (George), and Isac, III.

During Reverend Jackson's struggle, he stated, ". . . And He said unto them, Go ye into the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (St. Mark 16:15). 'Every individual on God's earth feels that they are in charge of their destiny and that they know what is best for them. God, being as mighty as He is,

sometimes has other plans for us. Until our faith is accepted, there is often a constant struggle between God and man—with God being the victor.'" After his struggle was over, Reverend Jackson began his ministry in 1978. One of his favorite scriptures is: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (Timothy 2:15)." Reverend Jackson elected to further his knowledge in the teachings of the Almighty at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, where he received a Master of Divinity Degree. Reverend Jackson received his Doctor of Ministry degree in May, 1999. His dissertation for the degree is entitled the "Discipling of Black Men Within the Local Church".

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Isac Jackson, Jr.

IN HONOR OF THE WESTERVILLE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BOWLING TEAM

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Westerville Central High School Boys Bowling team for winning the Division I Boys Bowling Tournament.

An achievement such as this certainly deserves recognition. The Ohio High School Athletic Association has enabled talented teams and individuals to earn state titles since its founding in 1907. Throughout this time, the champions of OHSA state level competitions have represented the most dedicated and accomplished athletes in Ohio. Each year these elite competitors join the long ranks of those who embody Ohio's proud history of athletic success.

The Westerville Central Boys Bowling team's victory caps a tremendous season. This sort of success is earned only through many hours of practice, perspiration and hard work. They have set a new standard for future athletes to reach. Everyone at Westerville Central High School can be extremely proud of their performance.

On behalf of the citizens of Ohio's 12th Congressional District, I congratulate the boys bowling team on their state championship. I wish them continued success in both their athletic and academic endeavors.

RECOGNIZING SERGEANT PATRICK O'MALLEY

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Patrick O'Malley of the Pomona Police Department for his unyielding commitment to improve the lives of residents in my district every single day.

Sgt. O'Malley may be a native of the Sunshine State, but it is our Golden State that has been the beneficiary of his strong work ethic and compassionate character since he moved here in 1971. He started his career as a police

officer with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department Academy in 1991, graduating a year later in 1992. In 1993, my district received a wonderful addition when Sgt. O'Malley joined the Pomona Police Department. Since then, he has continued his life-long devotion to public service through his career in law enforcement of more than 25 years.

While Sgt. O'Malley has had a commendable career with numerous assignments including the Gang Team, Patrol Operations, Traffic Bureau, Detective Bureau, and the MAIT Investigation team, perhaps his most admirable assignment came when he met BreAunna Barnett.

"An angel with a badge," is the phrase that BreAunna's mother, Leanne, uses to refer to Sgt. O'Malley. Mr. Speaker, in what could only be described as a mother's worst fear, Leanne almost lost her daughter to the drug addiction epidemic that plagues our country today. The unequivocal love of a mother and the pure integrity of an officer brought Leanne and Sgt. O'Malley together. While many would have given up, Sgt. O'Malley committed himself to finding and helping BreAunna.

When he found BreAunna she initially rejected his attempts to help, but that did not stop Sgt. O'Malley, who refused to give up. Over time, Sgt. O'Malley gained her trust and eventually helped her receive proper treatment. Even after recovery, Sgt. O'Malley still continued to check up on BreAunna.

In the most tumultuous of times, we find hope in individuals like Sgt. O'Malley, the very same hope that BreAunna experienced. Yes, indeed, he is an angel with a badge.

Sgt. O'Malley's case is especially relevant and worth highlighting in the environment that we find ourselves today where communities' distrust in police officers has reached unprecedented levels. The positive work that our police officers perform often goes unnoticed, and instead we only see the negative. We look to stories like that of Sgt. O'Malley's to remind us that the simple act of caring goes a long way and that taking a community policing approach works.

Sgt. O'Malley did not shy away from a challenge and is a reminder that we too should not shy away from helping each other out.

For his endless contributions and commitment to my community, and because he teaches us to go above and beyond what is asked, I would like to recognize Sergeant Patrick O'Malley on the House floor today.

RECOGNIZING WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Margaret L. Williams Developmental Evaluation Center of the Upstate Medical Center Golisano Children's Hospital for its World Autism Awareness Day event on April 2nd.

This year marks the third year that the Center has worked with the Central New York community to light up notable Downtown Syracuse buildings in blue to highlight the beginning of April as World Autism Month.

Light it Up Blue is a unique, global campaign to increase understanding and accept-

ance of autism. Thousands of iconic landmarks, buildings, and community centers nationwide "Light it Up Blue" in support of individuals living with autism and to help promote understanding and acceptance of autism.

While there is no known cause or cure for autism, increased awareness of the multiple types of autism spectrum disorder enables families to seek early and proper treatment.

I commend the Margaret L. Williams Developmental Evaluation Center of the Upstate Medical Center Golisano Children's Hospital for its efforts to support and enhance autism awareness in Central New York.

BRANDON LUJAN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brandon Lujan for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Brandon Lujan is a 12th grader at Mapleton School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brandon Lujan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brandon Lujan for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

IN HONOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HEADLAND'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARTHA ROBY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor First Baptist Church (FBC) of Headland in Headland, Alabama upon its 150th Anniversary.

In 1867, eight people in a small village formerly known as "Heads Land" gathered to establish what was then known as The Baptist Church of Christ at Bethlehem, led by Reverend Thomas Scott. The church officially took the name of "The First Baptist Church, Headland, Alabama" in December of 1969. It has been housed at three separate locations, with its current home residing on East Church Street. The church campus has expanded with the additions of a Sunday School Annex, a Children's Building, a pastorium which now serves as church offices, and a Ministry Center. From its humble beginnings, the church has now grown to a current membership of 1,068, making it the largest church in Henry County.

Over the years, FBC Headland has expanded its reach with its TV Ministry, Food

Pantry, Child Development Center, Church Counseling Ministry, and multiple Worship Services and Sunday School Classes. FBC Headland's mission statement is "Glorifying God by Knowing Christ and Making Him Known," and I commend them for their dedication to ministries that do just that.

The City of Headland is fortunate to have had the touch of FBC Headland upon its community for 150 years. FBC Headland has been an example of the faithfulness and providence of the Lord and I am excited to see what He will do through their ministry in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize First Baptist Church of Headland's 150 years of fellowship, worship, and service.

HOUSTON METHODIST WEST HOSPITAL EARNs FIVE STAR SERVICE AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Houston Methodist West Hospital for receiving the 2016 Exemplary Five Star Service Award by the Texas Department of State Health Services' Vital Statistics Unit.

Houston Methodist West earned this award for its birth registration achievements for the sixth year in a row. This prestigious award recognizes excellence in certification and training, customer service, timeliness, and accuracy in filing birth certificates. Houston Methodist West is one of only 10 hospitals in Texas to receive the Exemplary Five Star Service Award.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Houston Methodist West Hospital for receiving the Five Star Service Award. We all benefit from their commitment to quality healthcare and we thank them for their hard work to keep Houstonians healthy.

DANIELLE HERRERA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Danielle Herrera for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Danielle Herrera is a student at Northglenn High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Danielle Herrera is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Danielle Herrera for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING TAMERA JONES

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, Tamera Jones is the daughter of Mr. Timothy and Felicia Jones of Clinton, MS. Currently, Tamera is an Honor student of Clinton High School.

Tamera is a very outgoing young lady that has served in several capacities in her school, showing great leadership skills and the qualities of a great team member. Tamera is a member of Mu Alpha Theta, HOSA, FEA, FCA and also a volunteer throughout the community. Not only is Tamera a positive influence within her school, but she is the 2016 Miss Teen of Mississippi. In November, she will be competing for Miss Teen of America, a scholarship and recognition pageant that recognizes teenagers from each state based on their scholastic record, community service and development. When she graduates from High School, Tamera will attend Tougaloo College with her Bachelor's degree in Biological Science and will go on to UMMC to receive her PhD in Pediatric Surgery.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Tamera Jones for her hard work and dedication at Clinton High School and throughout the communities of Mississippi.

APPLAUDING ALEX SCHRIVER FOR
HIS SERVICE TO ALABAMA'S
FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my deep appreciation to Alex Schriver for his years of service to Alabama's First Congressional District. Alex's last day serving the people of Southwest Alabama was Friday, March 31st.

Alex has served as the Chief of Staff in my Congressional office since I was sworn in on January 8, 2014. In this role, he has overseen my entire Congressional staff, served as my primary policy advisor, managed day-to-day operations of the office, and so much more. As it is often said, it is the job of the Chief of Staff to keep the train on the tracks, and Alex has done exactly that while building out a team of first-rate individuals. That is a testament to his strong leadership and steady demeanor.

Alex grew up in Tennessee and graduated from Auburn University. I first met him in 2009 during my gubernatorial campaign. It did not take long for me to realize that Alex was not your average campaign staffer. He would always go above and beyond and possessed a keen instinct that made him a valued member of the campaign team.

Alex went on to serve as the Chairman of the College Republican National Committee, where he oversaw 75 full-time staff and a record budget of \$16 million. In that role, he helped champion important conservative values and shape the national message.

When I decided to run for Congress in the 2013 special election, Alex was the obvious choice to serve as the campaign manager for my special election campaign. Special elections are particularly challenging given the dynamics surrounding them. As a testament to his aptitude and leadership, I was able to win a nine-person primary and go on to win the general election in December.

Alex has a rare blend of passion, confidence, compassion, knowledge, and toughness that has allowed him to be successful in his career. As he leaves my staff to move into the position of Senior Vice President at Targeted Victory, I have no doubt he will continue to be successful due to the same core qualities.

Mr. Speaker, Alex has been a dedicated and devoted member of my team, and he has served the people of Alabama's First Congressional District exceedingly well. I wish him nothing but the best in his future endeavors.

IAN RODRIGUEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ian Rodriguez for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Ian Rodriguez is an 8th grader at Shadow Ridge Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ian Rodriguez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ian Rodriguez for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICAN
WOODMARK CORPORATION'S
NEW CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share with you and our colleagues, the establishment of a long-term relationship between a stellar national company, the American Woodmark Corporation, and Frederick County, which surrounds the City of Winchester, in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. The American Woodmark Corporation, a leading manufacturer of quality kitchen and bath cabinets with over 5,000 employees nationwide, has decided to invest \$30 million to build a new national corporate headquarters in Frederick County, in the 10th Congressional District of Virginia.

The project will bring its corporate employees together from four leased sites in the Winchester area to a central corporate office, strengthening interpersonal connections and driving greater efficiency in the company's day-to-day operations. The consolidation will mean that all 377 positions will be retained and that 55 new positions will eventually be created.

There was strong competition for American Woodmark's investment, and I want to acknowledge the hard work of Frederick County officials Patrick Barker of the Frederick County Economic Development Authority and his staff, as well as Chairman Chuck DeHaven and members of the Board of Supervisors, in working with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to secure a \$550,000 grant from the Commonwealth's Opportunity Fund and for providing a \$350,000 economic development grant from Frederick County.

In addition to the financial incentives and a very hospitable business environment, the extraordinary quality of life in the Northern Shenandoah Valley clearly played a role in American Woodmark's decision. Emanating from its agrarian roots, the Valley's friendly, caring culture causes charitable organizations to thrive and those less fortunate to be well cared for. The Valley's quality of life is further enhanced by great schools and libraries, a first rate regional health care system, and cultural variety that includes civil war battlefields, national parks and museums, as well as a university conservatory that is welcoming to the community. In fact, Forbes has ranked the Northern Shenandoah Valley in its top 20 "Best Small Places for Business and Careers" in the nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in congratulating and thanking Cary Dunston, president and CEO of American Woodmark, and its Board of Directors, on choosing to establish its central corporate office in Frederick County and in wishing the corporation great success in all of its future endeavors.

SENATOR ARTHENIA L. JOYNER,
TAMPA BAY'S WOMEN'S HISTORY
MONTH HONOREE

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of a true champion of progress, Senator Arthenia L. Joyner. Today, I recognize her as my Tampa Bay's Women's History Month honoree. Her invaluable contributions to Hillsborough County and the lives of our neighbors are an inspiration to us all. Today, on behalf of my neighbors, I recognize her selfless dedication, honor her valuable unceasing work, and thank her for her love of her and my home town.

Senator Arthenia Joyner was born in Lakeland, Florida on February 3, 1943 and later relocated with her family to Tampa in the late 1940's. Growing up during the time of segregation, Senator Joyner and her family have always played an active role on issues concerning civil rights. Henry Joyner, Moses White and Kid Mason, to name a few, were at the heart of Tampa's once thriving black business community on Central Avenue. Senator

Joyner has been key in preserving and honoring the history of Central Avenue, once populated by black-owned businesses, restaurants and night clubs.

Senator Joyner earned her B.S. from Florida A&M University in 1964 and her J.D. from Florida A&M University College of Law in 1968. Facing segregation and discrimination, she has always been out front. She participated in the first civil rights demonstrations in Tampa and was arrested twice while attending Florida A&M University when participating in efforts to desegregate movie theaters. Senator Joyner again "found a way to get in the way", in the words of my colleague Representative JOHN LEWIS, when she was arrested outside the South Africa embassy in D.C. for protesting against South Africa's apartheid government.

After law school, unable to find anyone in the legal profession willing to hire an African-American woman, she opened her own practice becoming the first African-American female lawyer in Hillsborough County and has practiced law there for forty-seven years, longer than any black woman in the history of Florida. Senator Arthenia Joyner served as an attorney, public school teacher and legal assistant for former State Representative, Joe Lang Kershaw. She was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2000 where she served three terms. In 2006 Senator Joyner was then elected to represent District 19 in the Florida Senate for two terms. She was appointed by her Senate peers to serve as the Florida Senate Democratic Leader for the 2014 to 2016 term, making her the first African-American woman to hold the position.

Throughout her legislative service, Senator Joyner has been recognized as a stalwart supporter of a wide variety of issues centered on human rights, civil rights, criminal and civil justice reform, health policies, and consumer protection. Her knowledge, passion and leadership made her a trusted public servant who knew how to get things done for her state and her neighbors. Senator Joyner currently serves as the National Vice President of the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL/Women) and the State Director for Women in Government. Recently she was appointed to represent the Florida Senate on the Criminal Justice Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures. And, most recently Senator Joyner was chosen for the important role serving on the Constitutional Revision Commission by Chief Justice Jorge Labarga.

The Tampa Bay Times has praised Senator Joyner for being "a strong supporter of civil rights, health care, and open government." In 2014, Senator Arthenia Joyner was awarded the L. Clayton Nance Award presented annually by the Florida Public Defender Association (FPDA) to those advancing the organization's mission of ensuring equal justice. The FPDA also recognized her legislative work and support of juvenile sentencing reform bill, HB 7035. Representative Laura Hall (AL), National President for NOBEL Women, stated that Senator Joyner doesn't only advocate for the state of Florida, but "she fights for the civil rights of others across this nation."

Senator Joyner has served her community and state but her service has also had global reach. It has been said that among her most prestigious awards are appointments by President Clinton to the U.S. Delegation to the Pop-

ulation Conference in Cairo, Egypt and the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the citizens of our Tampa Bay community, I am proud to honor my friend Senator Arthenia Joyner as my Tampa Bay's Women's History Month honoree. As Senator Joyner would say, "your word is your bond," as she encourages our community to stand for what they believe in. Following in the footsteps of her distinguished family and leaving big footprints of her own for all of us to follow, her courage and total commitment to human rights and improving the lives of all of us have helped not only the Tampa community, but our state, nation and the world.

DULLES HIGH WINS ACADEMIC DECATHLON CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Dulles High School Academic Decathlon team of Sugar Land, TX, for winning the Texas State Academic Decathlon.

This was the Dulles High Academic Decathlon teams' first decathlon state championship since 1987. The theme of the competition was World War II, where students were tested in economics, literature, mathematics, music, science and social science. Three team members earned individual recognition as well: Madison Gabino receiving first place in the Scholastic Division, Ethan Tu in second, and Jared Roth in fifth place. Dulles High is the only team in the Fort Bend Independent School District to ever win a State Academic Decathlon title, let alone two.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, I want to again congratulate the Dulles High School Academic Decathlon team for winning the Texas State Academic Decathlon. We are very proud of their success.

ELI TRUJILLO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Eli Trujillo for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Eli Trujillo is an 8th grader at the International School at Thornton Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Eli Trujillo is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Eli Trujillo for winning the Adams County Mayors

and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING ORELIA GAIL SIAS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable professional lady, Ms. Orelia Gail Sias of Cleveland, Mississippi.

Orelia was born to the late Roosevelt and Pauline Sias of Mayersville, Mississippi. She is a graduate of Delta State University and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration.

Ms. Sias' parents were farmers and owned over 400 acres of land. She realized at an early age that she could accomplish anything she set her heart to do, coming from a household where her parents were the prime example of that philosophy. Therefore, she embarked on her life journey by furthering her education and securing stable employment opportunities with Cleveland State Bank in August of 1986 as a switchboard operator, but knew that her desire was to move up in the financial institute. While in her 30 years with Cleveland State Bank, she moved up in the ranks to her current position as a Customer Representative in the Electronic Banking Division, where she handled customer fraud issues. In 2008, she began a part-time career with Walgreen's as a Pharmacy Technician and became a National Board Certified Pharmacy Technician.

Ms. Sias is very active with numerous community and civic organizations and has received numerous accolades and awards for her dedication to the community. She is politically involved and participated in the 2012 National Democratic Convention held in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 2013, she participated in President Barack Obama's inauguration ceremony in Washington, D.C., and while there she visited the Dr. Martin Luther Museum, his statue and other sites. Although she has influence in the community and through her professional careers, Orelia considers her greatest achievement is to honor the legacy which her parents instilled in her through their teachings: "To have respect and dignity for everyone your life paths allows you to and that will be returned to you". Family is of the utmost importance to Ms. Sias and she enhances others' lives by being an example and she offers mentorship to the younger generations.

Ms. Sias lives her life in servitude to others. She opens her home to those needing a place to stay and loan her vehicle to those who may be in need of transportation. She is someone who is admired and loved by her co-workers, community leaders, and her community for her professional style, her frankness of speech and how she carries herself.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Orelia Sias for being an outstanding professional lady in the Mississippi Delta.

IN HONOR OF SHERRY HABER

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Sherry Haber, a remarkable community leader and tireless advocate for children, who is being recognized as the Hillsborough Citizen of the Year by the Associated Parents' Group. This award honors a resident who has made a sustained and significant contribution to the community, especially to the education and well-being of our children. Sherry is truly deserving of this honor. There is no task too big or too small for Sherry to handle and if you want to get something done, you hand it to her.

Sherry served as Parent Group President for North Hillsborough School from 2009 to 2010. It was on her watch that the lower playground was installed and the hot lunch program was implemented. In her role as Art in Action Chair, she established the tradition of hosting an art show during North's annual open house, expanded Art in Action from 3rd through 5th grade to include K through 5th grade, was instrumental in launching the school's first talent show and choreographed multiple group performances. She also led efforts to renovate the library, chaired the 5th grade promotion and worked on the year book committee for eight years. For six years, she opened her home for the annual teacher appreciation lunch.

When Sherry's two children Ben and Cami moved on to Crocker Middle School, she again served as Parent Group President from 2012 to 2013 and repeated many of her contributions. She implemented a hot lunch program, established the Crocker Art Show and coordinated the Janet Chun Mural project. She also was graduation chair and organized the first Flash Mob.

From 2013 to 2015, Sherry served as communications chair of the Hillsborough Schools Foundation and hosted many successful fundraisers. For the last two years, she has served as the President of the Burlingame High School Music Boosters which means she has been supporting 150 students in band and choir. She even organized the band's first performance trip to Anaheim in over 20 years.

In addition to her deep involvement in the schools, Sherry found time to be a Den Leader for the Boy Scouts and Troop Leader for the Girl Scouts for a total of ten years. For six years, she was a volunteer for Hillsborough's Memorial Day Parade. In 2015, she served on the Israeli Art Show Committee at Peninsula Temple Shalom. Sherry Haber has an inexhaustible reservoir of energy and passion for children, our community and the arts.

Sherry is originally from Sacramento. She went to Punahou School in Honolulu, Hawaii and earned her BA in English at Stanford University. She and her husband of 24 years, Scott Haber, live with their two children in Hillsborough.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House of Representatives to join me in honoring an exemplary citizen, a dedicated community leader and a devoted mother and wife. Sherry Haber never stops giving of herself and she does it with enjoyment of life (*jolie de vivre*), I join with all Hillsborough residents in

saying we are very fortunate to have her as a neighbor and friend.

RECOGNIZING DOMINIC BARANDICA**HON. JEFF DENHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dominic Barandica, who will soon be named California's Young Man of Distinction by Youth Focus, Inc.

Dominic is deserving of the highest commendation for his dedication to the advancement of safety in high school football. Using helmet sensors, Dominic has extensively researched the consequences of repetitive head impacts by high school players. Since starting, he has obtained a sensor for every football athlete in the Modesto City High School system and has been a featured speaker on the issue at the Doctors Medical Center Sports Medicine Symposium. An accomplished athlete himself, Dominic has already accepted an early decision offer to play football for Case Western Reserve University.

In addition to his athletic accomplishments, Dominic has proven to be an incredible leader, serving as Gregori High School's Freshman Class President and Commissioner of Community Service, the President of the Inter High School Council of ASB Presidents of Modesto City High Schools, and as student representative to the Modesto City School Board, representing over 40,000 high school students.

He's shown his dedication to academics as an active member of the Mock Trial and Science Bowl Teams, and has been recognized as an AP Scholar with Distinction for his continued scholastic achievements. Finally, Dominic has embodied an unwavering commitment to community service as an Eagle Scout, a recipient of the President's Volunteers Service Gold Award and the American Red Cross Youth Hero Award.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Dominic Barandica for his recognition from the Youth Focus Group as California's Young Man of Distinction. His outstanding achievements and dedication to our community deserve to be commended.

JAZZLYN WILSON**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jazzlyn Wilson for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Jazzlyn Wilson is a 7th grader at Bennett Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jazzlyn Wilson is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their edu-

cation and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jazzlyn Wilson for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

JESSICA WICKERSHEIM**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jessica Wickersheim for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Jessica Wickersheim is a student at Adams City High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jessica Wickersheim is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jessica Wickersheim for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. STEPHEN OSTROFF**HON. PETE SESSIONS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, together with Congressman ERIC SWALWELL, we rise today to thank Acting Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Dr. Stephen M. Ostroff, and his team for their efforts to assist Congress and the Administration in improving patient enrollment, retention, minority participation and equitable access in cancer clinical trials, especially among underserved and underrepresented populations.

Patient participation is the single most critical ingredient to successful cancer trials being completed on time and on budget as well as bringing life-saving cancer drugs to market.

Unfortunately, most cancer clinical trials only provide for the cost of the trial drug and require the patient to cover all other costs affiliated with participation including but not limited to travel, lodging, and ancillary medical costs.

The result of this has been abysmally low cancer participation rates. Overall, only 6 percent of eligible cancer patients participate in clinical trials and a mere 5 percent of those participants represent the Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and Pacific Islander populations combined. According to Tufts Research, 38 percent of all clinical trials fail to finish on time or within budget due to lack of enrollment, and an astonishing 11 percent of trials fail to ever enroll a single patient, primarily due to the financial burden on patients to participate.

Joined by over a dozen of our colleagues from both sides of the aisle, we sent a letter to the FDA regarding possible misperceptions surrounding the regulatory meaning of inducement and coercion and asked for its assistance in providing clarity.

The FDA's letter in response we include in the RECORD today, helps provide this needed clarity, explaining that reimbursement is neither inducement, coercion, nor even a so-called "benefit" but rather fair compensation creating parity and equality in cancer trial access. The letter also states the FDA's commitment to further addressing our concerns when it finalizes guidance on this issue.

Accordingly, we, along with our colleagues, will continue our dialogue with national stakeholders, patient advocacy organizations, the pharmaceutical industry, and the Administration to continue to improve patient enrollment, retention, minority participation and equitable access in cancer clinical trials, especially among underserved and underrepresented patients.

U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION,
Silver Spring, MD, March 22, 2017.

Hon. PETE SESSIONS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SESSIONS: Thank you for the discussion on September 21, 2016, with Dr. Robert Califf, the former Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA or the Agency) and Dr. Richard Pazdur, regarding the improvement of patient participation, enrollment, retention, and equitable access to oncology clinical trials. In a follow-up letter dated October 6, 2016, you asked the Agency to confirm that it views reimbursement for travel expenses to and from clinical trial sites, including reimbursement for travel costs such as parking and lodging, as permissible and suggested that such reimbursement should not be construed as coercion or inducement.

As discussed with you on September 21, 2016, FDA generally would not consider reimbursement for such expenses to be undue influence or coercion intended to induce participation in a clinical trial. FDA has stated in the past that it is not uncommon for subjects to be paid for their participation in research, and has provided guidance on how those payments should be addressed during Institutional Review Board (IRB) review of a proposed clinical trial. When appropriate, the informed consent would identify any additional costs to the participant that may result from participation in the research and whether such expenses would be reimbursed.

In July 2014, FDA issued a draft guidance entitled, "Informed Consent Information Sheet Guidance for IRBs, Clinical Investigators, and Sponsors," which provides recommendations on informed consent content and the informed consent process. In this draft guidance, the issue of additional cost and payment to research participants is briefly addressed. For example, we recommend that, beyond the costs directly related to participation in the research, it may be appropriate to identify additional costs that the subject may incur. Additional costs may include the loss of income when the subject takes time off from work to participate in the clinical investigation and transportation costs. The consent form would also make clear whether and, if so, how funds for reimbursement will be made available to subjects, or the form would provide direction to subjects regarding how to obtain further information. The draft guidance also states that FDA considers payment to subjects for participation in clinical investigations to be

compensation for expenses and inconveniences, not a benefit of participation in research and that if payments are provided, the consent process should not identify them as benefits. Further guidance on when payments to research participants may be considered coercive or an exercise of undue influence is available on FDA's webpage "Payment to Research Subjects—Information Sheet."

As we finalize the draft guidance, we will look for ways to address your concerns about reimbursement of these types of expenses so that the final guidance will be more useful to patients and our stakeholders. We will also take advantage of our educational outreach activities to clarify this issue with the research community.

Thank you again for bringing this important issue to our attention. Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN M. OSTROFF, M.D.,
Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs.

RECOGNIZING ARNOLD SMEENK

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Arnold Smeenck on his retirement and recognize his distinguished career in the field of mortgage banking.

Mr. Smeenck joined First Maryland Mortgage Corp. in December 1993. He built an impressive portfolio of clients and projects, which directly contributed to the company's successful merger with M&T Realty Capital Corp. In recognition of his excellent work, Mr. Smeenck earned the prestigious President's Council Award in three consecutive years. In 2007, he was promoted to National Production Manager and Group Vice President. In these positions, Mr. Smeenck was responsible for managing the company's origination platform and supervising employees in nine states. Under his leadership, the sales team originated almost \$16 billion in deals. Mr. Smeenck will retire on April 3, after more than 23 years of service to M&T Realty Capital Corp.

Even more impressive than Mr. Smeenck's professional resumé is his commitment to serving his community. Arnold and his wife, Anne, have opened their home and their hearts to those in need. From taking in foster children and providing assistance to troubled youths, to repairing inner-city homes and building a school for deaf children in Mexico, Arnold and Anne have worked tirelessly to help people overcome difficult circumstances. Through the Smeenck Family Foundation, they have financially supported countless Christian ministries and charitable organizations, including the Charles Finney School and the new Pregnancy Resource Center in Corning, New York.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Arnold Smeenck on an impressive career and wishing him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

KENDALL WILLS EARNS BOY SCOUT EAGLE RANK AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kendall Camilo Wills of Sugar Land, TX, for earning his Boy Scout Eagle Rank Award.

Eagle Rank is the highest achievement a Boy Scout can earn. To earn this distinguished award, Kendall had to achieve the Life Scout rank, earn a total of 21 merit badges, and develop and provide leadership to others in a service project. The Boy Scouts of America will also award Kendall with the Catholic religious award, Ad Altare Dei. Kendall is also a member of the Order of the Arrow, the Boy Scouts national honor society.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Kendall Camilo Wills for earning his Boy Scout Eagle Rank Award. We are confident he will have continued success in his future endeavors. We are very proud.

HONORING JUANITA WINSTON SMITH-OWENS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of a dedicated servant, Mrs. Juanita Winston Smith-Owens.

Mrs. Smith-Owens, who was the seventh child of sixteen children, was born to the late Johnnie and Ruby Winston on December 6, 1917 in Pickens, MS. After aging and a short period of illness, Juanita completed her earthly journey while at Westminster Terrance Healthcare Center on August 4, 2016. It was a peaceful passing when she took her Savior's hand and transcended into eternity.

Mrs. Smith-Owens received her early childhood education from the Little Red Schoolhouse formerly known as Richland High School in Pickens, MS.

Mrs. Smith-Owens was married to the late Fred Smith, and this union was blessed with eight children. After the death of her husband, she later married Jerry Lee Owens and to this union no children were born, but she gave her wisdom and love to three stepchildren.

Mrs. Smith-Owens confessed a hope in Christ at an early age and was baptized at Crossroad Missionary Baptist Church, currently known as Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Pickens, MS under the pastorate of Reverend Don Sutton. In later years, she joined and united with Newport Missionary Baptist Church under the pastorate of Reverend J.L. Cross where she served in several capacities: Mother's Board, Church Secretary, Sunday School Teacher, President of the Usher Board, and a member of the Choir. She also served for many years as the Treasurer of the Lebanon District Association and Vice President of the District Rose Hill Convention. Mrs. Smith-Owens served faithfully. She later moved to Jackson, MS with her children and

united as a watch-care member from Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church under the pastorate of Reverend Jeffery Stegall. Again, she relocated to Louisville, KY where she united with Community Baptist Church under the pastorate of Reverend William T. Shoemaker.

Mrs. Smith-Owens lived a long industrious, hard working life. For many years, she labored as an agriculturalist and a cook at Double Quick Store No. 19 in Lexington, MS for 16 years and she gave true light to the phrase "Be the job large or small do it well or not at all." She retired from public work in 1989 and enjoyed traveling throughout the United States with her children.

Mrs. Smith-Owens was preceded in death by: her beloved mother, Ruby Walker; father, Johnny Winston; spouses: Fred Smith and Jerry L. Owens; two daughters: Mildred Smith, and Patsie Williams; two sons: Andrew Smith and John Smith; two granddaughters: Jacqueline Campbell-Jones and Racine Smith; one step-son, Lathan Jefferson; three brothers: Louis Stuart, Jesse Castel and Melvin; seven sisters: Ora, Eliza, Ida, Vivian, Lottie, Lela Mae, and Cora; and two son-in-laws: Charles Smith and Roy Williams.

Mrs. Smith-Owens leaves to rejoice her legacy and cherish her memories: four children: Richard (Burnette) Smith, Myron Smith, Dorothy Williams of Jackson, MS and Regina Commodore of Louisville, KY; two step-daughters: Geraldine Owens and Debbie Horton of Chicago, IL; three sisters: Julie (Jack) Greer of Lexington, MS, Thelma (Samuel) Greene, and Gertrude (Charles) Green of Chicago, IL; twenty six (26) grandchildren; a host of great-grandchildren, great-great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, a multitude of cousins and a legion of friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the legacy of Mrs. Juanita Winston Smith-Owens for her life and works to be remembered.

MAJOR GENERAL H. MICHAEL
EDWARDS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major General H. Michael Edwards, The Adjutant General of the State of Colorado, for his combined service of more than 44 years in the United States Air Force and the Colorado National Guard.

Major General Edwards' remarkable service to our state and our nation is much appreciated. His leadership skills were evident even as a cadet attending the United States Air Force Academy; transitioning to Student pilot while attending Undergraduate Pilot Training. He continued to hone his flying skills, serving a distinguished career flying various aircraft from the T-38 to the F-4s. Major General Edwards' command expertise was showcased as he rose through the ranks, becoming commander of the 140th Wing, Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, and as the Director of the Combined Air Operations Center, Al Udeid Air Base, State of Qatar. His honorable military career is significant, culminating in the selection and service as The Adjutant General, Colorado National Guard.

Major General Edwards has also advised my office on military and National Guard matters and assisted in a number of medal and service recognition ceremonies. His congenial manner, yet focused approach to his command has led to admiration and respect by all Coloradans.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Major General H. Michael Edwards for his dedication, commitment and service to our community, state and nation.

QUESTIONING THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank Congresswoman JAYAPAL and Congressman RASKIN for their tireless work to protect our democracy.

I also want to thank the fearless leaders of the CPC, Congressman KEITH ELLISON and Congressman RAUL GRIJALVA for organizing this Special Order Hour and for leading the fight for the integrity of our republic.

Mr. Speaker, we're here today to shine a light on the deceit and corruption taking place at the White House. For months, we've known that Russia meddled in our election to benefit Donald Trump's campaign.

In fact, even before the election, 17 intelligence agencies all concluded that the influence came from the highest levels of the Kremlin. The reality of this unprecedented interference is outrageous and appalling.

But even more disturbing than the fact of foreign actors meddling, has been the response of our Commander-in-Chief. President Trump stacked his campaign, and then his Administration, with officials who benefited both financially and personally from Russian ties.

Now, instead of calling for a bipartisan independent investigation into Russia's influence, President Trump has heaped praise on Vladimir Putin and undermined the ongoing investigations.

Amid all of the evidence pointing to Russian interference to benefit President Trump, one question remains.

Why has the President not taken this national security issue seriously? Over the past 60 days we have learned the answer to that question. A steady stream of revelations has shown what we've suspected all along. President Trump's cozy relationship with Russia warrants a bipartisan independent investigation. Nearly every week, the ties and lies that exist between President Trump and the Russians have led the news cycle.

Former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort stepped down during the campaign after reports of his murky financial dealings with Russia became public. Michael Flynn was forced to resign after news reports confirmed he lied about contacts with the Russians during and after the campaign.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions lied under oath to conceal meetings he had with Russian officials while on the campaign. And, just this week, we learned that President Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner had questionable financial links to Russia that warrant a Senate investigation.

The web of ties and lies gets murkier by the day. As these improprieties come to light, President Trump peddles increasingly desperate conspiracy theories in an attempt to distract from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. The American people are demanding that the truth about this Administration be exposed.

They deserve to know every last detail concerning Putin's involvement in our election; ties that exist between Trump allies and Putin officials; and exactly what knowledge President Trump had of Russian actions during the campaign.

Clearly, Republicans have proved that they are incapable of leading such an investigation. Just this week, we've watched the Chairman of the Intelligence Committee be caught up in this cloud of corruption. Congressman DEVIN NUNES, a former executive board member on Trump's transition team, is too compromised by the Trump Administration to lead this investigation. Congressman NUNES' conflicts of interest clearly demonstrate he cannot be trusted to conduct the investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the list is endless. He has withheld information from Members of the Intel Committee; shared critical information with the President, the subject of the investigation, without alerting his counterparts on the committee, including the Ranking Member, ADAM SCHIFF. Mislead the American people with scant details of his sources. Not to mention, he helped develop President Trump's national security plan on the campaign.

Mr. Speaker, Congressman DEVIN NUNES has lost the confidence of the American people. He needs to step down immediately from Chair of the Intelligence Committee.

Mr. Speaker, the corruption shrouding this Administration undermines our national security and makes us less safe. So the only solution here is an independent investigation to reveal the extent of President Trump's personal, political and financial ties to Russia.

I urge my colleagues to support this commission. This has gone far beyond partisan politics. This is about the character of our nation and the independence of our democracy. The American people deserve to know the truth about the troubling links that exist between President Trump and Putin's Russia.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FRESNO COUNTY FARM BUREAU

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Fresno County Farm Bureau in celebration of its 100 year anniversary of advocating for agriculture on behalf of the Central Valley.

The Fresno County Farm Bureau has been dedicated to bringing farmers and ranchers together to promote agriculture in the Central Valley since 1917. The organization was started by George Feaver, J.A. Poytress, Sam Heisinger, H.W. Wrightson, Charles Parlier, and Leroy Smith. Leroy Smith was the first Extension Service farm advisor assigned to Fresno County, which spurred his desire to initiate the Fresno County Branch.

The Fresno County Farm Bureau is one of fifty-three county Farm Bureaus, and represents over four thousand members. The

members include farmers, ranchers, and dairy producers who put food on Americans' dinner table every night. As a voice for agriculture, the organization has a goal of preserving California's fresh, local, and diverse agrarian culture for generations to come. It also leads the industry in addressing issues that result in long-term viability for agriculture through political action, community outreach, and public education. The Farm Bureau achieves their goal of advocating for the Central Valley by promoting economic vitality of the region through the work of its members.

The Fresno County Farm Bureau has been known to encourage all citizens to be supportive and appreciative of the incredible contribution farmers, ranchers, and farm workers make daily to the Central Valley community and economy.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Fresno County Farm Bureau on 100 years of contributions to our country and our Valley's agriculture industry. We commemorate the service of all the members of this organization who have worked collectively to improve, protect, and promote agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley, which has now become one of the breadbaskets of our nation. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the incredible contribution our farmers and ranchers make to the Central Valley community and our nation's economy.

HONORING NATIONAL PET DAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Pet Day, which takes place every year on April 11th. While loving our pets is something we do every day, National Pet Day encourages us to give special care to pets who may not get that extra attention. This day was founded in 2006 by Pet and Family Lifestyle Expert and Animal Welfare Advocate Colleen Paige, to help raise public awareness about the plight of many different kinds of animals. This is a common sentiment among animal rights activists, and I want to give recognition to all the organizations we have worked with personally in the mission to protect our beloved pets. The Animal Hope and Wellness Foundation, the Humane Society of the United States, and Social Compassion in Legislation have worked extensively to better the lives of our four-legged friends. Together, we introduced H.R. 1406, the Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act of 2017, which prohibits the slaughter and trade of dogs and cats for human consumption in the United States.

On January 6, 2017, I reintroduced H. Res. 30—Condemning the Dog Meat Festival in Yulin, China, and urging China to end the dog meat trade. This horrific festival dates back to 2009 through 2010, when it was launched by dog meat traders as a commercial enterprise to boost flagging sales of dog meat. More than 10,000 dogs are reported to be captured, transported and slaughtered every year for this Dog Meat festival, with more than 10 million dogs killed annually in China for the dog meat trade. Animal welfare groups have found that a number of these dogs are stolen pets

taken from their homes, still wearing their collars when they reach the slaughterhouse. Many dogs die during transport to the slaughterhouses after days or weeks without food or water, and others suffer illness and injury during transport, such as broken bones. These dogs suffer mentally from watching other dogs being disemboweled and blow-torched in front of them.

Yulin's dog slaughter takes place in residential areas and public marketplaces, imposing scenes of extreme animal cruelty on local residents, including young children who may, as a result, suffer psychological trauma and desensitization. The capture, transport, and butchering of dogs and the consumption of dog meat poses a risk to human health by exposing people to a multitude of diseases, including rabies and cholera. This practice, in my opinion, is completely unacceptable, and can be stopped by the diligent efforts of members of the Chinese government. Although the Yulin city government withdrew as a sponsor of the Dog Meat Festival, it has taken no meaningful action to enforce China's existing laws and regulations on animal disease control, food safety, trans-provincial dog transport, or youth protection, all of which are breached by the dog meat trade.

Activists from across the globe have continued the fight against this barbaric practice. I have been honored to work with Humane Society International, the Animal Hope and Wellness Foundation, the Vanderpump Dog Foundation, Duo Duo, the Animal Welfare Institute, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Citizens Lobbyists for H. Res. 30, as well as countless other organizations to bring awareness and hopefully change to this inhumane practice and torture of dogs.

Next month, I will be introducing a resolution denouncing the global dog meat trade, by urging all countries that allow this cruel and barbaric practice to end it once and for all. Furthermore, in the lead up to the Yulin Dog Meat Festival and after the introduction of my global dog meat trade resolution, I do plan on holding another Congressional Briefing on Capitol Hill to provide an opportunity for animal rights activists to speak on behalf of the voiceless.

I also want to recognize and thank the animal welfare organizations in Palm Beach and Broward Counties, whose tireless efforts each and every single day are to be commended. In Palm Beach, the Animal Rescue Force South Florida; Peggy Adams; Palm Beach County Animal Care & Control; Justin Bartlett; Second Chance; Big Dog Ranch Rescue; Gaisha, Tundra & Spirit's Place Husky Rescue; Adopt a Cat Foundation; Tri-County Animal Rescue; South Florida Rabbit Rescue, and the Everglades Golden Retriever Rescue. In Broward County, the Florida Humane Society, Humane Society of Broward County; Broward County Animal Care and Adoption Center, Animal Aid, Inc.; and Abandoned Pet Rescue.

The work that all of these organizations do for animals is truly heartwarming and the lengths that they go to ensure their welfare is inspiring. National Pet Day reminds us to do all that we can to make certain animals are taken care of everywhere. Whether it is taking supplies to animal shelters, volunteering, helping a friend with his or her pets who is recovering from an illness, or adopting a pet.

Mr. Speaker, in honor of National Pet Day, I once again want to reiterate my heartfelt gratitude to those who have dedicated their

lives to help, protect, and save animals not only here in the United States, but also across the globe.

MITCHELL MONTALVO INVITED TO JOIN NATIONAL SOCIETY OF COLLEGIATE SCHOLARS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mitchell Montalvo of Katy, TX, for being invited to join the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS).

Mitchell is studying computer engineering at the University of Houston, where he accepted a full scholarship from the U.S. Air Force. Membership to NSCS is by invitation only and based on a student's class standing and grade-point average. NSCS is part of the Association of College Honor Societies and is the only interdisciplinary honors organization for first and second year college students in the country. After graduating, Mitchell plans to enter the Air Force as a second lieutenant, specializing in cyber warfare.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Mitchell Montalvo for his invitation to join NSCS. We are very proud of him and look forward to his future service to our country.

HONORING WILLIE WHITE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Willie White, who is an Educator, a Leader and Public Servant.

Willie is a native of Canton, MS, where he and his older brother, Booker T. Jones, grew up and were raised by their grandparents. He is the second oldest child of Earl Jones and Lonnie B. White Bratton. In the late forties, both parents relocated to different Northern states, married and other siblings were born. The 68 year old, credits his stern grandparents for him becoming the man he is today.

After receiving his Elementary and High School education from the Madison County Public School District, he entered Alcorn State University in the fall of 1967 on a track scholarship. To avoid being drafted by the Army or the Marine Corp after receiving draft notices from both, he joined the Navy in 1970, where he served for twenty-one years on active duty and ten years reserved duty. During this time he served three tours in the Vietnam War. Because of his brave and heroic acts, he was inducted into the San Diego Aerospace Museum Hall of Champions in Balboa Park in San Diego, CA in 1989, along with receiving numerous other medals and awards.

Willie retired from the military in 1990 and began working as a Logistic Management Specialist for Naval Air Technical Data and Engineering Service Command (NATEC), which is a department of the defense supporting the war fighters. During this time, he graduated from Defense Acquisition University, San Diego, CA.

His tenure as an athlete, a high school, college and military track coach combined for more than forty years. He received all conference honors in football and track for the U.S. Navy, qualified in Track & Field for the U.S. Olympic team in 1972, but due to military obligations was unable to attend; California High School Coach of the year five times, and received the KGTV Channel 10 San Diego award in 1999 for outstanding citizenship in the community. He also served as chaplain and spiritual leader for the Mill Park Home Boys organization in San Diego, California.

In 1963 and 1966, Willie marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Canton, MS. In 2000 he was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. award in Canton, for his participation in these marches trying to ensure equal and civil rights for all mankind.

Since moving to Grenada, MS in 2011, where he now calls home, Willie has been very active in the community. He is continuing to use his knowledge and skills volunteering in various clubs, groups and civic organizations. He serves as president of the Male choir, an usher and on the Board of Trustees at Greater Pleasant Grove M.B. Church, Gore Springs, MS. He has membership in the following organizations: Grenada 100 Black Men of America, Inc., The American Legion and V.F.W. Post, Grenada Baptist District Association Men Division, Grenada Chamber of Commerce Smile Team, Montgomery-Carroll-Grenada County Alcorn State University Alumni Chapter, Alcorn State University National Alumni Association, Community Relations Council member for Finch-Henry Job Corps Center, and a board member of Central Mississippi Incorporated. Willie also volunteers at Grenada High School by giving assistance to the track coach and the ROTC program.

He is the father of four children, ten grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Willie is currently married to his college sweetheart Mildrette Netter White, a 1968 Olympic Gold Medalist. When he is not busy giving back to the community, he enjoys singing, listening to music, gardening, traveling and spending time with his family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Willie White, an Educator, a Leader and Public Servant, for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American Community.

VARTEGA CARBON FIBER RECYCLING

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Vartega Carbon Fiber Recycling for winning the 2016 Innovative Technology Award from the Jeffco EDC.

The award recognizes a company that is on the forefront of new and advanced technologies and show leadership in the industries of aerospace, aviation, bioscience, energy, photonics, nontechnology or the like.

Founded in 2014, Vartega is a technology development company specializing in the carbon fiber-reinforced plastic recycling process. Repurposing scrap materials, their innovative technology and processes enables them to

provide low-cost carbon fiber for mass-market applications while maximizing the environmental benefit of carbon fiber. Using low-cost recycled carbon fiber, the Vartega process helps to reduce fuel consumption and waste, and it diverts thousands of tons of waste from landfills each year.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Vartega Carbon Fiber Recycling for this well-deserved recognition from the Jeffco EDC.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WHITE HOUSE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LANGUAGE DIVERSITY ACT

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, in January, I wrote to President Trump requesting information about why the Spanish language option on the White House website was deleted. Although the White House did state that a Spanish option was under development, in the almost two months since I wrote the letter, I have not received a response nor has an official White House Spanish website been published.

As I stated in my letter to President Trump, there are many taxpayers whose first language is not English. Spanish along with Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese are the most commonly spoken languages in the U.S. Constituents benefit tremendously from having language options to access their government and receive information that may impact their lives. This is why it is imperative that the White House and federal agencies continue to be accessible to all taxpayers.

It is vital for my constituents and all Americans to be able to follow issues that affect their lives. I will continue to work to ensure that more taxpayers have access to information in the language they choose to utilize at home and in their communities.

Therefore, today, I am introducing the White House Accountability for Language Diversity Act. This legislation will require the White House and federal agencies to establish Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese language options for their official websites. This will ensure that millions of taxpayers have the option of accessing up-to-date information in their preferred language.

CONGRATULATING NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS WOODHULL

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate NYC Health + Hospitals Woodhull on their recognition from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) for an outstanding commitment to LGBTQ healthcare equality.

In the HRC's Healthcare Equality Index, Woodhull earned the distinction of being a Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality. When compared with other hospitals, Woodhull exemplifies fair practices and policies towards the LGBTQ community.

This honor reflects Woodhull's deep and unwavering commitment to serving underrepresented communities with the utmost professionalism and care. To ensure cultural competence, staff at Woodhull have undergone comprehensive training to meet the needs of the LGBTQ community.

Woodhull has a proud history of serving the residents of North Brooklyn, regardless of their ability to pay. Many of these residents are my constituents and one of my top priorities is making sure that our diverse community is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

When it comes to receiving healthcare, no individual should fear discrimination based on sexual orientation. It is crucial that all Americans receive high quality care and I applaud Woodhull for their inclusivity and dedication to serving the LGBTQ community.

HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM QUALIFIES FOR ROBOTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Cinco Ranch High School Robotics Team 624, CRYptonite, of Katy, TX, for qualifying for the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition World Championship.

To qualify for the FIRST World Championship, CRYptonite had to win the Chairman's Award, which goes to the team that best emulates the goals of FIRST. FIRST's mission is to inspire students to be tomorrow's science and technology leaders through engaging and innovative programs and competitions. To earn the Chairman's Award, CRYptonite had to demonstrate excellence over several years, by doing robot demos in schools, businesses and public venues. CRYptonite also played a big part in the building of the Robert Shaw Center for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math), which has raised awareness and interest in robotics competitions in the Katy Independent School District. CRYptonite will compete in the FIRST World Championship in Houston this April 19 through 22.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to CRYptonite for qualifying for the FIRST Robotics Competition World Championship. We wish them good luck and look forward to seeing their future success.

HONORING HENRY "LIL SONNY" NICKSON, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Tunica County Board Supervisor Henry "Lil Sonny" Nickson, Jr.

Supervisor Nickson was born to Mary and Henry Nickson, Sr. He has one sister, Sharla Brown-Nickson and was raised in Tunica, MS. Mr. Nickson is 40 years old. He is an 8th

grade Social Studies teacher at Tunica Middle School in the Tunica County School District. He previously served two terms on the Board of Alderman for the Town of Tunica. Mr. Nickson was the First African American elected to this position in Tunica County's history. He currently is in his second term as Tunica County Supervisor/District No. 4.

Supervisor Nickson is recognized amongst his family, his community, and his colleagues as a man of integrity and for the service, compassion, and outstanding spirit he has. He regularly attends and serves as a member of Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church in Tunica, Mississippi.

Supervisor Nickson attended and graduated from public high school in Tunica County. After earning his high school diploma from Rosa Fort High School (1994), he attended Jackson State University in Jackson, MS (Spr '99) as a Business Management Major. He became a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Alpha Beta Chapter. He is a member of Keystone No. 20, Masonic Lodge. For a few years after graduating from Jackson State University, Mr. Nickson enrolled in graduate school at Jackson State University (MAT Alternative Route Teaching Program). Also, he worked as a substitute teacher at Murrah High School and Mazzio's Pizza in Jackson, MS. After 2 years in Jackson, he returned to Tunica to be closer to his children and family.

On his return back to his hometown, Henry started jobs as a teacher's aide in the Tunica County School District and Jailor at the Tunica County Sheriff's Department. Also, Henry began the journey to become a licensed teacher. After a year as a substitute teacher, in 2001 Henry was hired as a GED/ESL/BASIC skills instructor for Coahoma Community College (Adult Basic Education Program). During the next several years, Henry would get promoted at the Tunica County Sheriff's Department as: Jail Supervisor (Corporal), County Team Leader (Coahoma Community College/Adult Basic Education Program), served as Planning Commissioner (Tunica County District No. 4), served as Tunica County Coordinator for Congressman THOMPSON, and returned back to the Tunica County School District as an In-School Suspension Coordinator and GED instructor. In 2009, Henry obtained his teacher's license and was hired at Tunica Middle School as a Social Studies Teacher/Coach and in 2010 obtained his Masters of Art Degree in Teaching from Belhaven University. Henry is currently working on completing his EDS in Educational Leadership and Administration Program at Delta State University.

Although he excelled in his employment, Supervisor Nickson's political career has been rewarding. In 2005, He became the 1st African American to qualify and win a political seat in the Town as Alderman/Ward No. 5. After an unsuccessful bid for state representative/District No. 9 in 2007, he regrouped and in 2012 was elected to the Tunica County Board of Supervisors (after an unsuccessful bid in 2003) and is currently in his 2nd term as Vice-president of the Tunica County Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Nickson is married to Lashunna Owens-Nickson (Jackson State University '04) of Heidelberg, MS. They have eight children: Henri, Chasidy, Anthony, James, Chasidy (Jackson State University), Khalid (Jackson State University), Khalil (Jackson State Univer-

sity) and Nikesha (Concorde Nursing Program).

Supervisor Henry "Lil Sonny" Nickson, Jr.'s leadership, passion, dedication, dependability, and service has made him synonymous with being one of the best, if not the best, elected official and community leader in the state of Mississippi. At the end of the day, Henry "Lil Sonny" Nickson, Jr. is recognized for his service to God, his family, his country, his community, and the people that seek his help.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Supervisor Henry "Lil Sonny" Nickson, Jr. for his dedication to serving this great state and country.

IN HONOR OF CAROL GUTIERREZ

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Carol Gutierrez, a teacher in the Hillsborough City School District for 27 years, who is being honored with the Community Care Award from the Associated Parents' Group. This award is given to a non-resident employee of the school district who has made sustained, significant and lasting contributions that have touched the lives of our children and benefited the community as a whole.

Carol has taught at West and North Hillsborough Elementary schools and was also a writing enrichment teacher at South for one year. Her love of children and drive to prepare them for the real world and successful lives has earned her the admiration and adoration of her students, their parents and her colleagues alike. The school district is extraordinarily fortunate to have such a top-notch and dedicated teacher.

Carol's secret to success is that she teaches students to trust their own instincts and to follow their own passions. The students also learn to share those passions with fellow students in their own classes and in other classes, which creates a wonderful learning environment that nurtures individualism and community at the same time.

In her current position as a 2nd grade teacher at North, Carol incorporates art, technology, cooperative learning and exploration time to engage her students. Examples of such activities include Business Day, Design Thinking Challenges and Recycled Art. Her classroom is vibrant, comfortable, welcoming and open. It is with good reason that one of her recent students said, "School can't get better than this. I love Ms. Gutierrez."

As a 5th grade teacher at West, Carol and two of her colleagues developed and refined a community service jobs program and a trip to our Nation's Capital. They also differentiated instruction with theme projects, led a math peer tutor program at lunch and promoted interest in world culture by hosting an annual geography bee. Carol also served as a new teacher mentor for the district.

Carol was born in East Chicago, Indiana and earned her BA from U.C. Berkeley. She and her husband Michael Gutierrez have three children, Nikolas, Katie and Joseph. In her spare time, Carol enjoys spending time with her family, drawing, cooking and exercising.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members of the House of Representatives to join me in recog-

nizing an exemplary and beloved teacher in the Hillsborough City School District. Carol Gutierrez brings out the best in every single one of her students and sets them on a path to success and life-long learning.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO ESTABLISH AN ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FOR THE GUAM CNMI VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I reintroduce legislation to authorize and establish an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) for the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program, and direct revenue from the established system to fund CBP operations and staffing needs for ports of entry in Guam and the CNMI.

The regional Guam-CNMI VWP recognizes Guam's unique location in Asia, and the need to be more competitive for tourists from other Asian nations. With Guam's primary source of economic revenue being tourism from Asia, my legislation would address several issues that have hampered our visitor industry and that continue to cost CBP millions of dollars annually in processing costs. The majority of foreign arrivals at Guam International Airport are those traveling under the Guam-CNMI VWP, and long immigration lines are a recurring issue due to limited staffing capacity when arrivals peak at Guam International Airport. At their peak, sometimes 1,200 passengers arrive when multiple flights arrive nearly simultaneously the wait times at immigration can be as long as two and a half hours.

I recognize that there are complaints about long wait lines at other international ports of entry. However, the long wait-times have caused harm to Guam's reputation in our primary visitor markets of Japan and South Korea. In fact, Japan television shows and radio programs have mocked the long lines and wait times at Guam International Airport, which has negatively impacted Guam's standing as a family-friendly destination for our Asian allies. The flight from Japan or South Korea is a little over three hours and, sadly, some of these visitors have waited about as long, or at times longer, in line than it takes to travel from their home country to Guam. That is unacceptable and runs counter to the previous Administration's goal of improving the arrivals process for international travelers arriving in the United States, as outlined in a memorandum to heads of executive departments and agencies on May 22, 2014. My legislation would work to address the problems that are occurring with long wait times at our respective ports of entry. Tourism is critical to the economies of the region, and we cannot let an antiquated visitor entry system and inadequate staffing harm our economy.

Establishing an ESTA specific to the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program would help to address several issues faced by visitors arriving at Guam International Airport. First, the current process relies on a paper-based system which is cumbersome and only adds to the delays when arriving. The bill would allow CBP to

automate that process and, as a result, save an estimated \$4 million annually that is used by CBP to process and file the paper forms. This is a commonsense reform that will save the federal government money and improve the customer experience at Guam International Airport and ports of entry in the CNMI.

Admittedly, CBP has the authority to create an ESTA system for the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program. However, they do not have the authority to direct revenues collected from this automated process towards staffing at ports of entry in Guam and CNMI. As such, it is the consensus of tourism industry leaders and other stakeholders that there is an ultimate need for this legislation. I am informed that staffing has not increased in Guam since after the 9/11 attacks. The CBP staffing pattern was sufficient, but as the number of tourists grows on Guam the lines have also grown and the staffing has not kept up with demand. Making the visitor entry process into ports of entry in Guam and CNMI electronic is part of the solution, but additional staffing is still required especially since nearly 50 percent of our visitors are first-time visitors and cannot avail themselves of Automated Passport Control (APC) systems.

I am proud of the innovative programming that brings people from all over the world to Guam. For example last year, Guam hosted the Festival of the Pacific Arts (FestPac) a quadrennial cultural event for island nations in the Pacific, which is the largest gathering for Pacific peoples to unite and strengthen our cultural ties. Over 12,000 visitors, cultural performers, and native artists came to Guam to participate in FestPac, and I appreciated the commitment of former Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske to ensure there was adequate staffing at Guam International Airport. But that additional staffing was accomplished by approving extra overtime for employees which is a costly endeavor. Events like FestPac show the maturation and growth of Guam's tourism industry. Improving the processes and capabilities of our ports of entry to ensure a pleasant experience for our visitors is a top priority, and the solutions must be long-standing and sustainable. We cannot simply rely on overtime of employees to meet the current and emerging demands at our main international port of entry.

An ESTA for the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program is an innovative, sustainable, common-sense, and cost-saving technological solution that would save the federal government millions, improve the visitor experience for our tourists, and increase resources to improve CBP capabilities by freeing up important personnel capacity to effectively monitor real threats to our national security. An electronic system for travel authorization would ultimately modernize and improve a Visa Waiver Program that continues to benefit the people of Guam and CNMI. My bill would help ensure that federal policy enhances economic opportunities and development in our region instead of being an impediment.

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the American Health Care Act—TrumpCare—and to express my relief that it was removed from consideration before a vote. This proposal would have been a disaster for Oregonians and Americans. People would pay more and get less, and if they couldn't afford to pay more, they'd be out of luck.

Many would face a future without health insurance, or with inadequate coverage. The bill was especially bad for seniors, whose rates would have increased significantly.

Without coverage, working families are a cancer diagnosis or a heart attack away from economic ruin. When I worked at Legal Aid, many clients were struggling to repay medical debt after getting sick with no insurance or insurance that didn't cover their needs. We can't go back to the days when medical debt forced people into bankruptcy.

At my recent town hall meeting in McMinnville, Oregon a woman told me that her father-in-law suffered a massive stroke. Without coverage under the ACA, their family wouldn't have been able to afford the helicopter transport to Portland or his care at a rehabilitation facility.

Astoundingly, the TrumpCare bill also eliminated essential health benefits; several important consumer protections the Affordable Care Act added to insurance. By removing these benefits, TrumpCare would not cover many critical services, like mental health care, emergency room services, and maternity care. This change in the bill, added late at night in a desperate but unsuccessful attempt to gain more support from conservatives, would mean that people would once again buy insurance policies that would not cover their needs.

Additionally, TrumpCare made meaningless the ACA guarantee that people with pre-existing conditions cannot be discriminated against or denied coverage. With TrumpCare, people with pre-existing conditions would face insurmountable bills if unexpected illness or injuries occur.

Finally, women would stand to lose significantly under TrumpCare. Women who get life-saving cancer screenings and care at Planned Parenthood would have to find a new provider. Without insurance plans covering maternity care, women would struggle to get prenatal care—or simply go without. New mothers without insurance could face \$50,000 in bills after a cesarean section.

I was strongly opposed to TrumpCare because it was terrible policy for Oregonians and Americans. I will continue to do everything in my power to protect Oregonians from the pay more, get less policies that are currently under consideration by the leadership of the House of Representatives.

Americans need the stability of knowing they will have affordable health care coverage. I stand ready to work with all of my colleagues on policies that improve access to affordable health care for everyone.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE N. MURPHY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on April 3, 2017, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber due to a family medical emergency. Due to these unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to vote on two legislative measures on the floor.

I want to express my strong support for H. Res. 92, a resolution condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles. I am a cosponsor of this measure. Had I been present and voting on Roll Call No. 209, I would have voted "aye."

Likewise, I support H.R. 479, the North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017. This bill expresses the sense of Congress that the Government of North Korea likely meets the criteria for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism and, if so, should be so designated. The bill also requires the State Department to provide a report to Congress on actions the Government of North Korea has taken to support terrorism. Had I been present and voting on Roll Call No. 210, I would have voted "aye."

NORTH KOREA STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM DESIGNATION ACT (H.R. 479) AND CONDEMNING NORTH KOREA'S DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL BALLISTIC MISSILES (H. RES. 92)

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, North Korea is an existential threat to its neighbors and a global menace that requires constant vigilance and close cooperation between the U.S. and its regional allies. Ignoring North Korea's dangerous actions has been a bipartisan problem of the last three Administrations—and it is one that continues to need bipartisan solutions from the Congress.

Secretary Tillerson announced recently that the U.S. will no longer be guided by the policy of "strategic patience." The U.S. cannot sit on the sidelines while Kim Jong-un proliferates nuclear and missile technology, sponsors terrorism and human trafficking efforts, and continues to abuse the North Korean people.

We trust that the threat posed by North Korea will be high on the agenda of President Trump and President Xi meeting this week. As we all know, the Chinese government's actions have not always been helpful.

Though the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on North Korea recommended the U.N. impose targeted sanctions on the North Korean leaders responsible for massive crimes against humanity, China blocked effective U.N. actions.

China's February announcement that it would cut off coal exports to North Korea is a needed and important step. But senior Chinese officials, such as Foreign Minister Wang Yi, continue to describe the China-North Korea relationship as being one of "like lips to teeth." In other words, there is little daylight between Beijing and Pyongyang.

Such statements are not helpful when North Korea's nuclear proliferation and its development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles threaten to destabilize the world. The U.S. Intelligence Community's 2016 Worldwide Threat Assessment concluded that North Korea is "committed to developing a long-range, nuclear-armed missile that is capable of posing a direct threat to the United States."

Despite China's objections, there is need for deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system and to conduct joint military exercises to strengthen coordination and cooperation posed by the threat of the North Korean military.

The threat to the U.S. and its allies is not only in East Asia, but in the Middle East as well. We are certain that Iran, to whom the past Administration released billions of dollars, is one of North Korea's nuclear partners. As witnesses testified at a joint hearing last July held jointly by three Foreign Affairs subcommittees, there is ample evidence that Iran has a longstanding nuclear collaboration with North Korea.

We should be very concerned that the Iranians will at some point acquire fissile material beyond what they are allowed to produce for themselves and threaten U.S. regional allies, including Israel.

We must continue to uncover both Pyongyang's enablers and those it enables. We should target with sanctions those individuals responsible for gross human rights violations inside the so-called "hermit kingdom" and stop money and materials from reaching terrorists and nuclear proliferators globally.

There is growing evidence that sanctions are having some effect. We know that high-level diplomats, military leaders, and the families of high-ranking officials are defecting—they are recognizing that they will be held accountable if they continue to support Kim Jong-Un's barbaric regime.

I urge support for the legislation offered today and commend my colleagues for bringing this important legislation before the House.

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOSE: THE SUPREME COURT

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week, the United States Senate will consider the nomination of Judge Neil M. Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court. Since President Trump first nominated Judge Gorsuch in January of this year, there has been fierce debate regarding his credentials, political leanings, and the circumstances surrounding his nomination.

The circumstances surrounding Judge Gorsuch's nomination are alarming. It is only due to Republican obstructionism during President Obama's Administration that Congress is even considering Judge Gorsuch's nomination. After the passing of Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016, Republicans in the Senate made an unprecedented move to stall the nomination of Judge Merrick Garland—President Obama's nominee—for a record 293 days. It was the source of tremendous tension during President Obama's final year in the

White House, and undermined the integrity of the highest court in our lands and our delicate system of checks and balances. Under Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL's leadership, Senate Republicans refused to hold a single hearing, vote, or take a single action to advance Judge Garland's nomination.

Freshly uncovered ties between President Trump and his close allies and advisors to the Kremlin have also raised numerous concerns about his nominees and the individuals who President Trump is selecting to fill the most trusted positions within our government. With the resignation of retired Gen. Michael Flynn, former National Security Advisor, former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, and foreign policy advisor Carter Page, there is a clear pattern emerging in President Trump's Administration. Members of Congress and others have begun asking questions, and the American people deserve answers before we allow President Trump's nominations to move forward.

Judge Gorsuch's record on the issues also deserves additional scrutiny. While Judge Gorsuch's conservative views are not an outright cause for concern, his record on issues impacting minority groups, women, and workers, and his positions favoring police immunity and corporate interests are cause for concern.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress needs to come together to carefully evaluate Judge Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court. Given President Trump's alleged ties to the Russian Government, I believe it is wise to suspend any of President Trump's nominations until Congress can satisfy any concerns surrounding these ties. It is also hypocritical for Republicans in Congress to cry foul of Democrats for trying to delay Judge Gorsuch's nomination when just a few months prior, Republicans had unjustly delayed President Obama's nominee for a record-setting 293 days. We must act in the best interests of our own country, and I believe that entails delaying the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch.

OPPOSING NOMINATION OF JUDGE NEIL M. GORSUCH TO BE ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 3, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, and member of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, I rise today to express my views regarding the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to be Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land and the final arbiter of our Constitution and laws, and its rulings can impact the lives and rights of all Americans as shown in the cases of *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Roe v. Wade*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *New York Times v. Sullivan*, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, and *Shelby County v. Holder*, to name but a few.

Judge Gorsuch is a judge with an agenda, as demonstrated by his record on the federal

bench, as well as his writings, speeches, and activities throughout his career.

Judge Gorsuch's frequent dissents and concurrences show he is out of the mainstream of legal thought and unwilling to accept the constructs of binding precedent and stare decisis when they dictate results he disfavors.

Judge Gorsuch's appointment to the Court would tip the balance in a direction that would undermine many of the core rights and legal protections Americans cherish.

For the reasons I will discuss in detail, the Senate should reject his nomination and not consent to his confirmation as the next Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

On Election Night the President-Elect pledged to the nation that he would be a president to all Americans.

That pledge will ring hollow to tens of millions of Americans in light of his nomination of Judge Neil M. Gorsuch to be an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Perhaps nothing would do more to reassure the American people that the President is committed to unifying the nation than the nomination and appointment of a person to be Associate Justice who has a record of championing and protecting, rather than opposing and undermining, the precious right to vote; the constitutionally guaranteed right of privacy; criminal justice reform, and support for reform of the nation's immigration system so that it is fair and humane.

That is not to be found in the record or character of Judge Gorsuch.

It should not be forgotten that the vacancy at issue was created in February 2016 by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia and should have been filled by the confirmation of the eminently qualified Judge Merrick Garland, Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

In fact, the only reason Judge Garland is not now on the Court is because Republican Senators disregarded a century of precedent and their constitutional oaths and refused to consider the nomination because it was made by President Obama.

Judge Gorsuch's conservative ideology and professed judicial philosophy of "original intent," which more accurately should be called the doctrine of predetermined result, has been at the core of his prior legal decisions.

He is not an unbiased judge; at best, he is a younger, more charming version of Judge Robert Bork, who was rejected 58–42 by the Senate in 1987.

Unlike his predecessors, Presidents Obama, Clinton, Reagan, Eisenhower among them, the current President did not consult in advance with the bipartisan leadership of the Senate and its Judiciary Committee.

Instead, the President selected Judge Gorsuch from the list of names provided him by the right-wing legal group, the Federalists Society.

Judge Gorsuch's adherence to originalism is alarming and should raise concerns for all Americans because on a narrowly divided Court, his could be the deciding vote to dismantle many of the constitutional safeguards and protections upheld by the Court that have moved the country forward and made it better.

Judge Gorsuch has a history of ruling against people who have used the legal system to hold government officials accountable.

He has also used the bench to rule in favor of large corporations routinely and against the rights of workers.

He has been lenient on those that have used excessive force and police brutality.

His record demonstrates hostility towards equal opportunity, worker's rights, women's access to reproductive healthcare services, and protections for persons with disabilities.

For example, in *TransAm Trucking, Inc. v. Administrative Review Board*, the majority held that a trucking company unlawfully fired an employee in violation of federal whistleblower protections.

The employee, Alphonse Maddin, was a truck driver whose brakes broke down in the middle of a freezing January night in Illinois.

The truck heater didn't work either, and he got so cold that he couldn't feel his feet or torso, and he had trouble breathing.

Nonetheless, his boss ordered him to wait in the truck until a repairperson arrived.

After waiting for three hours, Mr. Maddin finally drove off in the truck and left the trailer behind, in search of assistance.

His employer fired him a week later for violating company policy by abandoning his load while under dispatch.

The panel majority said the firing was unlawful, but Judge Gorsuch dissented and said the employee should have followed orders even at the risk of serious injury.

In *NLRB v. Community Health Services, Inc.*, Judge Gorsuch again dissented from a majority opinion that found in favor of employees, where a hospital was required to award back pay to 13 employees whose hours had been reduced in violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

Judge Gorsuch's frequent and recurring dissents in workers' rights cases suggest a refusal to follow binding case law when it leads to results that favor workers rather than businesses and employers.

In *Strickland v. UPS*, Gorsuch dissented from a ruling giving a 1 female UPS driver a chance to prove sex discrimination, arguing that the plaintiff had not provided evidence that she was treated less favorably than her male colleagues even though her coworkers testified and gave written testimony detailing the level of mistreatment they witnessed her receiving while employed by UPS.

Hwang v. Kansas State University involved a professor employed by Kansas State University who was diagnosed with cancer, and after treatments requested an extension for her disability due to a flu outbreak on the campus, which could potentially compromise her health.

Judge Gorsuch ruled that "showing up" for work is an essential job function and that the Rehabilitation Act should not be used as a safety net for employees who cannot work.

In *Planned Parenthood Association of Utah v. Herbert*, Judge Gorsuch dissented against the court's majority decision to decline a full court review of the case, in which, Governor Herbert of Utah stripped federal funding away from Planned Parenthood.

Neither party requested a full court review, however, Judge Gorsuch desired to deviate from court practices and norms to signal his favor for Governor Herbert's decision.

This particular case amplifies Judge Gorsuch's inability to remain impartial when deciding cases that may conflict with his personal beliefs.

Throughout his tenure as a Judge, Judge Gorsuch's record indicates his hostility toward women's rights and his willingness to overlook institutions that discriminate against women.

Women will likely be disproportionately impacted by Judge Gorsuch's appointment to the United States Supreme Court and any decisions related to health, labor, and reproductive justice.

Judge Gorsuch's record shows that he believes police officers always should be granted qualified immunity, allowing police officers and other government officials to avoid being held accountable for the excessive use of force.

His record on police immunity aligns with President Trump's belief in police impunity.

In cases where victims of excessive force did not pose an imminent threat to police safety, Judge Gorsuch has a tendency to side with police.

Judge Gorsuch's judicial record on police accountability minimizes the Fourth Amendment protections against warrantless search and seizure.

In three separate cases, Judge Gorsuch ruled in favor of police searches of vehicles without a warrant.

As an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Gorsuch would be one of the nine individuals tasked with one of the most critical systems of American democracy.

Because of the decisions rendered by the Supreme Court of the United States, women have been granted reproductive rights, de jure segregation and discrimination against African-Americans has been abolished and their right to vote protected, workers have been granted security from exploitative labor practices; and marriage equality is the law of the land.

If confirmed to a evenly divided United States Supreme Court, it is unlikely that Judge Gorsuch would have a balanced, unbiased view of important issues.

Judge Gorsuch's extreme judicial philosophy of original intent would likely lead him to cast decisive, out-of-the mainstream votes that reverse significant gains in the areas of police accountability, civil rights and liberties, women's reproductive rights, and workers' rights.

Judge Gorsuch's record in each of these areas should raise concerns for all Americans.

Opposing Judge Gorsuch is not a difficult decision; for members of the communities represented by CBC members, it is a matter of survival, of life and death.

An Associate Justice would be expected to be an independent jurist capable of rendering judicial decisions that prevent executive overreach.

No senator should vote to confirm the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch as Associate Justice if he or she has the slightest doubt that he possesses the character, qualities, integrity, and commitment to justice and equality needed for this position.

[From the National Law Journal, Mar. 22, 2017]

LAWYERS IN GORSUCH 'FROZEN TRUCKER' CASE SURPRISED AT ATTENTION (By Marcia Coyle)

The case of the frozen trucker sounds like a Conan Doyle mystery but it has become a focal point in Judge Neil Gorsuch's confirmation hearings, to the surprise of the lawyers who faced off before the judge—and to the frustration of one of them.

"Would I have anticipated this last year? Of course not," said Robert Fetter of Detroit's Miller Cohen, who represented the truck driver in a suit over the lawfulness of his termination. "It's just a strange set of circumstances that gets this case on the national radar."

Attorney Brad Thoenen of Kansas City, Missouri's Seigfreid Bingham, who represented the trucking company in the case, said: "From a professional perspective, I'm very intrigued how this little case that I got to work on now comes up in something as important as this." He added: "It's kind of cool."

The case is *Transam Trucking v. Administrative Review Board*, which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit—Gorsuch's home for the past decade—ruled on last year. The 2-1 panel, with Gorsuch in dissent, ruled for truck driver Alphonse Maddin.

Gorsuch's dissent has loomed large in U.S. Senate Democrats' portrayal of the nominee as a judge who more often than not sides with the companies against the "little guy." Democrats have challenged Gorsuch often about the dissent during his Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, which continued Wednesday.

The backstory, in brief: [Alphonse] Maddin, driving through Illinois, had waited more than three hours in freezing temperatures in an unheated truck for assistance. The brakes had frozen on his trailer. He was fired after disconnecting the trailer and driving off because his feet and legs were going numb. His employer had instructed him to stay with the truck until a repair team arrived or to drive the truck while pulling the trailer with the failed brakes.

In his dissent, Gorsuch said the law only forbids firing an employee who refuses to operate a vehicle out of safety concerns. "The trucker in this case wasn't fired for refusing to operate his vehicle," Gorsuch wrote. "The trucker was fired only after he declined the statutorily protected option (refuse to operate) and chose instead to operate his vehicle in a manner he thought wise but his employer did not."

RELUCTANT PARTICIPANT

Maddin and two others who were negatively affected by Gorsuch opinions recently appeared at a press conference sponsored by several Senate Democrats. A Detroit resident, Maddin has been unable to find work as a driver since his firing seven years ago and is "somewhat homeless," said Fetter, who has stayed in touch.

"He's a reluctant participant in these things," Fetter said in an interview this week. "He is just a regular guy and kind of shocked his case is getting this attention."

The case began more than seven years ago when Maddin, on his own, filed a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The agency undertook an investigation. Maddin had been unable to find a lawyer to represent him until he reached Fetter. That happened around the time the OSHA ruled against him.

"I saw there was an issue and wanted to represent him," Fetter recalled. "I had a lot of empathy for what he went through."

Through administrative proceedings, Maddin ultimately won. The company then turned to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

"I'm a Detroit lawyer," Fetter said. "I practice in circuit courts pretty regularly, either the Sixth or D.C. circuits. We have maybe one case in the history of the firm that gets to the Tenth Circuit; it has pretty egregious facts and we happen to get to Judge Gorsuch on the panel. He writes a dissent with this textualist argument that keys it up for interest in a Supreme Court confirmation hearing. That set of circumstances is pretty astounding."

At oral argument in the case, Fetter said, Gorsuch was "incredibly" hostile in tone towards him and the Labor Department attorney who shared his argument time.

"It was not pleasant," Fetter said of the experience.

Fetter said he has been watching some of Gorsuch's hearing and would normally pay attention to a U.S. Supreme Court confirmation hearing. "Whether I would watch as much as I did [Tuesday], probably not," he added. "I've looked at this one with particular interest. I'm watching Judge Gorsuch being grilled by [Sen. Al] Franken over my case and I'm feeling some sympathy for him, but then I remember my case, and I have no sympathy."

The Gorsuch hearing is the first that Thoenen, the lawyer for Transam, has watched.

"We were certainly interested in seeing how [the Transam case] would come up," he said. "We were aware of it when he was nominated and as the nomination process has gone on, we've been watching to see how it gets portrayed."

MUCH MORE TO THE STORY

The portrayal of the case, he said, has been a source of frustration to the firm, which has represented Transam for a number of years.

"The narrative is: Frozen trucker and frozen trucker gets fired from job," Thoenen said. "There's much, much more to the story that doesn't come out."

Thoenen continued: "As soon as he made his original complaint, OSHA came into Transam and had a couple of days investigation, talked to all of the people involved and found no violation, no retaliation by Transam. [Maddin] lost that round. That never gets mentioned in the narrative right now, only that seven judges ruled for him and Gorsuch is [the] only one to rule against him."

The facts, as found by an administrative law judge, were "vigorously disputed," including a nonworking heater and auxiliary power, Thoenen said.

Thoenen's firm, Seigfreid Bingham, is "kind of a unique little player in the market," he said. "We view ourselves as outside general counsel for a lot of clients," he said. "Primarily we represent clients in and around Kansas City."

Thoenen came into the case after the administrative law judge's opinion.

As surprising as is the trucker case's notoriety, more surprising perhaps is how long it took to end the case itself, Thoenen said.

"This event occurred in January 2009," he recalled. "We got the appellate opinion in 2016. Four years before that was the ALJ decision and another two to two-and-half years for the Administrative Review Board to affirm."

During the Gorsuch hearings, senators and the nominee talked about access to justice and the length of litigation, Thoenen said. "It is unbelievable that this case would go on for seven-and-a-half years."

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint commit-

tees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

APRIL 5

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine improving border security and public safety.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine protecting our midshipmen, focusing on preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

SD-192

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SH-216

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Business meeting to consider proposed legislation entitled, "Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver (WILD) Act", S. 518, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works, S. 692, to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance, and S. 675, to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship.

SD-406

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Scott Gottlieb, of Connecticut, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

SD-430

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the decline of economic opportunity in the United States, focusing on causes and consequences.

LHOB-1100

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Defense

To hold closed hearings to examine intelligence programs and threat assessment.

SVC-217

2 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy

To hold hearings to examine a progress report on conflict minerals.

SD-419

3 p.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Economic Policy

To hold hearings to examine the current state of retirement security in the United States.

SD-538

APRIL 6

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States Southern Command and United States Northern Command.

SD-G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security

To hold hearings to examine FAA reauthorization, focusing on perspectives on rural air service and the general aviation community.

SR-253

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine the 2017 tax filing season, focusing on Internal Revenue Service operations and the taxpayer experience.

SD-215

Joint Committee on the Library

Organizational business to consider committee rules for the 115th Congress.

SC-4

10:10 a.m.

Joint Committee on Printing

Organizational business meeting to consider committee rules for the 115th Congress.

SC-4

2 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2159–S2178

Measures Introduced: Six bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 801–806, and S. Res. 108. **Page S2175**

Measures Passed:

Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 544, to amend Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S2163–64**

Delta Queen: By 85 yeas to 12 nays (Vote No. 102), Senate passed S. 89, to amend title 46, United States Code, to exempt old vessels that only operate within inland waterways from the fire-retardant materials requirement if the owners of such vessels make annual structural alterations to at least 10 percent of the areas of the vessels that are not constructed of fire-retardant materials. **Pages S2159–63, S2164–68**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to principles for reforming the military selective service process; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services. (PM–5) **Page S2174**

Duke Nomination—Agreement: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security. **Page S2168**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, with the time until 12 noon equally divided in the usual form; that at 12 noon, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate; and that following disposition of the nomination, Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. **Page S2178**

Executive Communications: **Pages S2174–75**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S2175**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2175–76**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2176–77**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S2178**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—102) **Page S2168**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 3:01 p.m. and adjourned at 7:02 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2178.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Rod J. Rosenstein, of Maryland, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General, both of the Department of Justice.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 20 public bills, H.R. 1848–1867; and 5 resolutions, H.J. Res. 93; and H. Res. 239, 243–245, were introduced. **Pages H2628–29**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2630–31**

Reports Filed: A report was filed on March 31, 2017 as follows:

H. Res. 184, resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to communications with the government of Russia, with an amendment; adversely (H. Rept. 115–74).

Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 240, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1343) to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise its rules so as to increase the threshold amount for requiring issuers to provide certain disclosures relating to compensatory benefit plans (H. Rept. 115–75);

H. Res. 241, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1304) to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from the definition of health insurance coverage certain medical stop-loss insurance obtained by certain plan sponsors of group health plans (H. Rept. 115–76); and

H. Res. 242, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1219) to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to expand the investor limitation for qualifying venture capital funds under an exemption from the definition of an investment company, and providing for proceedings during the period from April 7, 2017, through April 24, 2017 (H. Rept. 115–77). **Pages H2627–28**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Denham to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2603**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:06 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H2604**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Dan C. Cummins, Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, CA. **Page H2604**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:07 p.m. and reconvened at 5:04 p.m. **Page H2605**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles: H. Res. 92, amended, condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ ye-a-and-nay vote of 398 yeas to 3 nays, Roll No. 209; **Pages H2605–09, H2614–15**

Reaffirming the United States-Argentina partnership and recognizing Argentina's economic reforms: H. Res. 54, amended, reaffirming the United States-Argentina partnership and recognizing Argentina's economic reforms; and **Pages H2609–11**

North Korea State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Act of 2017: H.R. 479, amended, to require a report on the designation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ ye-a-and-nay vote of 394 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 210. **Pages H2611–14, H2616–17**

Recess: The House recessed at 6:10 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H2614**

Privileged Resolution—Intent to Offer: Representative Jeffries announced his intent to offer a privileged resolution. **Pages H2615–16**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he transmitted Principles for Reforming the Military Selective Service Process—referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 115–27). **Page H2614**

Senate Referral: S. 544 was held at the desk.

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on pages H2604–05 and H2614.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two ye-a-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2614–15 and H2616–17. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Committee Meetings

ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP ACT OF 2017; SUPPORTING AMERICA'S INNOVATORS ACT OF 2017; SELF-INSURANCE PROTECTION ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1343, the "Encouraging Employee Ownership Act of 2017"; H.R. 1219, the "Supporting America's Innovators Act of 2017"; and H.R. 1304, the "Self-Insurance Protection Act". The Committee

granted, by voice vote, a structured rule for H.R. 1343. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–11 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule makes in order only the further amendment printed in the Rules Committee report, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The Committee granted, by record vote of 6–3, a closed rule for H.R. 1304. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted, and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The Committee granted, by record vote of 6–3, a closed rule for H.R. 1219. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule provides one motion to recommit. In Section 2, the rule provides that on any legislative day during the period from April 7, 2017 through April 24, 2017: the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. In Section 3, the rule provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2. In Section 4, the rule provides that each day dur-

ing the period addressed by section 2 of the resolution shall not constitute calendar days for the purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546). Finally, in Section 5, the rule provides that each day during the period addressed by section 2 of the resolution shall not constitute a legislative day for purposes of clause 7 of rule XIII (resolutions of inquiry). Testimony was heard from Chairman Hensarling, Chairman Roe of Tennessee, and Representatives Kildee and Scott of Virginia.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D374)

H.R. 1362, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic. Signed on March 31, 2017. (Public Law 115–16)

H.J. Res. 42, disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment compensation applicants. Signed on March 31, 2017. (Public Law 115–17)

S.J. Res. 1, approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield. Signed on March 31, 2017. (Public Law 115–18)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine national water hazards and vulnerabilities, focusing on improved forecasting for responses and mitigation, 2:30 p.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine United States Strategic Command programs, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, to receive a closed briefing on cyber threats to the United States, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: business meeting to consider the nomination of Jay Clayton, of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security, to hold hearings

to examine keeping goods moving, focusing on continuing to enhance multimodal freight policy and infrastructure, 2:30 p.m., SR-253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine efforts to protect U.S. energy delivery systems from cybersecurity threats, 10 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the European Union as a partner against Russian aggression, focusing on sanctions, security, democratic institutions, and the way forward, 10:15 a.m., SD-419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine FDA user fee agreements, focusing on improving medical product regulations and innovation for patients, 10 a.m., SD-430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine fencing along the southwest border, 9:30 a.m., SD-342.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:15 p.m., SH-219.

Full Committee, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, hearing entitled “The Next Farm Bill: Commodity Policy Part II”, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit, hearing entitled “The Next Farm Bill: Credit Programs”, 2 p.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Examining Federal Support for Job Training Programs”, 10 a.m., 2358-C Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Assessing Progress and Identifying Future Opportunities in Defense Reform”, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1808, the “Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017”; and H.R. 1809, the “Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017”, 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Environment, hearing on a discussion draft of Brownfields Reauthorization, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled “Cybersecurity in the Health Care Sector: Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships”, 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade, hearing entitled “Examining the Federal Reserve’s Mandate and Governance Structure”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade; and Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance, hearing entitled “Increasing the Effectiveness of Non-Nuclear Sanctions Against Iran”, 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, hearing entitled “Defeating a Sophisticated and Dangerous Adversary: Are the New

Border Security Task Forces the Right Approach?”, 10 a.m., HVC-210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice, hearing entitled “First Amendment Protections on Public College and University Campuses”, 11:30 a.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, hearing on H.R. 220, to authorize the expansion of the existing Terror Lake hydroelectric project, and for other purposes; H.R. 1411, the “Transparent Summer Flounder Quotas Act”; and a discussion draft of the “Bureau of Reclamation Pumped Storage Hydropower Development Act”, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Use of Confidential Informants at ATF and DEA”, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Information Technology, hearing entitled “Reviewing Federal IT Workforce Challenges and Possible Solutions”, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing entitled “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Enabling Innovation in the National Airspace”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing entitled “Authorization of Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Programs”, 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled “An Assessment of Ongoing Concerns at the Veterans Crisis Line”, 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, hearing entitled “Assessing VA Approved Appraisers and How to Improve the Program for the 21st Century”, 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of April 4 through April 7, 2017

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, with a vote on confirmation thereon at 12 noon.

Senate expects to proceed to the consideration of the nomination of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Appropriations: April 4, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine national water hazards and vulnerabilities, focusing on improved forecasting for responses and mitigation, 2:30 p.m., SD-192.

April 5, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine protecting our midshipmen, focusing on preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, 10 a.m., SD-192.

April 5, Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold closed hearings to examine intelligence programs and threat assessment, 10:30 a.m., SVC-217.

Committee on Armed Services: April 4, to hold hearings to examine United States Strategic Command programs, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

April 4, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, to receive a closed briefing on cyber threats to the United States, 2:30 p.m., SVC-217.

April 6, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine United States Southern Command and United States Northern Command, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: April 4, business meeting to consider the nomination of Jay Clayton, of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, 10 a.m., SD-538.

April 5, Subcommittee on Economic Policy, to hold hearings to examine the current state of retirement security in the United States, 3 p.m., SD-538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: April 4, Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security, to hold hearings to examine keeping goods moving, focusing on continuing to enhance multimodal freight policy and infrastructure, 2:30 p.m., SR-253.

April 5, Full Committee, business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 10 a.m., SH-216.

April 6, Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, to hold hearings to examine FAA reauthorization, focusing on perspectives on rural air service and the general aviation community, 10 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: April 4, to hold hearings to examine efforts to protect U.S. energy delivery systems from cybersecurity threats, 10 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: April 5, business meeting to consider proposed legislation entitled, "Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver (WILD) Act", S. 518, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works, S. 692, to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance, and S. 675, to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship, 10 a.m., SD-406.

Committee on Finance: April 6, to hold hearings to examine the 2017 tax filing season, focusing on Internal Revenue Service operations and the taxpayer experience, 10 a.m., SD-215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: April 4, to hold hearings to examine the European Union as a partner against Russian aggression, focusing on sanctions, security, democratic institutions, and the way forward, 10:15 a.m., SD-419.

April 5, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, to hold hearings to examine a progress report on conflict minerals, 2 p.m., SD-419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: April 4, to hold hearings to examine FDA user fee agreements, focusing on improving medical product regulations and innovation for patients, 10 a.m., SD-430.

April 5, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Scott Gottlieb, of Connecticut, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services, 10 a.m., SD-430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: April 4, to hold hearings to examine fencing along the southwest border, 9:30 a.m., SD-342.

April 5, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine improving border security and public safety, 9:30 a.m., SD-342.

Select Committee on Intelligence: April 4, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:15 p.m., SH-219.

April 4, Full Committee, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

April 6, Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH-219.

House Committees

Committee on Agriculture, April 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Agriculture and Tax Reform: Opportunities for Rural America", 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, April 5, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, hearing entitled "Federal Response to the Opioid Abuse Crisis", 10 a.m., 2358-C Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, April 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Consequences to the Military of a Continuing Resolution", 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

April 5, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled "The Current State of the U.S. Marine Corps", 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

April 6, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled "Evaluating the Defense Contract Auditing Process", 9 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, April 5, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing on H.R. 1180, the "Working Families Flexibility Act of 2017", 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, April 5, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled "Facilitating the 21st Century Wireless Economy", 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, April 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled "The 2016 Semi-Annual Reports of the

Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

April 6, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, hearing entitled “Examination of the Federal Financial Regulatory System and Opportunities for Reform”, 9:15 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 5, Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, hearing entitled “Turkey’s Democracy Under Challenge”, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

April 6, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled “Enforcement is Not Optional: The Goldman Act to Return Abducted American Children”, 12 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, April 5, Full Committee, markup on H. Res. 235, directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the Department of Homeland Security’s research, integration, and analysis activities relating to Russian Government interference in the elections for Federal office held in 2016, 11 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, April 5, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1842, the “Strengthening Children’s Safety Act of 2017”; H.R. 1761, the “Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017”; the “Global Child Protection Act of 2017”; and H.R. 659, the “Standard Merger and Acquisition Reviews Through Equal Rules Act of 2017”, 11 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, April 5, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on H.R. 1731, the “Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More Act of 2017”, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

April 5, Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing on H.R. 218, the “King Cove Road Land Exchange Act”; H.R. 497, the “Santa Ana River Wash Plan Land Exchange Act”; H.R. 1157, to clarify the United States interest in certain submerged lands in the area of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes; and H.R. 1728, to modify the boundaries of the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, and for other purposes, 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, April 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Response to the

Baton Rouge Flood Disaster: Part II”, 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

April 5, Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and Environment, hearing entitled “Improving the Visitor Experience at National Parks”, 2 p.m., 2247 Rayburn.

April 5, Subcommittee on National Security, hearing entitled, “Assessing the Iran Deal”, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

April 6, Subcommittee on Government Operations, hearing entitled “The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government”, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, April 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Taking Care of Small Business: Working Together for a Better SBA”, 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

April 6, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Scam Spotting: Can the IRS Effectively Protect Small Business Information?”, 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, April 5, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, hearing entitled “FAST Act Implementation: State and Local Perspectives”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, April 5, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing on H.R. 105, the “Protect Veterans from Financial Fraud Act of 2017”; H.R. 299, the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017”; H.R. 1328, the “American Heroes COLA Act of 2017”; H.R. 1329, the “Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017”; H.R. 1390, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans’ cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization; H.R. 1564, the “VA Beneficiary Travel Act of 2017”; and a draft bill entitled “Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017”, 10:30 a.m., 334 Cannon.

April 6, Subcommittee on Health, markup on pending legislation, 8 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Joint Meetings

Joint Economic Committee: April 5, to hold hearings to examine the decline of economic opportunity in the United States, focusing on causes and consequences, 10 a.m., 1100, Longworth Building.

Joint Committee on the Library: April 6, organizational business to consider committee rules for the 115th Congress, 10 a.m., SC–4, Capitol.

Joint Committee on Printing: April 6, organizational business meeting to consider committee rules for the 115th Congress, 10:10 a.m., SC–4, Capitol.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House.

The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 3 through March 31, 2017

	<i>Senate</i>	<i>House</i>	<i>Total</i>
Days in session	51	51	..
Time in session	368 hrs., 22'	251 hrs., 26'	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	2,157	2,601	..
Extensions of Remarks .....	..	418	..
Public bills enacted into law	4	14	18
Private bills enacted into law .....	..	..	..
Bills in conference .....	..	..	..
Measures passed, total	82	198	280
Senate bills	4	3	..
House bills	9	119	..
Senate joint resolutions	5	2	..
House joint resolutions	12	15	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	3	3	..
House concurrent resolutions	2	3	..
Simple resolutions	47	53	..
Measures reported, total	*41	*72	113
Senate bills	20	..	..
House bills	2	42	..
Senate joint resolutions .....	..	..	..
House joint resolutions .....	..	..	..
Senate concurrent resolutions .....	..	..	..
House concurrent resolutions .....	..	..	..
Simple resolutions	19	30	..
Special reports	9	2	..
Conference reports .....	..	..	..
Measures pending on calendar	23	16	..
Measures introduced, total	947	2,219	3,166
Bills	790	1,847	..
Joint resolutions	39	92	..
Concurrent resolutions	11	42	..
Simple resolutions	107	238	..
Quorum calls	3	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	101	90	..
Recorded votes .....	..	117	..
Bills vetoed .....	..	..	..
Veto overridden .....	..	..	..

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 3 through March 31, 2017

Civilian nominations, totaling 73, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	24
Unconfirmed	25
Withdrawn	24

Other Civilian nominations, totaling 1, disposed of as follows:

Unconfirmed	1
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Air Force nominations, totaling 783, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	58
Unconfirmed	725

Army nominations, totaling 2,551, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	7
Unconfirmed	2,544

Navy nominations, totaling 50, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	1
Unconfirmed	49

Marine Corps nominations, totaling 26, disposed of as follows:

Unconfirmed	26
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Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	3,484
Total confirmed	90
Total unconfirmed	3,370
Total withdrawn	24
Total returned to the White House	0

*These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 22 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 74 reports have been filed in the House.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, April 4

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, with a vote on confirmation thereon at 12 noon.

(Senate will recess following disposition of the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, April 4

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H.R. 1343—Encouraging Employee Ownership Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of the following measure under suspension of the Rules: H.R. 353—Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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