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No. 124

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 24, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES COMER 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

HONORING PROFESSOR VED NANDA

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

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to recognize the long career and accomplishments of a dear friend of mine, Professor Ved Nanda, who will be celebrating his 50th year teaching international law at the University of Denver.

As a professor at the Sturm College of Law, Professor Ved Nanda has been a pioneer in the international law com-

munity since his arrival at the University of Denver in 1965. Professor Nanda created the school's renowned international legal studies program and established the Denver Journal of International Law and Policy in 1972. His work has inspired a countless number of students to become a part of the conversation on human rights and international issues.

In addition to his achievements as an educator, Professor Nanda has contributed significantly to the international law community. He has served as the United States delegate to the World Federation of United Nations Associations where he worked to promote world peace, human rights, and the spread of democracy throughout the world.

The culmination of his work has led to his receipt of countless awards, including the "World Legal Scholar" award in 1990 and the "United Nations Association Human Rights Award" in 1997. I want to congratulate Professor Ved Nanda once more on his long career and many achievements. Professor Nanda's greatest passion was educating his students about the importance of international law and human rights. It is an honor to have a living legend in our community.

RECOGNIZING LENAPE VALLEY FOUNDATION

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, for over a half century, the Lenape Valley Foundation has provided assistance, compassion, and hope to thousands of children, adults, and families within my district. They offer services related to mental health, substance abuse, intellectual disability, and early intervention.

I was pleased to meet with community leaders and volunteers during the

groundbreaking ceremony at The Lodge at Lenape Valley Foundation, a new construction on the campus of Lower Bucks Hospital.

The new facility will provide more outpatient mental health services, including individual group and family therapy, an improved crisis call center, an improved crisis walk-in center, peer support, and Bucks County's only Crisis Residential Program.

I am thankful for the leadership of the Lenape Valley executive team: Alan Hartl, Walter Wolaniuk, Sharon Curran, Philip Braun, JoAnne Davis, Mary Dubyk, Mary Jane Fletcher, Traci Gorman, Angela Jacobsen, Marjorie Morgan, and Mary Ann Venezia, as well as board president, Robert Rogala; vice president, Lisa Bodine; secretary, Helene Cevasco Mathern; treasurer, Mark Strasburg; and all the board of directors.

I am proud to work with an organization which recognizes that everyone can grow and progress toward personal fulfillment, and we are proud to stand by their side.

HONORING UNITED WAY OF BUCKS COUNTY

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, the United Way of Bucks County is dedicated to improving the lives through the caring power of communities. We all have a stake in making our communities healthy and prosperous. The United Way of Bucks County is committed to working together, advancing the common good, and creating a better life for all.

The United Way works in close collaboration with diverse partners in Bucks County. From schools, government agencies, community corporations, neighborhood associations, the faith community, and volunteers, the United Way brings together passion, resources, and expertise to get things done in Bucks County.

Although there are about 1,300 United Way chapters nationally, each chapter shapes its own identity, holding firm

□ 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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that everyone deserves a good life through quality education, stable employment, supportive income, and good health.

I am very proud to work with Bucks County's team at the United Way: Marissa Christie, Faith Parkinson, Patricia Winslow Gallagher, Matt Uhler, Danielle Bush, Tim Philpot, Candi Guerrero, Katie Matarazzo, Dan Warvolis, and Pat Miller.

Mr. Speaker, these problem-solvers are making an impact on improving lives and making Bucks County a more prosperous community, and for that, they are deserving of all of our thanks and support.

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 (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Lord, our God, thank You for giving us another day.

As they are returning to the Capitol, please be with the Members of this people's House in all their undertakings today. You know them through and through. You know how they relate with one another and know them as the American people do, as the 115th Congress of the United States.

Lord, help them to know You. As ultimate truth, send Your spirit upon them, that You might find a dwelling place among them, so that all Your people can place trust in them as leaders as well as their representatives.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALZ 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.

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, July 20, 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 July 20, 2017, at 2:52 p.m.:

Appointments:
Board of Visitors of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

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, July 20, 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, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on July 20, 2017 at 5:14 p.m., said to contain a message from the President whereby he submits a notice continuing the national emergency with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-57)

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 Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to

the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond July 24, 2017. This notice superseded the notice regarding this topic submitted to the *Federal Register* on July 19, 2017.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations have reached such scope and gravity that they threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Such organizations are increasingly sophisticated and dangerous to the United States; they are increasingly entrenched in the operations of foreign governments and the international financial system, thereby weakening democratic institutions, degrading the rule of law, and undermining economic markets. These organizations facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts and increasingly facilitate the activities of other dangerous persons.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 with respect to transnational criminal organizations.

DONALD J. TRUMP,
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 20, 2017.

RECOGNIZING STEWART ADAIR

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

Mr. HURD. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the extraordinary contributions Mr. Stewart Adair has made on my hometown of Helotes, Texas.

Since first becoming the Walmart store manager in 2013, Mr. Adair has dedicated his professional and personal life to helping the people of Helotes. Stewart and his family have become pillars of the community.

As the store manager, Mr. Adair was responsible for leading hundreds of employees, where he quickly grew to become a role model and mentor to many.

In addition to his commitments to his job and his family, Stewart has spent much of his personal time supporting our Nation's troops. Stewart is well known in Helotes for organizing the annual Turkey for Troops program, which he has helped grow into a thriving charity event.

As many in the community of Helotes know, Stewart was recently diagnosed with cancer.

This past Saturday, I was honored to volunteer my time for a man who has

done so much to help his community. Mr. Adair is a perfect example of a Good Samaritan, and I am proud to recognize all that he has done for our community in Helotes.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S "ART OF THE DEAL" BOOK

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, those who are fair-minded and want to understand President Trump better should read his best-selling book from 30 years ago, which is as timely today as it was then. It is called "The Art of the Deal" and reveals these characteristics.

Donald Trump usually makes decisions quickly based on knowledge, experience, and intuition, rather than waiting for consultants' studies. He is a tough but practical negotiator willing to compromise to achieve a goal. He gets a deal done sooner or later, even if it sometimes takes years.

He is a counterpuncher who doesn't like to start a fight but will give more than he receives. He is loyal to friends who are loyal to him.

Most of the President's actions should be of no surprise to anyone who has read his book. In fact, those who are objective are likely to appreciate him more.

RECOGNIZING GRAND VIEW HEALTH HOSPITAL

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, for more than 100 years, residents of Bucks and Montgomery Counties have trusted Grand View Health hospital with the well-being of their families. They are dedicated toward leading our community to a healthier future.

Following their Community Health Needs Assessment, Grand View Health has identified and prioritized a community health improvement program, which, over the next 3 years, will address health challenges present in their service area.

I am proud of the positive impact that Grand View Health has made in our community. I commend their board of trustees for their outstanding leadership and service to our community. Many thanks to Jeffrey Landis, Mary Anne Poatsy, Mark Schlosser, William Aichele, Jean Keeler, Michael Corrado, Marc Freeman, Nicholas Lindberg, Robert Pritchard, Gregory Shelly, and all the doctors, nurses, staff, and volunteers who make this a success.

Madam Speaker, Grand View Health's commitment to the people it serves reminds us that we are all in this together, and it is never too late to start living a healthy lifestyle.

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.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BONUS TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 114) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 114

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

SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION OF AMOUNTS.

(a) VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM.—There is authorized to be appropriated, and is appropriated, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$2,000,000,000 to be deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—The amounts appropriated under subsection (a) shall be available for obligation or expenditure without fiscal year limitation.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF REDUCTION IN AMOUNT OF PENSION FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027".

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT FOR COLLECTION OF FEES FOR HOUSING LOANS GUARANTEED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in clause (iii), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027"; and

(B) in clause (iv), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027";

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027"; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027";

(3) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027"; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027"; and

(4) in subparagraph (D)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027"; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027".

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO USE IN-COME INFORMATION.

Section 5317(g) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "December 31, 2027".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 114, as amended, a bill to authorize appropriations for the Veterans Choice Program. This bill would authorize and appropriate \$2 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Choice Fund.

Allowing the Veterans Choice Fund to run dry is not a viable option. The Choice Program has provided critical care to millions of veteran patients.

In March, Secretary Shulkin testified that the expiration of the Choice Program would be a "disaster" for veterans. Just a few weeks ago, the Acting Under Secretary for Health reiterated that sentiment when she testified that veteran wait times would increase if the Choice Program went away.

Congress created the Choice Program in response to a nationwide wait-time scandal in 2014 to increase access to care through VA community providers for veterans who either cannot access care at a VA medical facility within a timely manner or who live far away from the nearest VA medical facility. Since the Choice Program was signed into law almost 3 years ago, it has gone through many growing pains and evolved considerably.

We know from a Government Accountability Office report from earlier this year that most of the veterans who use the Choice Program do so because VA does not offer the service that veterans need.

We also know that veteran demand for care through the Choice Program has never been higher, and, consequently, the remaining money in the Veterans Choice Program will run out in mid August, a few short weeks from now.

We cannot allow that to happen, and with passage of S. 114, as amended today, we won't.

There are allegations that providing more money for the Choice Program is

inappropriate unless we also provide more money for the VA healthcare system. I fail to understand the logic of that argument.

First, providing money for the Choice Program is providing money for support to the VA healthcare system. Choice is a VA program. Through it, VA patients and veteran patients are able to access care that would have otherwise have required either a long, possibly debilitating wait or an excessive travel time.

Second, the idea that Congress has been pouring money into VA community care programs to the detriment of addressing VA's in-house capacity is simply erroneous. VA's bottom line has increased substantially since the turn of the century while most other government agencies have seen theirs stagnate or reduced.

Madam Speaker, VA's budget has gone up four times since 2001. It has quadrupled. Two weeks ago, former Secretary Principi testified that since he left the Department in 2005 to the most current VA budget submission released in May, VA's budget increased a stunning 268 percent. That growth will likely continue, which is appropriate, given our Nation's commitment to serving her veterans.

Yet, especially considering that the Choice Program is just 3 years old, the idea that Congress is focused only on growing VA's external capacity is false.

That said, there are certainly priorities that remain unaddressed in the bill before us, and I am committed to continuing to work on those in the coming months.

However, providing \$2 billion today will ensure that the Choice Program remains funded for the next 6 months, solving our most pressing issue and preventing yet another veteran access crisis like the one that led to the creation of the Choice Program 3 short years ago while we addressed other important issues.

An important point to note is that the bill's costs are paid for using the same offsets that were used in the original act creating the Choice Fund.

I look forward to working with the minority, our colleagues in the Senate, and other stakeholders to charter a long-term path forward for the Choice Program and to address other needs to ensure that the VA healthcare system remains strong and stable for generations to come.

I am grateful to Ranking Member WALZ for his leadership and commitment in working very closely with me to come to a mutually agreeable solution today and to committing to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder in finding solutions in the months ahead. He has been a great partner.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 114, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1415

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

Madam Speaker, you are going to hear today and we have a series of bills, many of them historic in nature, many of them—all of them—worked in a bipartisan manner.

There has been a lot of talk lately of the one place in Congress that is really functioning well, and that is in the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I would echo that. It is because of the commitment, the dedication, and the end state that all of us agree on is the best possible care for those warriors willing to put their lives in harm's way, their families, and the care that was pledged to them.

Also, with that being said, democracy is hard. It requires us to do the work here, with the stakeholders, and there is no issue that has a more committed group of stakeholders than the veterans' community. Some of the names you are going to hear of veterans service organizations are a hallmark and a bedrock of not just veterans' issues, but of our communities. We work with them hand in hand to make sure that this Congress understands exactly what they need.

And democracy is hard. It is that old sausage-making adage sometimes. It is a disappointment to me that we are on the floor because I think we are just a little bit early; I think we are about a day. Like we have before, we stood on this floor when we had a very important accountability bill forward, and I said at that time we were going to have to work with the Senate to make sure we got something passed. We did that, it passed, and I am proud that we were able to do that.

It happened with the GI Bill that is coming up. The first run we went at it did not work because we had not built that collaboration, and I am disappointed today that I believe S. 114 has fallen into that.

This is a very fast-moving problem, because I want to be clear. What this does is it extends veterans' access to care in the community through the Veterans Choice Program without providing additional resources for the Department of Veterans Affairs to enhance its internal capacity.

I agree with my colleague who was very clear about the capacity of the VA, what Choice does, and I would absolutely echo not funding this program before we leave for the August recess is unacceptable. But not getting a bill that the Senate can agree on, not getting a bill that the President can sign, and not getting a bill that actually does what we are supposed to do is also not acceptable.

The gentleman is also right: we have quadrupled the VA budget, and I am proud of that. I also think it is probably not lost on anyone that that started in 2001 at the same time that we fought America's longest war and are still engaged around the world, with an aging population of Vietnam, Korean, and World War II veterans.

As it became apparent that the Veterans Choice Program was facing a

funding shortfall earlier this summer, nine veterans service organizations—Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AMVETS, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Vietnam Veterans of America—issued a letter which provided very clear guidance to House and Senate leadership and House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in terms of a solution, and I include in the RECORD the letter from these organizations.

JUNE 28, 2017.

Hon. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
Chairman, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JON TESTER,
Ranking Member, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PHIL ROE, M.D.,
Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. TIM WALZ,
Ranking Member, House Veterans' Affairs Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMEN ISAKSON AND ROE, RANKING MEMBERS TESTER AND WALZ: As leaders of the nation's largest veterans service organizations, and on behalf of our combined five million members and auxiliaries, we write to urge you to expeditiously reach agreement on and advance legislation to ensure continuous access to health care for millions of veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system, including care provided through the Choice program. Specifically, we call on you to reach agreement on an emergency appropriation and authorization bill that would address urgent resource shortfalls endangering VA's medical care programs—including Choice, community care and medical services. Further, in order to prevent these problems from recurring in the future, we call on you to equally invest in modernizing and expanding VA's capacity to meet rising demand for care, as well as finally address the glaring inequity in law that prevents thousands of family caregivers from getting the support they need to care for their veterans severely disabled before September 11, 2001.

In recent weeks, VA Secretary David Shulkin has repeatedly made clear in his public statements and congressional testimony that current funding is no longer projected to be adequate to meet the needs of an increasing number of veterans seeking medical treatment directly through the VA system as well as through community care programs, particularly the Choice program. Secretary Shulkin has made clear that rising demand for care by veterans has consumed more VA resources than previously anticipated, threatening the ability of VA to meet all of its obligations to ill and injured veterans both this year and next. Although Public Law 115-26 extended the Choice program beyond its prior sunset date of August 7, 2017, VA now projects it will likely run out of funding prior to the end of fiscal year (FY) 2017 unless additional funding is made available. Further, based on recent utilization trends, VA projects a higher demand for both community care and Choice next year (FY 2018), and anticipates additional funding requirements above the budget request made just weeks earlier. In order to ensure continuation of the Choice program—and absent an infusion of new funding—VA has stated its intention to take extraordinary budget

actions, including pulling back unobligated funding from VA medical facilities and utilizing funding in FY 2017 that had been designated as carryover funding for its FY 2018 budget request, thereby further reducing available medical care resources for next year.

Messrs. Chairmen and Ranking Members, our nation has a sacred obligation to ensure the men and women who served and sacrificed to defend our way of life receive timely, high-quality health care through a fully-funded VA health care system, which includes community care or Choice options whenever and wherever necessary. With the Choice program rapidly running out of funds and its successor community care program still many months away, it is imperative that Congress not allow veterans to go without needed care before this transition is completed.

We note that VA's FY 2018 budget submission included a request for \$3.5 billion in mandatory funds to continue the Choice program. In order to meet Congressional PAYGO requirements, VA also included two legislative proposals we vehemently oppose which would cut billions of dollars from veterans disability compensation through changes to Individual Unemployability eligibility and rounding down cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increases to "pay" for the new Choice funding. We find it absolutely unconscionable to cut benefits for disabled veterans to "pay" for their medical care. Congress imposed these PAYGO rules on itself and Congress has the authority to waive them by designating new funding for the existing Choice program as emergency spending, just as it did when the Choice program was created in 2014 through Public Law 113-146, the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA). It is our understanding that the actual need to continue the Choice program for the balance of this year and through the end of FY 2018 is approximately \$4.3 billion.

We remind you that the primary reason the Choice program was created was to address gaps in access due to the lack of clinicians and clinical space necessary to provide timely access to health care for all enrolled veterans. As such, VACAA not only included emergency funding to allow additional access to community care outside VA, it also contained funding to rebuild and expand capacity inside VA. Therefore, we call on you to continue this commitment to strengthen and modernize the VA by providing equal emergency funding to address VA's infrastructure and personnel gaps. There are at least 27 VA health care facility leases awaiting funding in order to be activated. In addition, there are dozens of minor and major construction projects that require billions of dollars in funding to sustain and expand VA's capacity to provide timely care to enrolled veterans. Furthermore, VA has tens of thousands of vacant positions which will require not just funding, but innovative new programs to recruit and retain hard-to-fill clinical positions in many areas of the country. Therefore, we call on you to include an equivalent level of funding—\$4.3 billion—to support VA's internal capacity to deliver care.

Finally, since enactment of the Public Law 111-163 in 2010, which created the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC), eligibility has been restricted to caregivers of severely disabled veterans injured or made ill on or after September 11, 2001. The clear intention of the law was to initiate this program rapidly for post-9/11 veterans to address their urgent needs, thereafter working to expand the program to meet the critical needs of family caregivers of seriously disabled veterans of

all generations as soon as feasible. However seven years later, Congress has yet to begin addressing the blatant unfairness facing caregivers of severely disabled veterans injured prior to September 11, 2001. As Secretary Shulkin and other experts agree, supporting caregivers who allow veterans to remain in their homes will save VA money that would otherwise need to be spent for long term institutional care. Therefore, we call on you to include both authorization and funding to eliminate this indefensible inequity based on existing bipartisan legislation in the Senate (S. 591) and the House (H.R. 1472, H.R. 1802).

While the current funding crisis must be addressed in the short term through emergency funding and authorization, we remain focused on moving beyond the flawed Choice program as soon as practicable. We continue to urge you to work with us, Secretary Shulkin and other critical stakeholders to design and implement a new paradigm for veterans health care built around an integrated network, with a modernized VA serving as the coordinator and primary provider of care, and community providers addressing remaining gaps in access and services. We further urge you to consolidate all community care programs through a single unified discretionary funding source that includes the necessary flexibility and accountability to ensure that VA can deliver the highest quality of care in the most appropriate clinical settings within the network.

Messrs. Chairmen and Ranking Members, we recognize the continuing attention and commitment you have all shown to providing timely and accessible care to our nation's injured and ill veterans, and we hope you will work with us and Secretary Shulkin to address this urgent funding shortfall. America's veterans have earned the right to high-quality, timely and accessible health care. We believe that the comprehensive plan outlined above will ensure our nation continues to meet that sacred obligation and call on you to support it.

Respectfully,

Garry J. Augustine, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters, DAV (Disabled American Veterans); Robert E. Wallace, Adjutant General, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Joseph Chenelly, National Executive Director, AMVETS; Dana T. Atkins, Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), President, Military Officers Association of America; Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Verna L. Jones, Executive Director, The American Legion; Sherman Gillums, Jr., Executive Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA); Hershel Gober, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Mr. WALZ. In their letter from June 28, they wrote: "Specifically, we call on you to reach an agreement on an emergency appropriation and authorization bill that would address urgent resource shortfalls endangering VA's medical care programs—including Choice, community care and medical services. Further, in order to prevent these problems from recurring in the future, we call on you to equally invest in modernizing and expanding VA's capacity to meet rising demand for care. . . ."

Choice means choosing to go to the VA hospital and choice means choosing to use community care. Both are equal

opportunities for our veterans to get the care they need.

The current bill before us does not meet the requirements asked for by our veterans service organizations. In fact, in order to keep the Veterans Choice Program going, House leadership and the Budget Committee have refused to see this as an emergency and are requiring \$2 billion in offsets to pay for the bill.

While the actual offsets being offered are noncontroversial and are the ones the committee has used in the past, the fact that the leadership is requiring offsets from VA programs to pay for private care is wrong—all of this to appease a small vocal minority who simply sees any spending as unnecessary.

On Friday, a number of the same VSOs listed above issued a joint statement, which noted:

"Veterans healthcare benefits have already been 'paid for' through the service and sacrifice of the men and women who wore our Nation's uniform, millions whom suffered injuries, illnesses and lifelong disabilities."

I agree with them. Without emergency funding, robbing Peter to pay Paul, an analogy used by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, is not a viable path. It is actually robbing future Peter to pay current Paul.

Had it been apparent VA would be facing this shortfall, Congress maybe would have never extended the Veterans Choice Program beyond its sunset of August 7 and would have, instead, begun working on legislation that would have consolidated VA's multiple community care programs into one easy-to-understand and -use program.

I reiterate: Choice is not a permanent VA program. Now, it may end up being that. It may be someone's wish, but it is not. It was a short-term fix that was testified we need to extend the program. Several weeks later, leadership of the VA came back and told us they are 4-point-whatever billion dollars short and asked us to fix it. That is not the chairman's fault; that is not the Members of this House's fault; but it is our responsibility.

Now, the question is: How do we ensure that the care is continuous? How do we make sure care is not interrupted? How do we make sure a veteran who is getting chemotherapy in the private setting right now is not told to not come back because we are not going to pay it?

The sense of urgency is with all of us. What I ask is that we try and come back, take a look at what we can do. And I will say this: the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the House has made as good faith an effort to do this as anyone could possibly ask. I understand the challenges coming from a broader caucus and asking for this. This, where we are at today, is significantly changed from where we started, but it is apparent, in the Senate, that it will not pass.

We will not have money for the Veterans Choice Program, so we need to

decide: Do we stand and make a statement of ideological, fiscal, whatever they want to call it, or do we come together, unanimously agree on something we can move forward, build capacity into the VA to assure that Choice is there, everything from the research into the VA to the care in the communities, and come together to find that?

Moreover, these shortages are further reinforced in Choice when you take into account veterans' reliance on VA's system for care has steadily increased. While enrollment has been flat in fiscal years 2014 through 2016, the total number of veterans utilizing VA healthcare has grown by 3 percent. The total appointments in VA increased by more than 5 percent during this period.

In order to address that need, since the Veterans Choice Program was implemented, the total number of community care appointments has increased by 61 percent, and more than 25 million appointments were completed in fiscal year 2016. Over one-fifth of this care was completed in the Veterans Choice Program. No disagreement. Community care has always been there, and community care is an absolute staple of the VA.

What is also not debatable is capacity inside the VA must remain there. Any shortfall in capacity is going to distort where people are getting their care.

While we are not here to oppose the premise of veterans having access to care, members of my Caucus, as this stands right now, cannot go forward until we figure out how we are going to come to a compromise that gets the capacity as it should be in the VA and also allows us and everyone—we should never have this discussion in this House. If we can't find compromise that gets something across the finish line that actually does something for veterans, everything else is just messaging for politics.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to the chairman's words, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I think the one way that we don't have the Veterans Choice Program work for veterans is not vote for S. 114. Just to clarify a couple of things, this \$2 billion is emergency spending that our Budget Committee agreed to.

I want to just for a minute kind of go over how we got to this position where we are right now.

The Veterans Choice Program, in April, we were told, would last until next January or February. So we passed the CHOICE Act, and the President signed it into law. We found out a short 60 days later that the funds would run out in mid August—the 7th to the 15th of August is when the Secretary told us—so that kind of caught us off guard, and we had to get moving rather quickly.

The June 28 letter that my good friend, Mr. WALZ, referred to sort of got us started with this process. I want to go through it because the process is important about how we are here today.

The Members need to understand that my efforts to work with the committee's ranking member and, indeed, all members of the committee on a path forward which addresses the concerns of all of the organizations, I have done that.

Let me begin by saying I fundamentally disagree that we have neglected the needs of our internal VA healthcare system. We just passed a MILCON-VA bill last week. I stated the reasons for that in my earlier remarks. I think the Secretary's op-ed this morning in USA Today clearly makes the point.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD that article.

[From USA Today, July 24, 2017]

VETERANS AFFAIRS SECRETARY: VA HEALTH CARE WILL NOT BE PRIVATIZED ON OUR WATCH

(By David Shulkin)

As a physician, my professional assessment is that the Department of Veterans Affairs has made significant progress over the past six months—but it still requires intensive care. In order to restore the VA's health, we must strengthen its ability to provide timely and high quality medical care while improving experiences and outcomes for veterans.

I believe the best way to achieve this goal is to build an integrated system that allows veterans to get the best health care possible, whether it comes from the VA or the private sector.

This is not a novel idea. No health care provider delivers every treatment under the sun. Referral programs for patients to get care through outside providers (known as Choice or Community Care at the VA) are as essential to the medical profession as stethoscopes and tongue depressors. But VA attempts to offer veterans these options have frequently stirred controversy.

Some critics complain that letting veterans choose where they get certain health care services will lead to the privatization of VA. Nothing could be further from the truth.

VA has had a community care program for years. Congress significantly expanded these efforts in 2014 in response to the wait time crisis. As a result, since the beginning of this year, VA has authorized over 18 million community care appointments—3.8 million more than last year, or a 26% increase, according to the VA claims system.

But as VA's community care efforts have grown, so has our capacity to deliver care in-house. The VA budget is nearly four times what it was in 2001. Since then, the department's workforce has grown from some 224,000 employees in 2001 to more than 370,000 today, according to the Office of Personnel Management. And we're delivering 3 million more appointments at VA facilities per year than we were in 2014.

In other words, community care or private capacity and VA's internal capacity are not mutually exclusive. We are ramping up both simultaneously in order to meet the health care needs of the veterans we are charged with serving. Our fiscal 2018 budget continues this trend. It will spend \$2.7 billion more for in-house VA care, compared to a \$965 million increase for community care. This means that the total dollar increase for

medical care within VA is three times that of the increase for community care. Overall, when all funding sources are taken into account, we expect to spend \$50 billion on health care services within VA and \$12.6 billion on VA community care in fiscal 2018.

Even though these numbers make it abundantly clear VA is not at all headed toward privatization, I understand the underlying concerns of some critics. They don't want to lose all that VA has to offer. I don't either—and we won't.

Many of VA's services cannot be replicated in the private sector. In addition to providing some of the best quality overall health care in the country, VA delivers world class services in polytrauma, spinal cord injury and rehabilitation, prosthetics and orthotics, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress treatments and other behavioral health programs. The department plays a critical role in preparing our nation's doctors and nurses—70% of whom train at VA facilities. And we lead the nation in innovation, with VA research having contributed to the first liver transplant, development of the cardiac pacemaker, advancements in treatments for PTSD, cutting-edge prosthetics, and many other medical breakthroughs.

All of these factors underscore that fears of privatization are simply unfounded. President Trump is dedicated to maintaining a strong VA, and we will not allow VA to be privatized on our watch. What we do want is a VA system that is even stronger and better than it is today. To achieve that goal, VA needs a strong and robust community care program.

Veterans deserve the best. If a VA facility isn't meeting the community standard for care, doesn't offer a specific service, or doesn't have an appointment available when it's needed, veterans should have access to care in their community.

This is precisely what they have earned and deserve. It's what the VA is working with Congress and Veterans Service Organizations to deliver. And it's what the system needs to remain a valuable resource for our country's great veterans, now and in the future.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I respect the veterans service organizations and their point of view, and I am a member of most of them. I, therefore, reached an agreement with the ranking member on a plan to fund the Veterans Choice Program for 1 year, fund the life safety maintenance issues at VA facilities, approve 28 VA clinic leases, provide the Secretary with the tools to be more competitive in attracting and retaining VA physicians, and conduct a long-overdue asset review of VA's aging facilities.

When the ranking member and I briefed the VSOs on this plan and then committee members—two separate meetings—it was clear that we needed to take some time to work out the differences. There was some concern there. And I have said that is fine. I think we can take a two-phased approach.

Phase one was the one we are talking about today, and we agreed on that. It is necessary to fund the Veterans Choice Program for 6 months to ensure that the veterans get needed healthcare without long drives and waits. That is exactly what we were dealing with 3 years ago.

The second phase, which we would consider 6 months from now, would

consider the remaining items I have talked about between the ranking member and me. During the interim, the committee would conduct open, transparent hearings on asset review and anything else—the leases or anything else—that was in that agreement. There was full transparency about this plan among committee members, which is why I found it a little disheartening now what I am hearing.

The reality is, right now, we don't have an agreement from the Senate or a bill to act on, so it is time for us to act because time is growing short.

There are veterans out there, Madam Speaker, that are getting chemotherapy as we speak. There are pregnant veterans who need to know if they can have their baby and have it paid for by the VA. I could go on and on. That is why we need to remove this right now. Then we would have time to work these other issues out.

And just a couple of VA staffing issues. You hear the concern that VA is going to be privatized and so forth. I hear that all of the time. Well, this is what the VA has done, as far as their facilities are concerned, since 2010. I arrived here in 2009.

Since then, the VA has added 3,600 physicians, almost 13,000 nurses—and they are one of the largest employers of nurses in the country—almost 4,000 LPNs, and over 3,200 nonphysician healthcare providers. I could go on and on. The increase in medical services has been over \$10 billion since then. So there have been huge increases.

And just a couple of things from the VA Secretary's editorial in *USA Today*: "But as VA's community care efforts have grown, so has our capacity to deliver care in-house. The VA budget is nearly four times what it was in 2001. Since then, the Department's workforce has grown from some 224,000 employees in 2001 to more than 370,000 today, according to the Office of Personnel Management."

That doesn't sound like an organization that is being privatized. It has grown in that capacity.

"And we're"—the VA—"delivering 3 million more appointments at VA facilities per year than we were in 2014."

They have grown that capacity internally.

In our fiscal 2018 budget, the trend continues. We are going to spend \$2.7 billion more on in-house VA care compared to a \$965 million increase in community care. So there is a \$3 billion increase in in-house VA care versus out-of-VA care, or outside care.

I think these are all good things. I think the fact that more veterans are getting care, more appointments are being made, whether they are in or out of the VA, is a good thing. But to make the argument that this is privatization is clearly not there.

I would like to say that we can work these out. We need to make sure we take that anxiety away. The Secretary has clearly stated that he has to have

this passed. I would simply pass it. It gives us 6 months, Madam Speaker, to work on these issues, and I am more than happy to do it. I have stated so to every organization out there.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I would just like to respond to the chairman.

I, too, have not made the argument on privatization. I do not believe that is the goal here. I do not believe that is what we talked about. If there are those that have that, that is not the intention of this committee, the chairman, his staff, or anyone involved with this.

And when we did talk—and I think this could be an interesting way for this House to listen to how we do this. There was transparency in these negotiations, and we sat in front of people and did them. And one of the issues in there was we had to build the capacity amongst the VSOs.

We need to stop for a minute. There may be times we need to take those hard votes against it, but I ask all of the Members to think about this, Madam Speaker. All of the veterans service organizations have lined up in opposition to this.

□ 1430

Now, that doesn't mean that they are totally right, and it doesn't mean that there isn't something here we can talk and debate about. The question is trying to get their goodwill.

I think when we talked the last time, we had some leases, and I am not calling them token, but in the budget of the big VA, which I do think in many cases is adequately funded, trying to get some of that to show the sense of goodwill.

If I were counting on the decision being made strictly by the VA Committee, I would encourage people to know this would get done, but I am deeply concerned we are going to see a Frankenstein monster of appropriation process this week that in no way resembles regular order. That has nothing to do with this committee.

Again I would say, if it were left to us, bifurcating this issue and coming back and fixing it, I have faith in that. In this House of Representatives and the leadership now, I do not have that, nor do the veterans service organizations.

So the question here is not questioning the motive, the question here is not a false canard of privatization versus inside-the-VA care, it is not even the discussion we are having right now of the adequacy overall of the whole budget; it is a case of the VA leadership running a program, running out of money way before they had, and coming to the House and telling us that. And this is not and cannot be made that the idea is you are going to go home without funding the VA. No one will say that about you, and no one

should say that about us. Everybody in this House will get this thing done and get it funded. So it is not the case.

I do understand this: we are against the wall, we are under the gun, because they just handed us this. So it is our job to figure out how to build everybody into this.

So the things that are being asked to do with the Choice Program, I support that. The offsets and pay-for, I disagree with. To make that work, our side was willing to say: Can we show some good faith and fund some of these leases and get some payments for these folks in terms of an emergency spending? But I understand the difficulty is if a spending bill comes, there is going to be a vocal group of folks who are going to make the case, as we have seen, that makes it very difficult to move legislation.

Madam Speaker, you have witnessed it with healthcare, you have witnessed it with other things, that we are going to have to compromise. If we get into our corners, it is not going to work.

So I want to be very clear. The motives of the chairman to care for our veterans is unquestioned, Choice being funded is unquestioned. Making sure there is capacity and goodwill and the funding needs in these leases and some of the things we are asking for is a necessity to make sure the Senate can pass this, and that it shows them that we are moving in the right direction.

So I would ask, give us a day, have us come back at this. Don't put this thing on the board to fail and then let everyone else take the message. Everyone here knows we are going to end up here and pass something that can be signed into law, and that will happen. The questions are: Do we do damage amongst ourselves; do we keep the goodwill and the collaboration; or do we decide we need to make a message first, then come back and then blame someone because they are not funding the veterans? No one in here wants that to happen.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I do agree with my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota, TIM WALZ. We are not going to leave here until we pass this, because there are veterans out there who are ill, who have served this country honorably, who need care.

I am a physician. I have worked in a VA hospital, I have worked in a medical unit in Southeast Asia many years ago, I have seen the results and injuries of war, and I have seen the results and injuries of current wars. And we are going to do this.

I know when I sat down and we put this compromise package together, and as openly as I could, I brought in the VSOs, I brought in both the Republican and Democrat sides, which we typically just check all that at the door in this committee, which I am thankful for,

and work just for veterans, and there were some issues that were brought up. And I recognized that, and I said: Well, the smart thing to do is we know that Choice runs out of money in 2 to 3 weeks. We have to fund the veterans' healthcare now, and we will take these other issues up as a package and have time to debate them and discuss them. That is all this is about. It is about emergency spending. We recognize that, and that is okay with our side.

I say the easiest way to do this is put this \$2 billion bill on President Trump's desk, he will sign it, and veterans will have access to this Choice Program for the next 6 months. That is what the Secretary wants. He wrote a very eloquent editorial in USA Today about this entire issue.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), the vice ranking member of the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to oppose S. 114.

A strong and sustainable Veterans Health Administration is critical to providing America's veterans with the care they deserve. By funding the Choice exception without investing in the VA itself, this legislation explicitly prioritizes the private sector at the VA's expense. This is not an acceptable way forward.

Care in the community has always been and will always be important in ensuring veterans have access to care, the care that they have earned, but it would be a profound mistake to funnel billions of dollars into private care while neglecting the VA and the millions of veterans it serves every year, and that is exactly what this bill does.

Veterans service organizations are speaking out, because they know what is at stake. They understand the bigger policy implications of today's vote.

This legislation is a referendum on the mistaken belief that the private sector is better equipped to care for our Nation's veterans than specialized VA doctors.

I have a statement from eight VSOs that echo these concerns, and I include it in the RECORD.

LEADING VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS CALL ON MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO DEFEAT UNACCEPTABLE CHOICE FUNDING LEGISLATION
URGE HOUSE TO WORK WITH SENATE TO REACH A BIPARTISAN, BICAMERAL AGREEMENT

(Joint Statement from AMVETS, DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), and Wounded Warrior Project (WWP))

As organizations who represent and support the interests of America's 21 million

veterans, and in fulfillment of our mandate to ensure that the men and women who served are able to receive the health care and benefits they need and deserve, we are calling on Members of Congress to defeat the House vote on unacceptable choice funding legislation (S. 114, with amendments) scheduled for Monday, July 24, and instead work with the Senate to reach a bipartisan, bicameral agreement.

As we have repeatedly told House leaders in person this week, and in a jointly-signed letter on June 28, we oppose legislation that includes funding only for the "choice" program which provides additional community care options, but makes no investment in VA and uses "savings" from other veterans benefits or services to "pay" for the "choice" program.

Veterans health care benefits have already been "paid for" through the service and sacrifice of the men and women who wore our nation's uniform, millions of whom suffered injuries, illnesses and lifelong disabilities.

In order to ensure that veterans can receive necessary care without interruption, we call on House leaders to take the time necessary to work together with Senate leaders to develop acceptable "choice" funding legislation that not only fills the current funding gap, but also addresses urgent VA infrastructure and resource needs that led to creation of the "choice" program in the first place.

All of our organizations are committed to building a future veterans health care system that modernizes VA and integrates community care whenever needed so that enrolled veterans have seamless access to timely, quality care. However, if new funding is directed only or primarily to private sector "choice" care without any adequate investment to modernize VA, the viability of the entire system will soon be in danger.

We call on leaders in both the House and Senate to work together in good faith, and we remain committed to supporting such efforts, in order to quickly reach an agreement that ensures veterans health care is not interrupted in the short term, nor threatened in the long term.

Mr. TAKANO. The organizations signing the statement are AMVETS; the Disabled American Veterans; Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Association, IAVA; Military Officers Association of America, MOAA; Military Order of the Purple Heart; Veterans of Foreign Wars; Vietnam Veterans of America; and Wounded Warrior Project.

I would like to quote from a few of the paragraphs:

"In order to ensure that veterans can receive necessary care without interruption, we call on House leaders to take the time necessary to work together with Senate leaders to develop acceptable Choice funding legislation that not only fills the current funding gap, but also addresses urgent VA infrastructure and resource needs that led to creation of the Choice Program in the first place.

"All of our organizations are committed to building a future veterans healthcare system that modernizes VA and integrates community care whenever needed so that enrolled veterans have seamless access to timely, quality care. However, if new funding is directed only or primarily to private sector Choice care without any adequate investment to modernize VA, the via-

bility of the entire system will soon be in danger."

I also have letters opposing S. 114 from the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the VFW. I include these letters in opposition in the RECORD.

WASHINGTON, July 22, 2017.—Paralyzed Veterans of America (Paralyzed Veterans) today weighed in on options being considered to fund the veteran "choice" program, as the House of Representatives considers a vote on a draft bill, S. 114 as amended, on Monday, July 24. Priorities for the organization include open discussion on the best way to build up specialized veteran-centric services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), while expanding access to non-specialized healthcare for veterans without cutting critical non-healthcare VA benefits.

"The notion of streamlining VA is a necessary discussion that must continue. The devil is in the details, though," said Sherman Gillums Jr., executive director of Paralyzed Veterans of America. "We do support the responsible 'right sizing' of VA, starting with the elimination of redundancies and ultimately using cost savings to increase reinvestment in VA's foundational services, such as spinal cord injury care. Offsets, at least in part, may be necessary in order to achieve that."

Offsets, or program and benefit trade-offs used for budgeting purposes, are not new to VA. Past offsets include fees and collections related to housing loans and extensions in the reduction of certain pensions used to pay for other benefits. However, this is the first time Congress is requiring VA to include deficit reduction as a component of the agency's plan to maintain and expand the VA Choice Program. Moreover, some veteran advocates have expressed staunch opposition to offsets because they require VA to employ a "rob Peter to pay Paul" approach to funding programs.

"Paralyzed Veterans' main concern is that using these offsets to pay for VA healthcare comes at the expense of expanding non-healthcare benefits, such as disability compensation," explained Gillums. "However, we are not prepared to simply oppose offsets because we believe VA is open to strengthening healthcare for our most catastrophically disabled veterans, which matters above all else. Paralyzed Veterans leads as an expert voice on the most complex healthcare challenges these veterans face, and we intend to use that voice to promote new ideas and progress."

"The bottom line is the discussion must continue with open minds on all sides," concluded Gillums.

ABOUT PARALYZED VETERANS

Paralyzed Veterans of America is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. For 70 years, we have ensured that veterans have received the benefits earned through their service to our nation; monitored their care in VA spinal cord injury units; and funded research and education in the search for a cure and improved care for individuals with paralysis.

As a partner for life, Paralyzed Veterans also develops training and career services, works to ensure accessibility in public buildings and spaces, provides health and rehabilitation opportunities through sports and recreation and advocates for veterans and all people with disabilities. With more than 70 offices and 33 chapters, Paralyzed Veterans serves veterans, their families and their caregivers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico (pva.org).

Source: Paralyzed Veterans of America.

VFW URGES OPPOSITION TO S. 114

From: Carlos Fuentes, VFW Legislative Director.

Sent: Monday, July 24, 2017.

Subject: VFW Urges Opposition to S. 114.

On behalf of the nearly 1.7 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliary, we urge all members of Congress to vote NO on S. 114, which would gradually privatize the VA health care system.

At the VFW's 118th National Convention, VFW National Commander Brian Duffy asked our members what they thought of this bill.

Respectfully,

CARLOS FUENTES,
Director, National Legislative Service,
The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, after more than 2 years and more than \$10 billion, the VA Choice Program has failed to deliver on its promise of shorter wait times for veterans.

It is time for us to recognize that private care is not the panacea for the complex challenge of caring for our Nation's veterans and that the VA's role must remain foundational to veterans' care. This bill does not reflect that reality.

I urge my colleagues to reject this legislation while we continue to work toward a bipartisan, bicameral solution.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the time left on our side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 9 minutes remaining.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to clarify a couple of things that have been said here today.

Madam Speaker, we did work out an agreement. When I met with all of the interested parties, which I thought was our job, both the ranking member and myself did this, as we always do, we found out some issues that were there.

The primary thing we have to do right now is to provide healthcare, or we will be right back to where we were in 2014, when there were waiting lists around the country and veterans dying waiting on care.

Maybe not in urban America, but in rural America where I live, many of these hospitals and veterans absolutely rely on this for their health and welfare. The further they live away from a VA facility, the more they rely on Choice.

Let me go over this again so that it is clear. I got into Congress in 2009. I was elected then and sworn in then. The VA was spending \$93.7 billion on all VA care; that is the disability claims, healthcare, and cemeteries. In this fiscal year, that budget is going to be \$186 billion, where basically the discretionary budget in this Congress has been flat, so that money has come from other places, education, environment, other places that we have invested in our veterans, which is, and I believe to this day, a good thing to be doing.

We have gone, in 2001, from 224,000 people, that is not a small organiza-

tion, to 370,000 people who work for the VA today. They are providing that money.

I guess what I was hearing from the other side of the aisle was if we didn't have the Choice Program, the wait times would have gotten shorter. I mean, that is the reason we have the Choice Program, was the VA wasn't doing it.

The fact is, they have hired people. I mentioned here just a moment ago, since 2010, when I first got here, they have hired 13,000 more nurses, 3,600 more doctors, 3,200 more physician extenders, nurse practitioners and PAs. So the VA has increased its capacity, and they have seen millions of more visits.

This week, we are going to take up the VA appropriations bill. I misspoke a minute ago; I said last week. This week, we are taking up the MILCON-VA appropriations bill where we talk about those things, about the money that we are going to spend in the VA. That is going to be debated this week.

This is a separate issue. This is about providing healthcare for veterans after August 15, that is 2 to 3 weeks from now, when that program will be shut off and veterans in the middle of care will not be able to get care.

It is a simple vote. We can work these other things out in the next few months after this very easily.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, to be clear, we are very aligned on the goals here. I am not implying that wait times went down if we didn't have Choice. I was on the conference committee that created Choice as part of it. There is community care that has been there. There is also a \$12 billion shortfall in facilities rated D and F. We had sewer lines breaking and running feces back into hospitals, those types of things.

I am not saying that maybe the money is not already there or they are not using it correctly. The fact of the matter is this was a program that was created out of the crisis of Phoenix. It did not stand up as quickly as it could have; it was plagued with tons of problems that many of us heard about. We kept committed to it. I would argue that they are getting their legs under them and providing care in a timely manner.

It grossly overspent where it was at. We have had no audit. And I think we need to keep this in mind, that on this side of the aisle, I will be the first to talk to anyone who grandstands this and makes this as a case that this is a failure at the VA or the administration. I don't know that yet.

What I would say is we are all in this together, so we want to get it done. I am simply making the case today that in light of opposition that is rarely seen from the VSOs in such opposition

to this, that even though the outcome is there, and nothing the chairman said was incorrect, it is the spirit of what it takes to legislate that is missing around here. You can go to the White House after passing a bill in the House, and if the Senate doesn't do anything, it is not a law.

So we have other people to deal with: constituents, veterans, veterans service organizations, Democrats in the Senate, Republicans in the Senate, Democrats on this side.

So what I am asking is, just give a little on the side of what it takes to build the coalition, get the thing passed, and then let's go back and fund VA care and end this ridiculous argument of privatization versus non-privatization. Wherever a veteran can get the care and access it as quickly, timely, and quality as possible is what we are trying to shoot for. In many cases, that is in the VA; in other cases, it is in the community. So this is not a drop-dead.

My hope on this is, is that a debate, when it comes to emergency spending of money and depending on the Senate, is not going to split the goodwill, the good work, and, I would argue, the fair democracy and execution of how the House of Representatives is supposed to work.

So my final statements on this would be, I am in virtual total agreement with the chairman on what needs to be done here. Our differences lie in, he is right, when I went back and talked to people, I could not sell to the VSOs the plan as it is, and they have every right to speak out on that. And we could not sell the Senate at this point.

So what I would ask the gentleman again is, don't make us oppose this piece of legislation simply to make a statement for a few members. Bring it back when we can have the Senate, the VSOs, and everyone in and accomplish our goal.

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

□ 1445

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Obviously, this has been a robust debate about a very important issue, which is providing timely healthcare for veterans who have been waiting. The ranking member and I negotiated in good faith and put an agreement together, which fell apart this weekend.

We had met basically with both the VSOs and the committee members and had an agreement to go forward. I then backed up on that agreement because I realized it wasn't a consensus, and just divided it into two.

The most pressing need, Madam Speaker, is to provide healthcare, whether it is chemotherapy or obstetrical care, surgery that a veteran may need, timely visits to the doctor. In 2 to 3 weeks we are up that close, and one of the reasons is, as has been stated multiple times, the VA gave us some

really bad information 2 months ago. We thought this was going to last for 6 more—8 more months before we ran out of money in this vital program for veterans.

This is going to get passed. For all veterans or people out there, citizens of this country watching this, we are going to provide this for our veterans.

And I might add that not all VSOs do oppose this. Many were mentioned, but many others do not oppose this legislation.

I think it is critical that we get this done, Madam Speaker, get this off the table this week, signed into law, work the other part of the agreement that we had agreed to out in the next coming weeks. I will be willing to work as expeditiously as possible to get this done.

Once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 114, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. WALZ. Madam 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.

REPORT ON H.R. 3358, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-244) on the bill (H.R. 3358) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

HARRY W. COLMERY VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3218) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3218

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Consideration of certain time spent receiving medical care from Secretary of Defense as active duty for purposes of eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Sec. 102. Educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart.

Sec. 103. Inclusion of Fry Scholarship recipients and Purple Heart recipients in Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program.

Sec. 104. Inclusion of certain members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program.

Sec. 105. Consolidation of certain eligibility tiers under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 106. Eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance for certain members of reserve components of Armed Forces who lost entitlement to educational assistance under Reserve Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 107. Calculation of monthly housing stipend under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program based on location of campus where classes are attended.

Sec. 108. Charge to entitlement for certain licensure and certification tests and national tests under Department of Veterans Affairs Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 109. Restoration of entitlement to educational assistance and other relief for veterans affected by school closure or disapproval.

Sec. 110. Additional authorized transfer of unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits to dependents upon death of originally designated dependent.

Sec. 111. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

Sec. 112. Honoring the national service of members of the Armed Forces by elimination of time limitation for use of entitlement.

Sec. 113. Monthly stipend for certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces receiving Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Sec. 114. Annual reports to Congress on information on student progress submitted by educational institutions.

Sec. 115. Improvement of information technology of the veterans benefits administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 116. Department of Veterans Affairs high technology pilot program.

TITLE II—OTHER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 201. Work-study allowance.

Sec. 202. Duration of educational assistance under Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 203. Olin E. Teague increase in amounts of educational assistance payable under Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program.

TITLE III—ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 301. State approving agency funding.

Sec. 302. Authorization for use of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to pursue independent study programs at certain educational institutions that are not institutions of higher learning.

Sec. 303. Provision of information on priority enrollment for veterans in certain courses of education.

Sec. 304. Limitation on use of reporting fees payable to educational institutions and sponsors of programs of apprenticeship.

Sec. 305. Training for school certifying officials.

Sec. 306. Extension of authority for Advisory Committee on Education.

Sec. 307. Department of Veterans Affairs provision of on-campus educational and vocational counseling for veterans.

Sec. 308. Provision of information regarding veteran entitlement to educational assistance.

Sec. 309. Treatment, for purposes of educational assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of educational courses that begin seven or fewer days after the first day of an academic term.

Sec. 310. Inclusion of risk-based reviews in State approving agency oversight activities.

Sec. 311. Comptroller General study of State approving agency performance.

TITLE IV—RESERVE COMPONENT BENEFITS

Sec. 401. Eligibility of reserve component members for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Sec. 402. Time limitation for training and rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected disabilities.

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 501. Repeal inapplicability of modification of basic allowance for housing to benefits under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 502. Reconsideration of previously denied claims for disability compensation for veterans who allege full-body exposure to nitrogen mustard gas, sulfur mustard gas, or Lewisite during World War II.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SEC. 101. CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN TIME SPENT RECEIVING MEDICAL CARE FROM SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AS ACTIVE DUTY FOR PURPOSES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3301(1)(B) is amended by inserting “12301(h),” after “12301(g),”.

(b) RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to service in the Armed Forces occurring on or after September 11, 2001.

(c) APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO USE OF ENTITLEMENT.—An individual who is entitled to educational assistance by reason of the amendment made by subsection (a) may use such entitlement to pursue a course of education beginning on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 102. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART.

(a) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 3311(b) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(10) An individual who is awarded the Purple Heart for service in the Armed Forces occurring on or after September 11, 2001, and continues to serve on active duty in the Armed Forces or is discharged or released from active duty as described in subsection (c).”.

(b) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—Section 3313(c)(1) is amended by striking “or (9)” and inserting “(9), or (10)”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 103. INCLUSION OF FRY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AND PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS IN YELLOW RIBBON G.I. EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3317(a) is amended, in the second sentence, by striking “paragraphs (1) and (2)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), (9), and (10)”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 104. INCLUSION OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY IN YELLOW RIBBON G.I. EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3317(a) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking “section 3313(c)(1)(A)” and inserting “subsection (c)(1)(A) or (e)(2)(A) of section 3313 of this title”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2022.

SEC. 105. CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN ELIGIBILITY TIERS UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3311(b), as amended by section 102, is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking “12 months” and inserting “6 months”;

(2) by striking paragraph (7); and

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (8), (9), and (10) as paragraphs (7), (8), and (9), respectively.

(b) AMOUNT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 3313(c) is amended by striking paragraph (7).

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 33 is further amended as follows:

(1) In section 3311(f), by striking “paragraph (9)” each place it appears and inserting “paragraph (8)”.

(2) In section 3313, as amended by section 102—

(A) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “(9), or (10)” and inserting “(8), or (9)”;

(B) in subsection (d), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” each place it appears and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(C) in subsection (e)(2)(C)—

(i) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

and

(ii) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”.

(D) in subsection (f)(2)(A)(ii), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(E) in subsection (g)(3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)(iv)—

(I) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

and

(II) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B)(iii)—

(I) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

and

(II) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(iii) in subparagraph (C)(ii)—

(I) in subclause (I), by striking “(9)” and inserting “(8)”;

(II) in subclause (II)—

(aa) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

(bb) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(iv) in subparagraph (D)(ii)—

(I) in subclause (I), by striking “(9)” and inserting “(8)”;

(II) in subclause (II)—

(aa) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

(bb) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(F) in subsection (h), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(3) In section 3316—

(A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(B) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”.

(4) In section 3317(a), in the second sentence, as amended by section 103, by striking “paragraphs (1), (2), (9), and (10)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), (8), and (9)”.

(5) In section 3321(b)(4), as amended by section 112, by striking “section 3311(b)(9)” and inserting “section 3311(b)(8)”.

(6) In section 3322—

(A) in subsection (e), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”;

(B) in subsection (f), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”;

(C) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”.

(7) In section 3679(c)(2)(B), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 106. ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF RESERVE COMPONENTS OF ARMED FORCES WHO LOST ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) ELECTION.—Section 16167 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—A member who loses eligibility for benefits under this chapter pursuant to subsection (b) shall be allowed to elect (in such form and manner as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may prescribe) to have such service previously credited toward this chapter credited towards establishing eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, notwithstanding the provisions of section 16163(e) of this title or section 3322(h)(1) of title 38.”.

(b) QUALIFICATION OF SERVICE.—Section 3301(1) of title 38, United States Code, shall be construed to include, in the case of a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who, before November 25, 2015, established eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, pursuant to section 16163(a)(1) of such title, but lost eligibility for such educational assistance pursuant to section 16167(b) of such title, service on active duty (as defined in section 101 of such title) that satisfies the requirements of section 16163(a)(1) of such title.

(c) ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3311(b)(6) of title 38, United States Code, shall be construed to include an individual who, before November 25, 2015, established eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, pursuant to section 16163(b) of such title, but lost such eligibility pursuant to section 16167(b) of such title.

(d) DURATION.—Notwithstanding section 3312 of title 38, United States Code, an individual who establishes eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 33 of such title by crediting towards such chapter service previously credited towards chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, is only entitled to a number of months of educational assistance under section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, equal to the number of months of entitlement remaining under chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, at the time of conversion to chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 107. CALCULATION OF MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BASED ON LOCATION OF CAMPUS WHERE CLASSES ARE ATTENDED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313(c)(1)(B)(i)(I) is amended by striking “the institution of higher learning at which the individual is enrolled” and inserting “the campus of the institution of higher learning where the individual physically participates in a majority of classes”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to initial enrollment in a program of education on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 108. CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT FOR CERTAIN LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION TESTS AND NATIONAL TESTS UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION TESTS.—Subsection (c) of section 3315 is amended—

(1) by striking “shall be determined at the rate of one month (rounded to the nearest whole month)” and inserting “shall be pro-rated based on the actual amount of the fee charged for the test relative to the rate for one month”; and

(2) by striking “for each amount paid that equals” and inserting “payable”.

(b) NATIONAL TESTS.—Section 3315A is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) A national test that evaluates prior learning and knowledge and provides an opportunity for course credit at an institution of higher learning as so described.”; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking “shall be determined at the rate of one month (rounded to the nearest whole month)” and inserting “shall be prorated based on the actual amount of the fee charged for the test relative to the rate for one month”; and

(B) by striking “for each amount paid that equals” and inserting “payable”.

(c) TESTS INCLUDED.—Section 3452(b) is amended in the last sentence—

(1) by striking “and national tests providing” and inserting “, national tests providing”; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, and national tests that evaluate prior learning and knowledge and provides an opportunity for course credit at an institution of higher learning”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall apply to a test taken on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 109. RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER RELIEF FOR VETERANS AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.

(a) SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—

(1) RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT.—Chapter 36 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§3699. Effects of closure or disapproval of educational institution

“(a) CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—Any payment of educational assistance described in subsection (b) shall not—

“(1) be charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the individual concerned; or

“(2) be counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title limits the receipt of educational assistance by such individual.

“(b) EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE DESCRIBED.—Subject to subsection (c), the payment of educational assistance described in this paragraph is the payment of such assistance to an individual for pursuit of a course or program of education at an educational institution under chapters 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapters 1606 or 1607 of title 10, if the Secretary determines that the individual—

“(1) was unable to complete such course or program as a result of—

“(A) the closure of the educational institution; or

“(B) the disapproval of the course or a course that is a necessary part of that program under this chapter by reason of—

“(i) a provision of law enacted after the date on which the individual enrolls at such institution affecting the approval or disapproval of courses under this chapter; or

“(ii) after the date on which the individual enrolls at such institution, the Secretary prescribing or modifying regulations or policies of the Department affecting such approval or disapproval; and

“(2) did not receive credit or lost training time, toward completion of the program of education being so pursued.

“(c) PERIOD NOT CHARGED.—The period for which, by reason of this subsection, educational assistance is not charged against entitlement or counted toward the applicable aggregate period under section 3695 of this title shall not exceed the aggregate of—

“(1) the portion of the period of enrollment in the course from which the individual did not receive credit or with respect to which the individual lost training time, as determined under subsection (b)(2), and

“(2) the period by which a monthly stipend is extended under section 3680(a)(2)(B) of this title.

(d) CONTINUING PURSUIT OF DISAPPROVED COURSES.—(1) The Secretary may treat a course of education that is disapproved under this chapter as being approved under this chapter with respect to an individual described in paragraph (2) if the Secretary determines, on a case-by-case basis, that—

“(A) such disapproval is the result of an action described in clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(B); and

“(B) continuing pursuing such course is in the best interest of the individual.

(2) An individual described in this paragraph is an individual who is pursuing a course of education at an educational institution under chapters 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapters 1606 or 1607 of title 10, as of the date on which the course is disapproved under this chapter.

(e) NOTICE OF CLOSURES.—Not later than five business days after the date on which the Secretary receives notice that an educational institution will close or is closed, the Secretary shall provide to each individual who is enrolled in a course or program or education at such educational institution using entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, notice of—

“(1) such closure and the date of such closure; and

“(2) the effect of such closure on the individual's entitlement to educational assistance pursuant to this section.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3698 the following new item:

“3699. Effects of closure or disapproval of educational institution.”.

(b) MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) section 3680 is amended—

(A) by striking the matter after paragraph (3)(B);

(B) in paragraph (3), by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively;

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(D) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as redesignated, in the first sentence, by striking “Payment of” and inserting “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), payment of”; and

(E) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary may, pursuant to such regulations as the Secretary shall prescribe, continue to pay allowances to eligible veterans and eligible persons enrolled in courses set forth in paragraph (1)(A)—

“(A) during periods when educational institutions are temporarily closed under an established policy based on an Executive order of the President or due to an emergency situation, except that the total number of weeks for which allowances may continue to be so payable in any 12-month period may not exceed four weeks; or

“(B) solely for the purpose of awarding a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313 of this title, during periods following a permanent closure of an educational institution, or following the disapproval of a course of study described in section 3699(b)(1)(B) of this title, except that payment of such a sti-

pend may only be continued until the earlier of—

“(i) the date of the end of the term, quarter, or semester during which the closure or disapproval occurred; and

“(ii) the date that is 120 days after the date of the closure or disapproval.”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (1)(C)(ii) of such subsection, as redesignated, is amended by striking “described in subclause (A) of this clause” and inserting “described in clause (i)”.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply with respect to courses and programs of education discontinued as described in section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), after January 1, 2015.

(B) SPECIAL APPLICATION.—With respect to courses and programs of education discontinued as described in section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), during the period beginning January 1, 2015, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act, an individual who does not transfer credits from such program of education shall be deemed to be an individual who did not receive such credits, as described in subsection (b)(2) of such section, except that the period for which the individual's entitlement is not charged shall be the entire period of the individual's enrollment in the program of education. In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall establish procedures to determine whether the individual transferred credits to a comparable course or program of education.

(2) MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall take effect on August 1, 2018, and shall apply with respect to courses and programs of education discontinued as described in section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, as added by such subsection, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 110. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZED TRANSFER OF UNUSED POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS TO DEPENDENTS UPON DEATH OF ORIGINALLY DESIGNATED DEPENDENT.

(a) TRANSFER UPON DEATH OF DEPENDENT.—Section 3319 is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)(1), by inserting after “section 3321” the following: “, and except as provided in subsection (k) or (l).”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) ADDITIONAL TRANSFER UPON DEATH OF DEPENDENT.—In the case of a dependent to whom entitlement to educational assistance is transferred under this section who dies before using all of such entitlement, the individual who transferred the entitlement to the dependent may transfer any remaining entitlement to a different eligible dependent, notwithstanding whether the individual is serving as a member of the Armed Forces when such transfer is executed.

“(l) TRANSFER BY DEPENDENT.—In the case of an individual who transfers entitlement to educational assistance under this section who dies before the dependent to whom entitlement to educational assistance is so transferred has used all of such entitlement, such dependent may transfer such entitlement to another eligible dependent in accordance with the provisions of this section.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) ELIGIBLE DEATHS.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after August 1, 2009.

(2) USE OF ENTITLEMENT.—A dependent to whom entitlement to educational assistance is transferred under subsection (k) or (l) of section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), may use such entitlement to pursue a course of education beginning on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 111. EDITH NOURSE ROGERS STEM SCHOLARSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 33 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3320. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitation under subsection (f), the Secretary shall provide additional benefits to eligible individuals selected by the Secretary under this section. Such benefits shall be known as the ‘Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship’.

“(b) ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of this section, an eligible individual is an individual—

“(1) who is or was entitled to educational assistance under section 3311 of this title;

“(2) who has used all of the educational assistance to which the individual is entitled under this chapter or will, based on the individual’s rate of usage, use all of such assistance within 180 days of applying for benefits under this section;

“(3) who applies for assistance under this section; and

“(4) who—

“(A) is an individual who—

“(i) is enrolled in a program of education leading to a post-secondary degree that, in accordance with the guidelines of the applicable regional or national accrediting agency, requires more than the standard 128 semester (or 192 quarter) credit hours for completion in a standard, undergraduate college degree in—

“(I) biological or biomedical science;

“(II) physical science;

“(III) science technologies or technicians;

“(IV) computer and information science and support services;

“(V) mathematics or statistics;

“(VI) engineering;

“(VII) engineering technologies or an engineering-related field;

“(VIII) a health profession or related program;

“(IX) a medical residency program;

“(X) an agriculture science program or a natural resources science program; or

“(XI) other subjects and fields identified by the Secretary as meeting national needs;

“(ii) has completed at least 60 standard semester (or 90 quarter) credit hours in a field referred to in clause (i); or

“(B) is an individual who has earned a post-secondary degree in a field referred to in subparagraph (A)(i) and is enrolled in a program of education leading to a teaching certification.

“(c) PRIORITY.—In selecting eligible individuals to receive additional benefits under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to the following individuals:

“(1) Individuals who require the most credit hours described in subsection (b)(4).

“(2) Individuals who are entitled to educational assistance under this chapter by reason of paragraph (1), (2), (8), or (9) of section 3311(b) of this title.

“(d) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary shall pay to each eligible individual who receives additional benefits under this section the monthly amount payable under section 3313 of this title for not more than nine months of the program of education in which the individual is enrolled (adjusted with respect to the individual pursuant to section 3313(c), as appropriate), except that the aggregate amount paid to an individual under this section may not exceed \$30,000.

“(2) The Secretary may not pay to such an individual an amount in addition to the amount payable under paragraph (1) by reason of section 3317 of this title.

“(3) An individual who receives additional benefits under this section may also receive amounts payable by a college or university pursuant to section 3317 of this title.

“(e) PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER.—An individual who receives additional benefits under this section may not transfer any amount of such additional benefits under section 3319 of this title.

“(f) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF TOTAL ASSISTANCE.—The total amount of benefits paid to all eligible individuals under this section may not exceed—

“(1) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

“(2) \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2022; and

“(3) \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 and each subsequent fiscal year.

“(g) CONGRESSIONAL NOTICE.—If the Secretary identifies a new subject or field pursuant to subsection (b)(4)(A)(i)(XI) as meeting a national need, the Secretary shall submit to Congress notice of such identification at least 90 days before conferring eligibility on any individual for purposes of this section on the basis of such identification, including any analysis of labor market supply and demand used in identifying the new subject or field, as applicable.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3319 the following new item:

“3320. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 3320 of title 38, United States Code, shall take effect on August 1, 2019.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—

(1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than August 1, 2022, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of an interim assessment of the Comptroller General of the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program under section 3320 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a). Such report shall include the recommendations of the Comptroller General for improving the scholarship program and an assessment of each of the following, using rigorous, systematic, and objective methodology, and including comparisons to eligible veterans who did not participate in the program:

(A) An explanation of the identification of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of subjects and fields meeting national needs under subsection (b)(4)(A)(i)(XI) of such section, including any analysis of labor market supply and demand, as applicable.

(B) An evaluation of the types of educational institutions and programs where beneficiaries use the educational assistance provided under the scholarship program.

(C) The completion rate of students participating in the program.

(D) The job placement rate for individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program in the field of study of the program of education.

(E) The median annual earnings of individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program.

(F) The average age of the individuals who received educational assistance under the scholarship program.

(G) An assessment of the extent to which any educational institutions made changes to degrees or programs of education offered by the institution for which the scholarship program may be used after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than August 1, 2024, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress an assessment of such scholarship program that includes each of the following:

(A) Each item described in subparagraph (A) through (G) of paragraph (1).

(B) The percentage of individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program who were subsequently employed for a period of six months or longer in the field of study of the program of education.

(C) The percentage of individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program who were subsequently employed for a period of less than six months in the field of study of the program of education.

SEC. 112. HONORING THE NATIONAL SERVICE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES BY ELIMINATION OF TIME LIMITATION FOR USE OF ENTITLEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 3321 is amended—

(1) by striking “individual’s entitlement” and all that follows through the period and inserting “individual’s entitlement—”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(1) in the case of an individual whose last discharge or release from active duty is before January 1, 2013, expires at the end of the 15-year period beginning on the date of such discharge or release; or

“(2) in the case of an individual whose last discharge or release from active duty is on or after January 1, 2013, shall not expire.”.

(b) CHILDREN OF DECEASED MEMBERS.—Subsection (b)(4) of such section is amended—

(1) by inserting “of this title” after “3311(b)(9)”; and

(2) by striking “child’s entitlement” and all that follows through the period and inserting “child’s entitlement—”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(A) in the case of a child who first becomes entitled to such entitlement before January 1, 2013, expires at the end of the 15-year period beginning on the date of such child’s eighteenth birthday; or

“(B) in the case of a child who first becomes entitled to such entitlement on or after January 1, 2013, shall not expire.”.

(c) SPOUSES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.—Subsection (b) of such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) APPLICABILITY TO SPOUSES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.—The period during which a spouse entitled to educational assistance by reason of section 3311(b)(9) may use such spouse’s entitlement—

“(A) in the case of a spouse who first becomes entitled to such entitlement before January 1, 2013, expires at the end of the 15-year period beginning on the date on which the spouse first becomes entitled to such entitlement; or

“(B) in the case of a spouse who first becomes entitled to such entitlement on or after January 1, 2013, shall not expire.”.

SEC. 113. MONTHLY STIPEND FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES RECEIVING POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313 is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(j) DETERMINATION OF MONTHLY STIPENDS DURING CERTAIN ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE.—

“(1) PRO RATA BASIS.—In any month in which an individual described in paragraph (2) is performing active duty service described in section 3301(1)(B) of this title, the

Secretary shall determine the amount of monthly stipends payable under this section for such month on a pro rata basis for the period of such month in which the covered individual is not performing such active duty service.

“(2) INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.—An individual described in this paragraph is an individual who is—

“(A) a member of the reserve components of the Armed Forces; and

“(B) pursuing a program of education using educational assistance under this chapter.”.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 114. ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS ON INFORMATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS SUBMITTED BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Section 3326 is amended—

(1) by striking “As a condition” and inserting “(a) SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—As a condition”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes a summary of the information provided by educational institutions under subsection (a) for the calendar year preceding the year during which such report is submitted.”.

SEC. 115. IMPROVEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OF THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROCESSING OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE CLAIMS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, to the maximum extent possible, make such changes and improvements to the information technology system of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that—

(1) to the maximum extent possible, all original and supplemental claims for educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, are adjudicated electronically; and

(2) rules-based processing is used to make decisions with respect to such claims with little human intervention.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a plan to implement the changes and improvements described in subsection (a).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the changes and improvements described in subsection (a).

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs \$30,000,000 to carry out this section during fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

SEC. 116. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide eligible veterans with the opportunity to enroll in high technology programs of education that the Secretary determines provide training or skills sought by employers in a relevant field or industry.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of the pilot program under this section, an eligible veteran is a veteran who is entitled to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33,

34, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, United States Code.

(c) CONTRACTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), by not later than 180 days after August 1, 2018, the Secretary shall seek to enter into contracts with any number of qualified providers of high technology programs of education for the provision of such programs to eligible veterans under the pilot program. Each such contract shall provide for the conditions under which the Secretary may terminate the contract with the provider and the procedures for providing for the completion of the instruction of students who were enrolled in a program provided by such provider in the case of such a termination.

(2) PAYMENT OF CONTRACTORS.—A contract under this subsection shall provide that the Secretary shall pay to a provider—

(A) upon the enrollment of an eligible veteran in the program, 25 percent of the cost of the tuition and other fees for the program of education for the veteran;

(B) upon the completion of the program by the veteran, 25 percent of such cost; and

(C) upon the employment of the veteran in the field of study of the program following completion of the program, 50 percent of such cost.

(3) QUALIFIED PROVIDERS.—For purposes of the pilot program, a provider of a high technology program of education is qualified if—

(A) the provider has been operational for at least two years;

(B) the provider has successfully provided the high technology program for at least one year; and

(C) the provider meets the approval criteria developed by the Secretary under paragraph (4).

(4) APPROVAL CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall develop criteria for approving providers for purposes of the pilot program. In developing such criteria, the Secretary may consult with State approving agencies. Such criteria is not required to meet the requirements of section 3672 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.—In entering into contracts to carry out the pilot program, the Secretary shall give preference to a qualified provider that offers tuition reimbursement for any student who—

(A) completes a program of education offered by the provider; and

(B) does not find full-time meaningful employment in the field of study of the program within the 180-day period beginning on the date the student completes the program.

(d) HOUSING STIPEND.—The Secretary shall pay to each eligible veteran who is enrolled in a high technology program of education under the pilot program on a full-time basis a monthly housing stipend equal to the product—

(1) of—

(A) in the case of a veteran pursuing resident training, the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, for a member with dependents in pay grade E-5 residing in the military housing area that encompasses all or the majority portion of the ZIP code area in which is located the institution at which the individual is enrolled; or

(B) in the case of a veteran pursuing a program of education through distance learning, a monthly amount equal to 50 percent of the amount payable under subparagraph (A), multiplied by

(2) the lesser of—

(A) 1.0; or

(B) the number of course hours borne by the individual in pursuit of the program of

education involved, divided by the minimum number of course hours required for full-time pursuit of such program of education, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

(e) HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM OF EDUCATION DEFINED.—In this section, the term “high technology program of education” means a program of education that—

(1) is offered by an entity other than an institution of higher learning;

(2) does not lead to a degree; and

(3) provides instruction in computer programming, computer software, media application, data processing, or information sciences.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program under this section.

(2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—

(A) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date on which the Secretary first enters into a contract under this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the interim assessment of the Comptroller General. Such report shall include the recommendations of the Comptroller General for improving the pilot program and an assessment of each of the following:

(i) The technology experience of the directors and instructors of the providers of high technology programs of education under the pilot program.

(ii) Whether the providers cooperated with the technology industry to create the curriculum for the program of education.

(iii) Whether the providers use an open source curriculum for the program of education.

(iv) The admittance rate into the pilot program.

(v) The job placement and retention rate for veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program in the field of study of the program.

(vi) The percentage of veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program who were subsequently employed for a period of six months or longer in a field of study of the program.

(vii) The percentage of veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program who were subsequently employed for a period of less than six months in a field of study of the program.

(viii) The median annual salary of veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program and were subsequently employed.

(ix) As applicable, the transfer rates to other academic or vocational programs and certifications and licensure exam passage rates.

(x) The average age of veterans who participated in the pilot program.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than five years after the date on which the Secretary first enters into a contract under this section, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a final report on the pilot program. Such report shall include the recommendation of the Comptroller General with respect to whether the program should be extended and an assessment of each item described in clauses (i) through (x) of subparagraph (A).

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For each fiscal year during which the Secretary carries out a pilot program under this section, \$15,000,000 shall be made available for such purpose from funds appropriated to, or otherwise made available to, the Department for the payment of readjustment benefits.

(h) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out a pilot program under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary first enters into a contract under this section.

TITLE II—OTHER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SEC. 201. WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCE.

Section 3485(a)(4) is amended by striking “the period beginning on June 30, 2017, and ending on June 30, 2022,” each place it appears and inserting “any time on or after June 30, 2017,”.

SEC. 202. DURATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 3511(a)(1) is amended—

(1) by striking “chapter for” and all that follows through the period and inserting “chapter—”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(A) in the case of a person who first enrolls in a program of education using such entitlement before August 1, 2018, for an aggregate period not in excess of 45 months (or to the equivalent thereof in part-time training); or

“(B) in the case of a person who first enrolls in a program of education using such entitlement on or after August 1, 2018, for an aggregate period not in excess of 36 months (or to the equivalent thereof in part-time training).”.

SEC. 203. OLIN E. TEAGUE INCREASE IN AMOUNTS OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PAYABLE UNDER SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) INCREASE.—Section 3532 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “\$788” and inserting “\$1,224”; and

(ii) by striking “\$592” and inserting “\$967”; and

(iii) by striking “\$394” and inserting “\$710”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking “\$788” and inserting “\$1,224”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “\$788” and inserting “\$1,224”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a month that begins on or after October 1, 2018.

TITLE III—ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SEC. 301. STATE APPROVING AGENCY FUNDING.

(a) INCREASE.—Section 3674(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “out of amounts available for the payment of readjustment benefits” and inserting “out of amounts in the Department of Veterans Affairs readjustment benefits account and amounts appropriated to the Secretary”; and

(2) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph (4):

“(4) In addition to amounts made available under paragraph (5), there is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 and each subsequent fiscal year.”; and

(4) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “The total” and inserting “(A) The total”; and

(B) by striking “for any fiscal year shall be \$19,000,000” and inserting “for fiscal year 2018 shall be \$21,000,000 and for fiscal year 2019 and thereafter shall be \$23,000,000”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) Beginning in fiscal year 2019, whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts

payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) as a result of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)), the Secretary shall, effective on the date of such increase in benefit amounts, increase the amount in effect under subparagraph (A), as in effect immediately prior to the date of such increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act, by the same percentage as the percentage by which such benefit amounts are increased.”.

SEC. 302. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAMS AT CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE NOT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

Section 3680A is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “in—” and inserting “in any of the following:”; and

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “any” and inserting “Any”; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “any” and inserting “Any”; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(D) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking “any” and inserting “Any”; and

(ii) by striking “; or” and inserting a period; and

(E) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following new paragraph (4):

“(4) Any independent study program except an independent study program (including such a program taken over open circuit television) that—

“(A) is accredited by an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education under subpart 2 of part H of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b);

“(B) leads to—

“(i) a standard college degree;

“(ii) a certificate that reflects educational attainment offered by an institution of higher learning; or

“(iii) a certificate that reflects completion of a course of study offered by—

“(I) an area career and technical education school (as defined in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of section 3(3) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302(3))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; or

“(II) a postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; and

“(C) in the case of a program described in subparagraph (B)(iii)—

“(i) provides training aligned with the requirements of employers in the State or local area where the program is located, which may include in-demand industry sectors or occupations; and

“(ii) provides a student, upon completion of the program, with a recognized postsecondary credential that is recognized by employers in the relevant industry, which may include a credential recognized by industry or sector partnerships in the State or local area where the industry is located; and

“(iii) meets such content and instructional standards as may be required to comply with the criteria under section 3676(c)(14) and (15) of this title.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) In this section, the terms ‘State or local area’, ‘recognized postsecondary cre-

dential’, ‘industry or sector partnership’, and ‘in-demand industry sector or occupation’ have the meaning given such terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).”.

SEC. 303. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON PRIORITY ENROLLMENT FOR VETERANS IN CERTAIN COURSES OF EDUCATION.

Section 3698(c)(1)(C) is amended—

(1) in clause (ix), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in clause (x), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(xi) information on whether the institution administers a priority enrollment system that allows certain student veterans to enroll in courses earlier than other students.”.

SEC. 304. LIMITATION ON USE OF REPORTING FEES PAYABLE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SPONSORS OF PROGRAMS OF APPRENTICESHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 3684 is amended to read as follows:

“(c)(1) The Secretary may pay to any educational institution, or to the sponsor of a program of apprenticeship, furnishing education or training under either this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title, a reporting fee which will be in lieu of any other compensation or reimbursement for reports or certifications which such educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship is required to submit to the Secretary by law or regulation.

“(2) Such reporting fee shall be computed for each calendar year by multiplying \$16 by the number of eligible veterans or eligible persons enrolled under this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title. The reporting fee shall be paid to such educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship as soon as feasible after the end of the calendar year for which it is applicable.

“(3) No reporting fee payable to an educational institution under this subsection shall be subject to offset by the Secretary against any liability of such institution for any overpayment for which such institution may be administratively determined to be liable under section 3685 of this title unless such liability is not contested by such institution or has been upheld by a final decree of a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

“(4) Any reporting fee paid to an educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship after the date of the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2011 (Public Law 111-377)—

“(A) shall be utilized by such institution or sponsor solely for the making of certifications required under this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title or for otherwise supporting programs for veterans; and

“(B) with respect to an institution that has 100 or more enrollees described in paragraph (2) may not be used for or merged with amounts available for the general fund of the educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship.

“(5) The reporting fee payable under this subsection shall be paid from amounts appropriated for readjustment benefits.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 305. TRAINING FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS.

(a) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with the State approving agencies, set forth requirements relating to training for school certifying officials employed by covered educational institutions offering courses of education approved under chapter 36 of title 38,

United States Code. If a covered educational institution does not ensure that a school certifying official employed by the educational institution meets such requirements, the Secretary may disapprove any course of education offered by such educational institution.

(b) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “covered educational institution” means an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more individuals using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “school certifying official” means an employee of an educational institution with primary responsibility for certifying veteran enrollment at the educational institution.

(3) The term “State approving agency” means a department or agency of a State designated under section 3671 of title 38, United States Code.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 306. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692 is amended by striking “December 31, 2017” and inserting “December 31, 2022”.

SEC. 307. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION OF ON-CAMPUS EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELING FOR VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 36 is amended by inserting after section 3697A the following new section:

“§ 3697B. On-campus educational and vocational counseling

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide educational and vocational counseling services for individuals described in section 3697A(b) of this title at locations on the campuses of institutions of higher learning selected by the Secretary. Such counseling services shall be provided by employees of the Department who provide such services under section 3697A of this title.

“(b) **SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.**—(1) To be selected by the Secretary under this section, an institution of higher learning shall provide an appropriate space on the campus of the institution where counseling services can be provided under this section.

“(2) In selecting locations for the provision of counseling services under this section, the Secretary shall seek to select locations where the maximum number of veterans would have access to such services.

“(c) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the counseling services provided under this section. Such report shall include, for the year covered by the report—

“(1) the average ratio of counselors providing such services to individuals who received such services at each location where such services were provided;

“(2) a description of such services provided;

“(3) the recommendations of the Secretary for improving the provision of such services; and

“(4) any other matters the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3697A the following new item:

“3697B. On-campus educational and vocational counseling.”.

SEC. 308. PROVISION OF INFORMATION REGARDING VETERAN ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 36 is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3699A. Provision of certain information to educational institutions

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—For each veteran or other individual pursuing a course of education that has been approved under this chapter using educational assistance to which the veteran or other individual is entitled under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, the Secretary shall make available to the educational institution offering the course information about the amount of such educational assistance to which the veteran or other individual is entitled. Such information shall be provided to such educational institution through a secure information technology system accessible by the educational institution and shall be regularly updated to reflect any amounts used by the veteran or other individual.

“(b) **ELECTION.**—A veteran or other individual pursuing a course of education described in subsection (a) may elect not to provide the information described in such subsection to an educational institution in a manner prescribed by the Secretary.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699 the following new item:

“3699A. Provision of certain information to educational institutions.”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Section 3699A of title 38, United States Code, as added by this section, shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 309. TREATMENT, FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, OF EDUCATIONAL COURSES THAT BEGIN SEVEN OR FEWER DAYS AFTER THE FIRST DAY OF AN ACADEMIC TERM.

Section 3684(a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph (4):

“(4) A course offered by an educational institution that does not begin on the first day of an academic term, but does begin seven or fewer days after such day, shall be treated as beginning on such day for purposes of this section.”.

SEC. 310. INCLUSION OF RISK-BASED SURVEYS IN STATE APPROVING AGENCY OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES.

Section 3673(d) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking “COMPLIANCE AND”;

(2) by striking “such compliance and oversight” and inserting “conducting risk-based surveys and other such oversight”; and

(3) by inserting “, in consultation with the State approving agencies,” after “as the Secretary”.

SEC. 311. COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY OF STATE APPROVING AGENCY PERFORMANCE.

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall carry out a study on the performance of State approving agencies. Such study shall include each of the following:

(1) An analysis of the effectiveness of the cooperation between the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and State approving agencies regarding the execution of shared compliance and oversight responsibilities under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) An analysis of the resources necessary for State approving agencies to fulfill the responsibilities of such agencies under such title, including an analysis of whether Congress has appropriated sufficient funds for State approving agencies to fulfill such responsibilities and the historic effect of funding on the ability of such agencies to fulfill such responsibilities.

(3) An evaluation of the use by State approving agencies of risk-based methods of review for identifying violations of established standards under such chapter.

(4) An examination of how State approving agencies use risk factors, including rapid increases in veteran enrollment, increases in the amount of benefits per capita, volume of student complaints, rates of Federal student loan defaults of veterans, veteran completion rates, deficiencies identified by accreditors and other State agencies, and deficiencies in Department of Veterans Affairs program administration compliance, in their oversight and compliance responsibilities and in selecting educational institutions for review of eligibility.

(5) Recommendations on how the Secretary and State approving agencies can better use data to evaluate, approve, or disapprove educational institutions under such chapter.

(b) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, a report on the study required under subsection (a) and the findings and recommendations of the Comptroller General with respect to such study.

TITLE IV—RESERVE COMPONENT BENEFITS

SEC. 401. ELIGIBILITY OF RESERVE COMPONENT MEMBERS FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3301(1)(B) is amended by striking “or 12304” and inserting “12304, 12304a, or 12304b”.

(b) **RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to service in the Armed Forces occurring on or after the date of the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-252).

(c) **APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO USE OF ENTITLEMENT.**—An individual who is entitled to educational assistance by reason of the amendment made by subsection (a) may use such entitlement to pursue a course of education beginning on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 402. TIME LIMITATION FOR TRAINING AND REHABILITATION FOR VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

Section 3103(f) is amended by striking “or 12304” and inserting “12304, 12304a, or 12304b”.

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 501. REPEAL INAPPLICABILITY OF MODIFICATION OF BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING TO BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **REPEAL.**—Subsection (b) of section 604 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291; 37 U.S.C. 403 note) is repealed.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on January 1, 2018, and shall apply with respect to individuals who first use their entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, on or after such date.

SEC. 502. RECONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUSLY DENIED CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS WHO ALLEGE FULL-BODY EXPOSURE TO NITROGEN MUSTARD GAS, SULFUR MUSTARD GAS, OR LEWISITE DURING WORLD WAR II.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

(1) **RECONSIDERATION REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reconsider

all claims for compensation described in paragraph (2) and make a new determination regarding each such claim.

(2) CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION DESCRIBED.—A claim for compensation described in this paragraph is a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary determines—

(A) arose from the alleged full-body exposure of a veteran to a covered substance—

(I) during active military, naval, or air service during World War II; and

(ii) at a site listed in paragraph (3); and

(B) was denied before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) SITES.—The sites listed in this paragraph are the following:

(A) Camp Siebert, Alabama.
(B) Fort McClellan, Alabama.
(C) Huntsville Arsenal, Alabama.
(D) Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Colorado.
(E) Naval Research Laboratory, D.C.
(F) Bushnell Field, Florida.
(G) Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois.

(H) Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland.
(I) Fort Detrick, Maryland.
(J) Naval Research Laboratory, Maryland.
(K) Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland.

(L) Horn Island Installation, Mississippi.
(M) Camp Crowder, Missouri.
(N) Hart's Island, New York.
(O) Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
(P) Charleston, South Carolina.
(Q) Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.
(R) Toole Army Depot, Utah.
(S) Naval Research Laboratory, Virginia.
(T) U.S.S. Eagle Boat No. 58.
(U) Ondal, India.
(V) Fort Clayton, San Jose Island, Panama.

(W) Any site the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines is appropriate.

(4) FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION.—In making a determination under paragraph (1), the Secretary—

(A) shall consider—

(i) that contemporaneous records of testing of full-body exposure to a covered substance frequently may be unavailable because such tests were classified or such records were lost or destroyed;

(ii) that many veterans were sworn to secrecy following testing described in clause (i);

(iii) each statement based on personal knowledge of a veteran who served at a site listed in paragraph (3);

(iv) information in the report from the Secretary of Defense under subsection (b)(2); and

(v) any evidence the Secretary considers relevant; and

(B) may not determine that testing of full-body exposure to a covered substance did not occur at a site based solely on—

(i) information contained in the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Chemical Biological Warfare Database; or

(ii) any list of known sites of testing of full-body exposure to a covered substance maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense.

(5) PRESUMPTION OF EXPOSURE.—In carrying out paragraph (1), when the Secretary of Veterans Affairs makes a determination regarding whether a veteran experienced full-body exposure to a covered substance, the Secretary—

(A) shall presume, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish otherwise, that the veteran experienced such exposure by reason of the service of the veteran in World War II—

(i) based on the locations listed in paragraph (3); and

(ii) consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of service of the veteran in accordance with section 1154 of title 38; and

(B) shall resolve each reasonable doubt in favor of the veteran.

(6) EFFECTIVE DATE OF AWARD.—The effective date of any award of disability compensation resulting from reconsideration of a claim under paragraph (1) shall be fixed in accordance with the facts found, but shall not be earlier than the date of the receipt of the claim for compensation described in paragraph (2).

(b) INVESTIGATION AND REPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall—

(1) investigate and assess each site—

(A) where the Army Corps of Engineers has uncovered evidence of testing conducted by the Department of Defense during World War II to assess the effects of full-body exposure to a covered substance on humans; or

(B) with regards to which more than two veterans have been denied claims for compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, in connection with exposure to a covered substance at such site; and

(2) submit to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a report on testing described in paragraph (1)(A), including—

(A) a list of each location where such testing occurred, including locations investigated and assessed under paragraph (1);

(B) the dates of each such testing; and

(C) the number of members of the Armed Forces who experienced full-body exposure to a covered substance in each such testing.

(c) INVESTIGATION AND REPORT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) investigate and assess—

(A) the actions taken by the Secretary to contact individuals who experienced full-body exposure to a covered substance in the course of testing described in subsection (b)(1)(A);

(B) the number of claims filed with the Secretary for disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, arising from testing described in subsection (b)(1)(A); and

(C) the percentage of claims described in subparagraph (B) that the Secretary denied.

(2) submit to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Defense a report regarding the investigations and assessments carried out under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The terms “active military, naval, or air service”, “veteran”, and “World War II” have the meanings given such terms in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and

(B) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

(3) The term “covered substance” means—

(A) nitrogen mustard gas;

(B) sulfur mustard gas; or

(C) Lewisite.

(4) The term “full-body exposure”, with respect to a covered substance, has the meaning given that term by the Secretary of Defense.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3218, as amended, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, which I introduced with Ranking Member WALZ and every member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs 2 weeks ago.

This bill and how it got to this point today is a shining example of how well Congress can and should work together. It is the result of tireless work of many veterans service organizations and the bipartisan efforts of committee members.

I am proud that the improvements and enhancements to the GI Bill that this Chamber will advance today will empower servicemembers, veterans, survivors, and dependents for generations to come.

This is the first major improvement to the GI Bill since 2011, and it encompasses 17 bills introduced by our colleagues, many who serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and also others who share our committee's commitment to the men and women who have raised their right hand side to serve.

This package includes over 30 provisions and brings forward many enhancements that veterans' groups have requested for years. I have said it before and I will say it again, this isn't a package that comes along every day.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3218, as amended, is aptly named after Mr. Harry W. Colmery, who is credited with actually writing by hand the first draft of the World War II-era GI Bill. It is only appropriate that we honor him today for his work on the first GI Bill decades ago.

This package would do a number of things, and I want to focus on just a few key improvements. First, it would eliminate the 15-year time limit to use the GI Bill benefits for future eligible beneficiaries and anyone who left active service on or after January 1, 2013.

Madam Speaker, the GI Bill, when I used it for 2 years after I got out of the military, was, at 10 years, you could no longer use it. This is a lifetime commitment to the American people, to our veterans, if they can exercise their GI Bill benefit at any time.

Let me repeat that. For the first time in the history of our GI Bill, future beneficiaries and some veterans will be able to carry these benefits with them throughout their life.

Secondly, the bill would provide significant increases in GI Bill funding for

reservists and guardsmen, including those who are currently serving on orders but do not accrue GI Bill eligibility, as well as dependents, surviving spouses, and surviving dependents.

It would also provide 100 percent GI eligibility for post-9/11 Purple Heart recipients.

Finally, it would increase opportunities for veterans to complete a science, technology, engineering, math degree, or other high technology program. That particular issue is one that I know Leader MCCARTHY has advocated for. It is a privilege to have him as an original cosponsor of the bill, and we thank him for his leadership in getting the bill to the House floor promptly.

The provisions I just mentioned only scratch the surface of the benefits that our veterans and survivors will receive under this bill.

The amendment to this bill before the House today provides technical and conforming changes to ensure the bill is budget-neutral over the 10-year budget window, clarifies that students impacted by the closure of ITT Tech would be able to have their GI Bill eligibility restored if they are unable to transfer their credits, and, starting in fiscal year 2022, would provide eligibility for a Yellow Ribbon Program to Active Duty servicemembers.

Madam Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to all the VSOs who pushed for this package. And I would be remiss if I didn't single out and give my sincere thanks to the Student Veterans of America, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Got Your Six for working tirelessly across the Hill over several months to help us make this happen.

I commend and thank them because, without a doubt, we would not be in this Chamber today on the verge of this historic moment without their efforts.

Finally, I thank Ranking Member WALZ for his strong leadership and support in making this package come together. I also express my appreciation to Senators ISAKSON and TESTER for their efforts in negotiating a strong package we can all agree on. I know they are planning to hold a markup on this companion bill to H.R. 3218, as amended, this week, and I would expect that they can pick up and pass this bill and get it to President Trump's desk before the August District Work Period.

Madam Speaker, this is a strong bill that would help thousands of student veterans for the rest of their lives. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 20, 2017.

Hon. DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 3218, the "Harry W. Colmery

Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017." There are certain provisions in the bill 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.R. 3218. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Armed Services does not waive any fixture 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 committee report on H.R. 3218 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. The committee also reserves the right to seek appointment to any House-Senate conference on this legislation and requests your support if such a request is made. 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 VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2017.
Hon. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman, House Committee on Armed Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THORNBERRY: In reference to your letter on July 20, 2017, I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 3218, as amended, the "Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017."

I appreciate the House Committee on Armed Services' waiver of consideration of provisions under its jurisdiction and its subject matter as specified in your letter. I acknowledge that the waiver was granted only to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 3218, as amended, and does not in any way waive or diminish the Committee on Armed Services' jurisdictional interests over this legislation or similar legislation. I will support your committee's request for appointment to any House-Senate conference on H.R. 3218, as amended. Finally, I will also support your request to include a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter in the committee report on H.R. 3218, as amended, and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Again, thank you for your assistance and cooperation with these matters. Sincerely,
DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman.

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

I rise in unwavering support of H.R. 3218.

It is interesting, we may prove a couple of things. One is that the universe needs to be balanced, or God has an incredible sense of irony, or our democracy is resilient and strong because, after our debate over the last piece of legislation, I can tell you that, in the time I have had the privilege of representing the people of southern Minnesota, I am not sure there is a day that I feel more of that sense of pride and honor than to be here today. Much of that thanks goes to a humble man who won't say so himself.

The Colmery GI Bill, in any years past, and maybe with a different chair-

man, would have been the Roe GI Bill, as the Sonny Montgomery GI Bill; but the chairman is a man of humbleness and passing on thanks to others, and it shows in giving the credit to so many Members who wrote and were part of this legislation.

This is a real historic piece of work. It is hard to get big pieces of legislation like this done. I saw somebody had written up recently and said: Well, the VA Committee is moving a lot of things because it is easy.

I think, after that last little debate and how this one has gone, there is nothing easy about it because it is not supposed to be easy. It is supposed to be a challenge building the coalitions necessary. It is supposed to be thoughtful because we are impacting generations going forward.

There are so many people to thank, and the chairman started hitting on them; but I want to again as someone who, if not for the GI Bill, would not have received my education, and our lives and the trajectory of our lives are changed dramatically for that.

Somebody stood in these chairs years ago and thought about putting a GI Bill in place that ended up benefiting me; and the idea of being able to pay it forward from one veteran to another, or from this House to another, is something that seems like it is lacking too much around here.

When we get together, there is much we can do for this country. The improvements in the bill are wide-ranging. I just want to mention a couple because I think they need to be said and I think veterans are paying attention, Madam Speaker, and maybe some of the folks watching this.

I am happy to say we are able to remove the 15-year expiration date. The idea of a lifetime GI Bill just goes to the reality of modern-day warriors; many of them serving at different times, serving later in life, not going right away when they get out, or even changing professions; and having that benefit there and holding it and enhancing their education is not only benefiting their lives, it benefits our economy.

We know that when these wars started we had very high veteran unemployment rates. We are trying to figure out different ways. And as the chairman pointed out, using the GI Bill for STEM research and other ways to get a skill set is just smart legislation.

I want to thank a few folks on the other side about understanding that we have one force now. We do not have an active Army and a Guard and Reserve that are two separate things. These warriors fight side by side, and their call up, when they get called up, means the same thing.

Because of the way regulation was written, there were things in here that created an inequality among them. And we were happy to have a general with us in General BERGMAN, Representatives O'ROURKE, BANKS, and RADEWAGEN, along with someone who

is not a member of this committee but is a co-chair on the Guard and Reserve Caucus. Mr. PALAZZO worked to make sure that we offset those things to make sure our Guard and reservists receive those same benefits from when they were deployed.

So this is a rare opportunity, Madam Speaker, to pass a significant piece of legislation that is fully paid for, compromised to in a bipartisan manner. The Senate is going to pick this up, I think. And I look forward to that day when President Trump, hopefully here towards the end of summer or early fall, picks that pen up and signs this and makes a difference in veterans' lives today and going forward.

So my thanks once again to the chairman and his leadership for bringing together and building this coalition that made something that many of us thought about for many years; we would like to have seen got done. It is going to get done today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1500

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I think one of the greatest things in here is the lifetime benefit. When I was in my early twenties, I wouldn't have put a big bet on being 40 years old. So I know you don't ever think you are going to get there, but you do. With the changing workforce today, it is a huge benefit that I think that veterans going forward are going to appreciate and the country will benefit from.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), my good friend.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership on this bill.

Since 1944, the GI Bill has provided veterans the opportunity to invest in themselves and their future through access to education benefits.

My father attended college on the GI Bill following his service to our country, launching his life and putting our family on the path to success.

While the world has changed since 1944, the dedication and service of our men and women in uniform remains constant. These volunteer warriors stand ready to defend our Nation in theaters around the globe. While we can never fully thank them for their commitment, we must endeavor to assist them and their families wherever possible.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act improves and extends the benefits granted to veterans and their surviving dependents through the GI Bill, helping to ease the transition from Active Duty to civilian life by paving the way with new career opportunities and technical education.

This bipartisan legislation is a crucial step to investing in the success of our veterans and advancing the common cause of serving those who have served us so honorably.

Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member and the entire committee for their leadership.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), my good friend and a stalwart supporter of veterans, the ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise in enthusiastic support of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, or the new GI Bill.

I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for leading the charge so that we can bring this important legislation to the House floor today.

I have the great honor of serving on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, a committee on which Democrats and Republicans work together and work closely with our partners, the veterans service organizations.

The GI Bill we bring forward today is no exception. This strong bipartisan legislation represents the biggest expansion of veterans' educational benefits in a decade. It is a huge win for our Nation's veterans.

The men and women of our military deserve the security of knowing that, upon completion of their service to our country, they will be able to embark on a fulfilling career and continue providing for their families.

I want to highlight several of the veterans who represent why we need this bill today. The first is a young man from my hometown of Cheshire. He was a classmate of my middle son in high school, and who, at age 19, lost his left leg and seriously injured his right leg when his unit was hit by an IED in Afghanistan. He had been in the country 3 months. It was the third IED.

He has been awarded a Purple Heart, but this young man and many others would not, under the current GI Bill, be entitled to receive educational benefits. That seems crazy, and it is. But this bill will correct that injustice and ensure that all our Purple Heart heroes, our American heroes are entitled to use those benefits because, regardless of those months, they have served this country.

The second one I think of is a 90-plus-year-old, who doesn't like to disclose his age, a Navy veteran from New Britain, Connecticut. He has just earned his second master's degree. That is the point of the lifelong benefits. We need educational benefits for life.

Again, this bill corrects the injustice for Guard and reservists, lifelong benefits. It is a win for America. The military is changing. The GI Bill needs to change with it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), my distinguished colleague, a senior member and vice chair of the committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman. I think he outdid

himself on this one. This is outstanding stuff. There is no other word. It is huge. It really is. He is helping our true American heroes with this, and I am so proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation.

The challenges our Nation's heroes face do not end on the battlefield. Education and career training programs offer veterans the opportunity to enter a new chapter of their lives when they return home from their service.

I recently visited AmSkills, a manufacturing apprenticeship center in New Port Richey, Florida, to learn more about the good work they are doing locally to help veterans transition to civilian careers.

The Forever GI Bill helps ensure that veterans nationwide have the resources to access career education programs such as AmSkills, of course, going to a university maybe, a community college, vocational training, whatever they want to do.

Importantly, this bill allows future eligible GI Bill recipients to use their benefits at any point in their lives. That is incredible. It is long overdue, as opposed to the current 15-year time limit, which is so unfair.

It also includes my provision, the VETERAN Act, which authorizes \$30 million to help the VA invest in modernizing their information technology systems for claims processing.

Congress and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee would have oversight of the VA's proposed changes and monitor its progress. The provision would be a major step in helping veterans receive their benefits in a more timely and efficient manner.

Overall, the legislation before us today will improve, expand, and modernize the GI Bill program for veterans and their surviving spouses and dependents. That is so very important.

Madam Speaker, I urge passage of this great bill.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), the vice ranking member of the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3218, which secures and strengthens the GI Bill for future generations of veterans. It does so without cutting benefits from anyone who is currently serving.

There are several provisions in this legislation worth celebrating. Removing time restrictions for future student veterans and making this a lifetime benefit, and increasing support for reservists, guardsmen, and their families are among the long overdue improvements to the GI Bill that are included in this legislation.

But the restoration of GI Bill benefits for students defrauded by ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges is particularly noteworthy for veterans in my district and across the country. When those two schools abruptly shut their doors, thousands of student veterans were left with nontransferable credits, depleted

benefits, and none of the job opportunities they were promised. By restoring their tuition and housing benefits, we are restoring a measure of justice for these veterans, and we are restoring their opportunity to get the education they deserve.

I hope this is just the start of our efforts to crack down on for-profit colleges that exploit veterans.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their leadership, as well as the other members of the committee and the veterans service organizations who contributed to the strength of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, passing H.R. 3218 is an important step toward ensuring that every person who serves this Nation has the opportunity to live a rewarding and purposeful and prosperous civilian life. I encourage all Members to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, before closing, let me just add my praise to the chairman for his generosity and humbleness. I recognize, too, that this bill does not bear his name but the name of a predecessor. That was an incredible gesture, Madam Speaker. I salute the chairman's leadership.

Mr. ROE from Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), my good friend, a Marine and Army veteran, and senior member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. COFFMAN. Madam Speaker, today the House will vote on H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, the largest expansion of educational benefits for our veterans in over a decade.

This legislation provides a lifetime benefit of the GI Bill, an additional 9 months of GI Bill eligibility for veterans pursuing a STEM degree, protection of GI Bill benefits for veterans impacted by a school's closure, and makes it easier for veterans to use their GI Bill for credentialing and licensure tests.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3218 also includes provisions from my bill, the GI Bill Processing Improvement Act, H.R. 2549, which ensures that veterans studying under the GI Bill for their military service receive their benefits in a timely manner.

Madam Speaker, as a United States Army veteran who attended the University of Colorado under the GI Bill, and my late father, a retired United States Army Master Sergeant, Harold Coffman, who learned heating and air-conditioning repair under the GI Bill, I rise today in strong support of this legislation.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLÁN), my good friend, a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and the voice of our Pacific Island veterans.

Mr. SABLÁN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Harry W. Colmery

Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, a bipartisan measure of which I am an original cosponsor.

Among the bill's many benefits that preceding speakers have stated, there are three that address issues specifically brought to me by veterans in my district, the Northern Mariana Islands.

The first affects veterans who were enrolled in colleges that closed and who, as a result, lost their educational benefit. The bill today restores that benefit so those veterans can continue their education.

The second problem my veterans brought to me has to do with post-9/11 reservists, like those in Company E, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, part of the Go for Broke Unit; and the 302nd Quartermaster Company in the Marianas; and national guardsmen, like the 368th Military Police Company, who were under Active Duty and who did not accrue education benefits. Those veterans will now have their Active Duty count towards the GI Bill.

Third, the minimum GI Bill benefit for veterans with less than 36 months of qualifying active service increases to 50 percent of the maximum amount payable.

Madam Speaker, I thank House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their leadership and commitment to working together for the benefit of our veterans, a truly bipartisan product of work.

I also commend the veteran service organizations we worked with for their determination to ensure our country honors the promise made to those who served and sacrificed on our behalf and in service to our Nation.

Madam Speaker, I ask for support for this legislation.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), an active member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today also in strong support of H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

When our brave men and women put on the uniform to protect our Nation, we have a sacred responsibility to provide them and their families with certain opportunities in repayment for their services and sacrifice.

As a new generation of servicemembers are returning from the battlefield, we as a nation have needed to reevaluate how we better help our veterans succeed back home. This important legislation is an example of how that success for veterans can be achieved.

As a result of the hard work of many veteran service organizations, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and countless veteran advocates, H.R. 3218 makes many important reforms to the GI Bill to improve veterans' access to education.

One reform that I would like to highlight is a provision that I introduced as

a stand-alone piece of legislation earlier this year called the Julian Woods Yellow Ribbon Program Expansion Act.

Madam Speaker, under current law, dependents and surviving spouses of those killed in action who attend college on the Fry Scholarship are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program. The Yellow Ribbon Program helps to cover the cost of schools with tuition above the level of what the GI Bill covers.

□ 1515

Since the dependents and spouses of those killed in action are not currently eligible for this program, they are, in fact, limited in their educational opportunities.

I thank the committee, Chairman ROE, and Ranking Member WALZ for including my bill in this legislation, and it is just one of many reforms that this package makes.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues' support.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA), a true supporter of veterans and new Member of the House who came with a passion for veterans.

Mr. KHANNA. Madam Speaker, I thank Ranking Member WALZ.

I want to commend Ranking Member WALZ and Chairman ROE for this extraordinary piece of legislation that invests in the education of our veterans. I also am pleased that you included Majority Leader MCCARTHY's legislation of which I was a proud original cosponsor, the VET TEC Act. That will allow veterans, for the first time, to take technology courses and learn some of the skills that are going to be needed for the 21st century economy.

It is no surprise that I read that the majority leader got this idea from his son, who spent a lot of time out in Silicon Valley and is well regarded. It is really heartening to see this House come together with the chairman's and ranking member's leadership on the jobs of the 21st century and making sure our veterans have opportunities for them.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER), my good friend. We have served on the Education and the Workforce Committee together since he has been here, and he is in his fourth term.

Mr. MESSER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chairman and his extraordinary leadership on this important topic.

I rise today to urge support for this broad, bipartisan reform package which expands and modernizes the GI Bill to better serve our military families. The bill includes a bipartisan proposal that I have worked on with Congressman MARK TAKANO of California to help veteran students impacted by school closures, like ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges, based in our home States.

When ITT Tech abruptly closed its doors, 40,000 students nationwide, including 7,000 veterans, were left without a degree or path forward. Jason Nyikos, a U.S. Navy veteran from Greenfield, Indiana, in my district, had to start his degree completely from scratch after spending 2 years at ITT Tech. Not a single credit transferred, and his GI Bill is going to run out before he can get a new degree. He told my office: "To spend 2 years of my life at a place with nothing to show for it is one of the biggest disappointments."

Jason's story is, sadly, one of thousands. It is not fair to these veterans that they would lose their GI benefits through no fault of their own, and if we really care, we need to do something about it.

The Takano-Messer proposal restores GI Bill benefits to veterans who were attending ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges when they closed so they can earn their degrees elsewhere. It also helps veterans who may be impacted by a school closure in the future.

Our military men and women count on their GI Bill benefits to build a career and a life after they have served our country. This bill will make sure they get a chance.

Madam Speaker, I urge your support and again thank the chairman for his efforts on this important issue and all of the reforms in this bill.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, it sounds like the gentleman who spent 2 years and didn't have anything to show for it was in the U.S. Congress, but that is another story altogether.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), my good friend, whom I served with on the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act. This bipartisan package will extend and ultimately improve our veterans' access to GI Bill benefits.

And while I wasn't prepared to speak to this, since my colleague from Indiana, Mr. MESSER, just spoke, I also rise in support of the Takano-Messer amendment to support those veterans who are not receiving credits now from their time at ITT Tech. So I do support that amendment as well.

But I am proud to be a part of this bill that Chairman ROE has so ably shepherded, and I appreciate the bipartisan support on both sides of the aisle for including the Veterans TEST Accessibility Act. This act does just what the title implies: it gives our veterans simpler, fairer access to tests like the SAT and GRE, as well as licensing and certification tests, like certifications to be mechanics, firefighters, Realtors, to name just a few.

Our current law requires veterans to use a full month of eligibility to be re-

imbursed for these tests. Given the relatively low cost of many tests, it simply isn't worth it for many veterans to lose potential reimbursement for an entire month of other educational expenses, like tuition. This provision fixes that problem. Veterans will be reimbursed for the amount of the test only, and they can still utilize the remaining eligibility to cover other educational expenses incurred that month.

Our vets have the skills and experience that many universities and employers are looking for, but they face challenges. This commonsense provision will give our veterans the tools they need to compete in the job market and help address veteran underemployment and unemployment. It allows them to take what they have learned, so many skills that they learned prior to and during their service, and use these benefits they have earned to advance their education and career.

I would like to thank Chairman ROE for his leadership, the VSOs, and all of our colleagues who have contributed to this important piece of legislation, and I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TENNEY). The gentleman from Minnesota has 9 minutes remaining.

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

Once again, you heard from members of the committee, and Members of this House about an important piece of legislation.

This past Saturday, I had the opportunity to meet with my hometown Guard unit, the 2nd Battalion of the 135th Infantry, the Red Bull Battalion. They came back from a mission in the Sinai.

When they left to go to the Sinai, because of the 12304(b) orders that were in there, they were not eligible for certain benefits. The entire time they were deployed, they continued to call and asked what was happening on the bill. On Saturday, they had just returned, and I was able to tell them that we were going to vote tonight, we were going to move this thing, and that their questions had been responded to.

So, retroactively, we were able to get this back to 2013. There are lots of good things in here that I think, as people spend a little more time on this, they will see, smart stuff.

Generations of veterans have contributed to our country and bettered themselves through the GI Bill. It is one of those things that a grateful nation does, an earned benefit that has been improved with time.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 3218, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This was a process, and it took several months working with the VSOs, with our staffs, with Mr. WALZ's team

and our team and others to get this bill where it is. And I think, as Mr. WALZ said, that as people dig into this bill, it is truly, I believe, an outstanding piece of legislation that honors the people who serve this country and will give them a benefit when they come home.

If you are 25 years old and you come home and you have a job from the military, you separate after a few years of service, and your job leaves when you are 42, you have lost that benefit now.

Now, you can go back and get retrained. We know that the average person is going to have five, six, seven different occupations during a professional working career. This will allow our veterans, I think some of the absolute finest people that grace this Nation, to be able to be the ones who are the leaders in the future because of the education benefit that they have earned with their service.

I thank my friend, Mr. WALZ, for his work on this and leadership on this, along with his team and our team here.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3218, the "Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017."

H.R. 3218 eliminates the current 15-year cap for veterans to use the benefits provided in the GI Bill, therefore enabling future eligible recipients to use their GI bill benefits for their entire lives.

This change would greatly aid our brave veterans in facilitating the transition from active duty to civilian life by ensuring that veterans have access to retraining at any point after service to meet the needs of a changing economy.

Furthermore, H.R. 3218 would enhance GI Bill benefits for survivors of military members killed during active duty by granting them access to the Yellow Ribbon Program, which is a program that covers more costs at private institutions of higher learning for eligible recipients.

By expanding access to financial assistance, this bill ameliorates the often high cost barrier associated with higher education for survivors of military members killed in the line of duty.

H.R. 3218 will also protect veteran's GI Bill benefits from the closures of private, for-profit universities, a development that has negatively impacted many student veterans across the nation.

Madam Speaker, our veterans deserve better than to see their hard-earned benefits lost, especially for events beyond their own control.

This bill also increases GI Bill benefits for nine additional months for student veterans enrolled in STEM 5-year degree programs.

I am pleased that this bill gives our veterans the resources they need to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the growing technology industry.

Last, this bill would qualify post-9/11 Purple Heart recipients for full GI Bill benefits.

It is imperative that service members whose active duty is cut short due to an injury suffered in the line of fire have their heroic service recognized fully when receiving GI Bill benefits.

H.R. 3218 corrects previous inequities faced by our nation's brave veterans, and protects their future.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3218.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3218, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam 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.

MILITARY RESIDENCY CHOICE ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 282) to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers to elect to use the same residences as the servicemembers.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 282

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 "Military Residency Choice Act".

SEC. 2. RESIDENCE OF SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS FOR TAX PURPOSES.

(a) RESIDENCE FOR TAX PURPOSES.—Section 511(a)(2) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 4001(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The spouse of a servicemember may elect to use the same residence for purposes of taxation as the servicemember regardless of the date on which the marriage of the spouse and the servicemember occurred."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any return of State or local income tax filed for any taxable year beginning with the taxable year that includes the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. RESIDENCE OF SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS FOR VOTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 705(b) of such Act is amended—

(1) by striking "State or local office" and all that follows through the period at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting "State or local office—"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(1) a person who is absent from a State because the person is accompanying the person's spouse who is absent from that same State in compliance with military or naval orders shall not, solely by reason of that absence—

"(A) be deemed to have lost a residence or domicile in that State, without regard to whether or not the person intends to return to that State;

"(B) be deemed to have acquired a residence or domicile in any other State; or

"(C) be deemed to have become a resident in or a resident of any other State; and

"(2) the spouse of a servicemember may elect to use the same residence as the servicemember regardless of the date on which the marriage of the spouse and the servicemember occurred."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 282, the Military Residency Choice Act. The Military Residency Choice Act would change the way military spouses claim State residency by allowing a spouse to claim the same State of residence as their servicemember spouse, even if they have never physically lived in that State.

I want to commend Representatives STEFANIK and WITTMAN for their work on this bill, and I will allow them to describe it in greater detail in a moment.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 282, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 282. This is a commonsense bill. It has received bipartisan support as it moved through the committee. It simplifies the process for a spouse of a servicemember to choose and change their State of residency for tax and voting purposes.

The bill is about removing additional headaches from servicemembers' lives and doing right by them. There are enough issues being a member of the military and for spouses and family. We don't need to add more to it.

This is a smart piece of legislation. It does exactly what it says it is going to do, and I support and encourage all Members to join me in support.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), co-author of the bill and my colleague on the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, my legislation gives military spouses the

choice to establish the same State of residency as the servicemember, giving them the benefit of retaining the same State of residency for voting and tax purposes.

As the proud Representative of Fort Drum and the Navy site at Kesselring, which I visited just this past Friday, I have heard firsthand about the challenges that military families face, and I have the highest respect for the sacrifices these families make to help protect our Nation and safeguard our freedom.

Military families must relocate every few years due to their spouse's responsibility to meet the requirements within the military. They sacrifice a great deal during these relocations, uprooting their lives and disrupting their families, all while serving as the critical support system for their loved ones. This is often a difficult and challenging time, with the heaviest burden falling upon military spouses.

Current law allows Active-Duty servicemembers to maintain one State of legal residence for tax and voting purposes, even when servicemembers receive military orders requiring them to relocate, but this does not apply to the servicemember's spouse. Essentially, this loophole requires spouses to establish residency every time the servicemember receives a new assignment, adding undue stress and anxiety to military families already under the pressure of managing their relocation. This legislation fixes this inconsistency.

Military spouses serve, too, and this bill eliminates the daunting task of documenting multiple tax jurisdictions and helps reduce instances of military spousal unemployment.

Traveling across the north country in New York, I have listened to the sacrifices our military families make to keep our Nation safe. We have a duty to reduce these burdens they face.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I again urge Members to support this smart piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this commonsense legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 282.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

VA PROVIDER EQUITY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1058) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1058

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 “VA Provider Equity Act”.

SEC. 2. ROLE OF PODIATRISTS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) INCLUSION AS PHYSICIAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 7413. Treatment of podiatrists; clinical oversight standards

“(a) PODIATRISTS.—Except as provided by subsection (b), a doctor of podiatric medicine who is appointed as a podiatrist under section 7401(1) of this title is eligible for any supervisory position in the Veterans Health Administration to the same degree that a physician appointed under such section is eligible for the position.

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CLINICAL OVERSIGHT STANDARDS.—The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, shall establish standards to ensure that specialists appointed in the Veterans Health Administration to supervisory positions do not provide direct clinical oversight for purposes of peer review or practice evaluation for providers of other clinical specialties.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7412 the following new item:

“7413. Treatment of podiatrists; clinical oversight standards.”.

(b) MODIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION OF PAY GRADE.—

(1) GRADE.—The list in section 7404(b) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “PHYSICIAN AND DENTIST SCHEDULE” and inserting “PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON (MD/DO), PODIATRIC SURGEON (DPM), AND DENTIST AND ORAL SURGEON (DDS, DMD) SCHEDULE”;

(B) by striking, “Physician grade” and inserting “Physician and surgeon grade”; and

(C) by striking “PODIATRIST, CHIROPRACTOR, AND,” and inserting “CHIROPRACTOR AND”.

(2) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to a pay period of the Department of Veterans Affairs beginning on or after the date that is 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF REDUCTION IN AMOUNT OF PENSION FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2024” and inserting “September 30, 2026”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1058, as amended, the VA Provider Equity Act. This legislation would recognize the professional contribution of hardworking podiatrists within the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system.

The VA standard for compensating podiatrists has not been updated in 41 years. In that time, education and training for podiatrists has been revolutionized.

As a result of the VA's failure to recognize and respond to advancements in podiatry practice, it has created significant disparities in pay and advancement opportunities for podiatrists practicing at the VA in comparison to their peers in the private sector.

Consequently, the VA struggles to recruit and retain experienced, qualified podiatrists—those we want caring for our veterans—at a time when veteran need for podiatry care is increasing.

This legislation would solve that problem by allowing VA podiatrists the opportunity to seek leadership opportunities at VA medical facilities and making podiatry pay equal to physician and dentist pay within the VA healthcare system.

I am grateful to my good friend, fellow veteran, and committee member, Dr. BRAD WENSTRUP, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, for his leadership in recognizing what an important issue this is and being thoughtful and tenacious in pursuit of a solution to it.

I am proud to join Dr. WENSTRUP in fully supporting this legislation and urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1058, as amended. The VA Provider Equity Act is a commonsense solution to a really important problem that is plaguing the VHA—a shortage of healthcare providers.

This legislation would allow VHA to attract the talented and experienced podiatrists it needs to better treat conditions caused by lower extremity injuries.

By allowing podiatrists the opportunity to advance within the VHA while earning pay comparable to what private sector podiatrists earn, VHA can better attract and retain these providers.

I appreciate the gentleman from Ohio, Dr. WENSTRUP's, work highlighting this, educating all of us on the committee, and making sure that the treatments of podiatrists between VHA and the private sector industry is aligned.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this good piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP). Colonel Wenstrup is a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1058, the VA Provider Equity Act, as amended, which would strengthen access to the comprehensive first-class healthcare that veterans deserve.

Podiatric care is one of the top needs at VA medical centers across the country. Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan report high rate of musculoskeletal ailments resulting from lower extremity injuries inflicted by improvised explosive devices.

Veterans of previous wars also experience higher instances of foot and ankle ailments caused by aging, diabetes, and service-connected disabilities. All of this leads to increased demand for podiatric care at the VHA.

However, VA struggles to recruit and retain podiatrists due to a disparity in pay and leadership opportunities in comparison to both podiatrists in the private sector and to other physicians employed by the VA.

This is because VA first established standards for podiatrists in 1976, and podiatric education, training, and practice have changed considerably since that time. Nonetheless, VA's outdated standards have remained unchanged. This has translated into increased wait times. As of 2015, 93 percent of new podiatry patients wait more than 15 days for an appointment, and podiatry is the fourth most referred-out surgical service to community care.

My bill, H.R. 1058, the VA Provider Equity Act, would make VA's doctors of podiatric medicine equal to doctors of osteopathy and medical doctors within VA in terms of pay and ensure that VA podiatrists are eligible for the same promotions and leadership opportunities as other VA physicians, which is consistent with the private sector.

This bill will make it easier for VA to recruit and retain the specialists our veterans so desperately need. In turn, this will result in better care for veterans and savings to the taxpayer, as a recent study from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found that podiatry services provided to diabetic patients could have saved between \$29 million and \$97 million in 2014, in the State of California alone.

Mr. Speaker, as the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the rest of our colleagues in Congress continue to work together to help our veterans receive the care they need, I urge the passage of this bill.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, again, this is a smart piece of legislation. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his work on this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 1058, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1058, 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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BONUS TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1690) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1690

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 "Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act".

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AWARDS AND BONUSES AWARDED TO CERTAIN HIGH-LEVEL EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 717 the following new section:

"§ 718. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that contains, for the most recent fiscal year ending before the submittal of the report, a description of the performance awards and bonuses awarded to Regional Office Directors of the Department, Directors of Medical Centers of the Department, Directors of Vet-

erans Integrated Service Networks, and any other individual employed in a senior executive position.

"(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following with respect to each performance award or bonus awarded to an individual described in such subsection:

"(1) The amount of each award or bonus.

"(2) The job title of the individual awarded the award or bonus.

"(3) The location where the individual awarded the award or bonus works.

"(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

"(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

"(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

"(2) The term 'individual' means—

"(A) a career appointee (as that term is defined in section 3132(a)(4) of title 5); or

"(B) any individual who occupies an administrative or executive position and who was appointed under section 7306(a) or section 7401(1) of this title.

"(3) The term 'senior executive position' means—

"(A) with respect to a career appointee (as that term is defined in section 3132(a)(4) of title 5), a Senior Executive Service position (as such term is defined in section 3132(a)(2) of title 5); and

"(B) with respect to an individual appointed under section 7306(a) or section 7401(1) of this title, an administrative or executive position."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 7 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 717 the following new item:

"718. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1690, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act.

This bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report to specified congressional committees on the performance awards and bonuses presented to Senior Executive Service employees, SES employees.

I believe that, if you do excellent work, you should receive a bonus. I also believe such a bonus should be justified and that there should be some level of transparency regarding those who receive a bonus.

Mr. Speaker, I support Congresswoman TENNEY's bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2006, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act.

This legislation will require VA to record any costs or savings it incurs as a result of using competitive procedures. The reporting requirement is limited to contracts reported in the Federal procurement data system and will ensure increased transparency in the VA.

It also requires VA to use standardized contracting templates throughout the entire VA. This will create an efficient system for VA contracting officers so they are not wasting man-hours developing multiple documents to award VA contracts.

Anyone who has been a Member of Congress and has dealt with VA contracts knows how difficult, confusing, and just, quite honestly, frustrating this is. So having standardized forms will improve oversight of these contracts so that all VA employees and contractors follow the same requirements for the same type of contract.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this smart legislation, efficiency in government, and help provide care in a more timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge its support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) who is the author of the bill.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for prioritizing bipartisanship and putting our veterans ahead of politics. This committee's work is a testament to what we can achieve here in Congress when we put aside politics and focus on results.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act requires the VA to submit a report to Congress at the end of each fiscal year listing the bonuses that were awarded to senior-level executives within the department.

In 2015, VA employees received more than \$177 million in bonuses, which was 24 percent more than they had received in 2014. The average bonus for a senior executive was \$10,000.

I have no doubt that the men and women of the VA serve our veterans admirably each day. In fact, I know that they do. In my own district, I have spoken with veterans who are grateful for the compassionate care they receive from the VA hospital in Syracuse as well as local VA clinics in Binghams and Rome.

VA employees should be fairly compensated for their work and awarded for their achievements in service to our Nation's veterans.

It is also clear to me that there is more work to be done. Just recently, an audit of several VA facilities in

North Carolina and Virginia revealed that wait times continue to be misrepresented and that nearly 14,000 veterans were denied access to timely care. The audit also found that veterans were waiting an average of 26 days to see mental health specialists, while the VA falsely reported average wait times of 6 days.

In light of such news, the American people are right to wonder who at the VA may be receiving a bonus this year. They are also right to be concerned about the nature and conditions of such bonuses.

H.R. 1690 would add a simple reporting requirement to existing law that will streamline the oversight of bonuses at the VA. It requires the agency to proactively provide information to Congress that details the amount of each bonus awarded to senior executives as well as the job titles of the individuals and the location of their employment.

Because of the patterns of mismanagement at the VA, veterans must know how bonuses are being awarded at the agency, and Congress deserves to receive this information in as timely a manner as possible without having to request it each year. This bill increases transparency over the bonus process without placing an undue burden on the agency.

It is an honor to represent a district that is home to more than 55,000 veterans. I owe it to each of them every day to make sure that the VA is accountable and transparent. Our Nation's veterans deserve the very best healthcare for their service and sacrifice to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their support, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1690.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, sometimes we sing from the same song sheet, and sometimes we don't sing from the same song sheet.

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

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

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was in the Lutheran hymnal and not the Baptist. I apologize to the gentlewoman, and the next time I ask my 10-year-old to not be on his phone, I will be duly chastised.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise in support of H.R. 1690. The gentlewoman is right. It is smart. The public demands transparency. Make sure that there is an accountability in this, and make sure that we are tracking.

So I thank the gentlewoman for her tolerance of us getting ahead of ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation also, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1690, 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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL SCRIBE PILOT ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1848) 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, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1848

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 "Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL SCRIBE PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a two-year pilot program under which the Secretary shall increase the use of medical scribes at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

(b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program at the 10 medical centers of the Department as follows:

(1) At least four such medical centers located in rural areas.

(2) At least four such medical centers located in urban areas.

(3) Two such medical centers located in areas with need for increased access or increased efficiency, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) MEDICAL SCRIBES.—

(1) HIRING.—Under the pilot program the Secretary shall—

(A) hire 20 new Department of Veterans Affairs term employees as medical scribes; and

(B) seek to enter into contracts with appropriate entities for the employment of 20 additional medical scribes.

(2) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall assign four medical scribes to each of the 10 medical centers of the Department where the Secretary carries out the pilot program as follows:

(A) Two scribes shall be assigned to each of two physicians.

(B) Thirty percent of the scribes shall be employed in the provision of emergency care.

(C) Seventy percent of the scribes shall be employed in the provision of specialty care in specialties with the longest patient wait times or lowest efficiency ratings, as determined by the Secretary.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the commencement of the pilot program required under this section, and every 180 days thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program. Each such report shall include each of the following:

(A) A separate analysis of each the following with respect to medical scribes employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and medical scribes performing Department of Veterans Affairs functions under a contract:

(i) Provider efficiency.

(ii) Patient satisfaction.

(iii) Average wait time.

(iv) The number of patients seen per day by each physician or practitioner.

(v) The amount of time required to hire and train an employee to perform medical scribe functions under the pilot program.

(B) Metrics and data for analyzing the effects of the pilot program, including an evaluation of the each of the elements under clauses (i) through (iv) of subparagraph (A) at medical centers who employed scribes under the pilot program for an appropriate period preceding the hiring of such scribes.

(2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the termination of the pilot program under this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program. Such report shall include a comparison of the pilot program with similar programs carried out in the private sector.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "medical scribe" means an unlicensed individual hired to enter information into the electronic health record or chart at the direction of a physician or licensed independent practitioner whose responsibilities include the following:

(A) Assisting the physician or practitioner in navigating the electronic health record.

(B) Responding to various messages as directed by the physician or practitioner.

(C) Entering information into the electronic health record, as directed by the physician or practitioner.

(2) The terms "urban" and "rural" have the meanings given such terms under the rural-urban commuting codes developed by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(f) FUNDING.—The pilot program under this section shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs. No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out such program.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON SMOKING IN FACILITIES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Section 1715 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 1715. Prohibition on smoking in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration

"(a) PROHIBITION.—(1)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), no person may smoke indoors in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration.

"(B) In the case of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration that is a community living center, no person may smoke indoors in such facility on or after December 31, 2018.

"(2) No person may smoke outdoors in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration on or after October 1, 2021.

"(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The term "smoke" includes the smoking of cigarettes (including e-cigarettes or electronic cigarettes), cigars, pipes, and any other combustion of tobacco.

“(2) The term ‘facility of the Veterans Health Administration’ means any land or building (including any medical center, nursing home, domiciliary facility, outpatient clinic, or center that provides readjustment counseling) that is—

“(A) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

“(B) under the control of the Veterans Health Administration; and

“(C) not under the control of the General Services Administration.

“(3) The term ‘community living center’ means a facility of the Department that provides nursing home care.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 1715 and inserting the following:

“1715. Prohibition on smoking in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.”

(2) Section 526 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585) is repealed.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1848, as amended, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017, which I am proud to sponsor.

One of my priorities as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is to increase access to care for veteran patients. One way to do that is help hardworking Department of Veterans Affairs clinicians to be more efficient in the practice of high-quality care.

The Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017 would do just that by creating a 2-year pilot program to test the use of scribes in VA medical centers.

□ 1545

Scribes are increasingly used in the private sector to help doctors navigate and document a patient's electronic health record. That allows doctors to place their focus not on a computer screen, but squarely on the patient.

I jokingly say, Mr. Speaker, that it was electronic health records that made me a Congressman. Basically, it ran me out of the medical office. That is a slight exaggeration, but it is not too far off.

Like many doctors I hear from today, I found the increasing amount of time that I was spending attending to electronic health record requirements, nec-

essary as they may be, detracted from the quality of my patients' interactions and significantly slowed down how smoothly my clinic day would operate. I believe the same is true at VA. Many doctors now, Mr. Speaker, are spending over half their time entering information, just basically being data entry people.

Onsite visits to VA medical facilities across the country, my staff and I always ask VA employees how we can help them provide safer, better care and see more patients. By far, one of the most common responses that we hear is a plea to “give us scribes; give us some help.”

That is exactly what passage of H.R. 1848, as amended, will do.

This bill also includes provisions of H.R. 1662, a bill sponsored by Dr. BRAD WENSTRUP, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, which would bring VA medical centers in line with every other major healthcare system by prohibiting smoking on VA medical facility properties.

I thank Dr. WENSTRUP for his leadership on this issue, and I am grateful to be working with him to make VA medical facilities healthy, smoke-free places for VA employees to serve veterans and for veterans to seek care.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support me in supporting H.R. 1848, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1848, as amended, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017, offered by Chairman ROE.

No one knows more about this, and I appreciate the chairman's education that goes into learning about the practice of medicine. Having a physician as the chairman is invaluable. This issue of scribes and how it interfaces with the doctor providing the care and the electronic medical record has been invaluable for me to understand.

I know that the chairman and many physicians have said they feel they are spending too much time entering the data and not enough time on patients. Chairman ROE's legislation would allow for the use of scribes within the VA during a 2-year pilot program. It has been proven to assist physicians and alleviate administrative burdens.

This is smart stuff, again. I appreciate the insight brought to us and making more efficiencies in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1848, 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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

VA PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2006) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the procurement practices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2006

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 “VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act”.

SEC. 2. INFORMATION ON COST OR PRICE SAVINGS FROM COMPETITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 8128 the following new section:

“§ 8129. Information on cost or price savings from competition

“(a) RECORDING OF INFORMATION.—With respect to any contract awarded by the Secretary that is reported in the Federal Procurement Data System described in section 1122(a)(4)(A) of title 41, United States Code, or any successor system, the Secretary shall record information on the amount of any cost or price savings realized by using competitive procedures in awarding such contract.

“(b) PLACEMENT OF RECORDS.—The Secretary shall place recorded information under subsection (a) as follows:

“(1) With respect to contracts recorded in the Electronic Contract Management System, or any successor system, in such system.

“(2) With respect to contracts not covered by paragraph (1), in a location determined appropriate by the Secretary.

“(c) CALCULATION OF COST SAVINGS.—(1) In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall calculate the amount of cost or price savings realized by using competitive procedures in awarding a contract by—

“(A) subtracting the total value of the selected offer or quote from the average of the total values of all offers or quotes evaluated; or

“(B) subtracting the total value of the selected offer or quote from the total value of the median offer or quote evaluated.

“(2) If the difference calculated pursuant to paragraph (1) is negative, the Secretary shall record such difference as zero.

“(3) The Secretary shall make calculations under paragraph (1) with respect to a contract—

“(A) at the time at which the Secretary obligates amounts under such contract; or

“(B) if such contract contains options, at the time at which the option is exercised.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8128 the following new item:

“8129. Information on cost or price savings from competition.”

SEC. 3. USE OF STANDARDIZED PROCUREMENT TEMPLATES.

To the extent practicable, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make available and use on a Department-wide basis the standardized procurement templates used by the Central Office of the Department, the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. In carrying out this section, the Secretary may customize such templates to address particular procurement situations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2005, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act.

H.R. 2006 is commonsense contracting, transparency, and efficiency legislation sponsored by my friend, Representative MIKE COFFMAN, an esteemed member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

This bill will make clear how much money the VA is saving by competing contracts and direct the VA to organize its contracting documents. Procurement difficulties seem to happen year after year, and I thank Representative COFFMAN and other Members with reform bills under consideration today for their work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 2006, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I feel so strongly about this, I am going to support it again today. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2006, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), a senior member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, a veteran of both the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army, and a great friend.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, one of the VA's top procurement goals is to achieve savings through competition. However, there is no uniformity in how the savings are calculated or if they are recorded at all.

This is why I introduced H.R. 2006, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act. My bill will create a consistent method for the VA to measure and record the cost savings generated by competing contracts from its \$20 billion procurement budget.

H.R. 2006 also directs the VA to organize its document templates, which are the building blocks for every contract, and make them accessible in a central place.

Mr. Speaker, too often, the VA reports flawed or incomplete data to Congress and to the public. While the VA's current leadership is working to correct years of transparency problems, the legislation gives that effort a much-needed push in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, the VA's contracting will benefit by adopting these best practices, and I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense measure.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2006.

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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PROTECTING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2749) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the oversight of contracts awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2749

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 “Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. LIMITATIONS ON SUBCONTRACTS UNDER CONTRACTS WITH SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8127 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (l) as subsection (m); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (k) the following new subsection (l):

“(l) LIMITATIONS ON SUBCONTRACTING.—(1)(A) The requirements applicable to a covered small business concern under section 46 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657s) shall apply with respect to a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans that is awarded a contract under this section.

“(B) For purposes of applying the requirements of section 46 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657s) pursuant to subparagraph (A), the term ‘similarly situated entity’ used in such section 46 includes a subcontractor for a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans described in such subparagraph (A).

“(2) The Secretary may award a contract under this section only after the Secretary obtains from the offeror a certification that the offeror will comply with the requirements described in paragraph (1)(A) if awarded the contract. Such certification shall—

“(A) specify the exact performance requirements applicable under such paragraph; and

“(B) explicitly acknowledge that the certification is subject to section 1001 of title 18.

“(3)(A) The Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for the Department, established pursuant to section 15(k) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(k)), and the Chief Acquisition Officer of the Department, established pursuant to section 1702 of title 41, shall jointly implement a process using the systems described in section 16(g)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 645(g)(2)), and any other relevant systems available, to monitor compliance with this subsection.

“(B) The Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the Chief Acquisition Officer shall jointly refer any violations or suspected violations of this subsection to the Inspector General of the Department.

“(C) If the Secretary determines, in consultation with the Inspector General of the Department, that a small business concern that is awarded a contract under this section did not act in good faith with respect to the requirements described in paragraph (1)(A), the small business concern shall be subject to any or all of the following consequences—

“(i) referral to the Debarment and Suspension Committee of the Department;

“(ii) a fine under section 16(g)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 645(g)(1)); and

“(iii) prosecution for violating section 1001 of title 18.

“(D) Not later than November 30 for each of years 2018 through 2022, the Inspector General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year during which the report is submitted that includes, for the fiscal year covered by the report—

“(i) the number of referred violations and suspected violations received under subparagraph (B); and

“(ii) the disposition of such referred violations, including the number of small business concerns suspended or debarred from Federal contracting or referred to the Attorney General for prosecution.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (l) of section 8127 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a contract entered into after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman

from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2749, as amended, the Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017.

H.R. 2749, as amended, is contracting reform legislation sponsored by my friends, General BERGMAN and Representative KUSTER, the chairman and ranking member of our Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

This bill will help stop companies that exploit the existing contracting laws and regulations to take work away from legitimate service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses.

It is crucial that Federal procurement be fair and that veteran entrepreneurs actually receive the business opportunities that the law creates for them. This bill is a smart fix for a difficult problem, and I appreciate my colleagues' work on it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 2749, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2749, as amended, the Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act.

I thank General BERGMAN and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire for introducing this. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations has worked hard to ensure that our service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses are provided the protections and support they need from the VA to remain competitive in the Federal contracting process.

Congress granted Federal Government contracting preferences to small businesses owned by veterans and service-disabled veterans because we want our veteran entrepreneurs to thrive.

This bill, introduced by Representatives BERGMAN and KUSTER, closes a loophole utilized by some that pass through contracts to non-veteran-owned businesses. This practice is unfair to the thousands of small-business owners who are actually serving and owned by service-disabled veterans who play by the rules.

The bill ensures that only our veteran entrepreneurs get this preference by closing the loophole. It is smart, it is the right thing to do, and I urge its passage.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), a new member of our committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today on behalf of H.R. 2749, the Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support for Ranking Member KUSTER and myself.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2749 aims to provide the VA with the tools it needs to correct the persistent problem in contracting. The problem is improper pass-throughs. An improper pass-through is when a small business obtains a contract under a set-aside, but gives all or substantially all of the work to a large company and, nonetheless, collects profit.

Sometimes multiple companies pass through the work while adding price markups. This has long been prohibited by law and wastes taxpayer dollars; but, in practice, agencies have little ability to stop it.

In the VA, veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses have special preference to receive contracts, but bad actors are taking contracts away from law-abiding veteran businessowners who truly want to perform their work. The committee gets complaints about this situation nearly every week.

This bill will make every bidder for a VA contract certify that it will perform the percentage of work the law already requires. The bill also directs the VA to work with the Office of Inspector General in a more effective way to find, stop, and, where appropriate, punish the improper pass-throughs.

H.R. 2749 relies on existing law and fills in gaps in implementation, but does not create any new bureaucracy.

The solution is long overdue. I strongly urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this good piece of legislation that is doing the right thing, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 2749, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RICE of South Carolina). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2749, 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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further pro-

ceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

ENSURING VETERAN ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGIC SOURCING ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2781) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the sufficient participation of small business concerns owned and controlled and owned by veterans and small business concerns owned by veterans with service-connected disabilities in contracts under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2781

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 "Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act".

SEC. 2. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CERTIFICATION OF SUFFICIENT PARTICIPATION OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY VETERANS AND SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED BY VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES IN CONTRACTS UNDER THE FEDERAL STRATEGIC SOURCING INITIATIVE.

(a) **CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate certification in writing that with respect to each contract (except for domestic delivery services) awarded under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (managed by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy) a sufficient number of small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and a sufficient number of small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities are represented within each category.

(b) **INSUFFICIENT REPRESENTATION.**—If the Secretary determines that the representation by small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans or small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities within a category of the contracts awarded under such Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative is not a sufficient number, the Secretary shall—

(1) consult with the Administrator of the General Services Administration to increase the number of such concerns awarded contracts under such category; or

(2) require the Department of Veterans Affairs to stop awarding orders under that category of the Initiative, effective on the date of such determination.

(c) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The terms "small business concern owned and controlled by veterans" and "small business concern owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities" have the meaning given such terms in section 8127(k) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term "category" means—

(A) a type of supply or service for which a suite of contracts has been established under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative; or

(B) any further subdivision or grouping within such a suite of contracts.

(3) The term "sufficient number", with respect to a type of business concern, means not fewer than two and enough to maximize the percentage of orders entered into by the Secretary with such business concerns, as determined by the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1600

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2781, as amended, the Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act.

H.R. 2781 is another piece of thoughtful contracting legislation sponsored by a hardworking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Dr. NEAL DUNN. This bill will make sure that all small businesses owned by veterans and service-disabled veterans are never excluded from a particular group of contracts run by the General Services Administration, or GSA.

Despite Congress' efforts to give our veterans maximum opportunity in VA contracting, the system does not always work as it should. This bill fixes a loophole that has cropped up recently and makes sure veteran businesses are not inadvertently ignored when VA uses these GSA contracts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2781, as amended.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2781. As said, the bill would require the VA Secretary and the General Services Administration to increase the number of veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses on the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative. The Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative increases cost savings, value, and socioeconomic participation for the sourcing of government contracts and ensures that our government has a community of businesses to strategically source from.

Ensuring more veteran-owned small business and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses are on the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative means that taxpayer dollars are spent on contracts that add value to the U.S.

Government, at the same time supporting veteran-owned businesses—smart legislation, again, the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN), a veteran and the author of the bill.

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2781 is a commonsense solution to a complicated problem. I am proud to sponsor it with my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA).

Over the last 10 years, Congress gave veteran and veteran service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses the highest preference to compete for VA contracts. Last year, the Supreme Court ruled in the Kingdomware case that this preference applies in all situations, even when VA uses contracts awarded by other agencies. A loophole has emerged in a group of contracts called the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative run by the General Services Administration.

Currently, the VA uses the GSA to connect them with suppliers of certain goods and services that they need to purchase. All too often, the GSA is not connecting the VA with enough small businesses that are owned by veterans and service-disabled veterans. The law requires that the VA look for these companies and buy from them when it can, if they are competitive; but when the veteran businesses are not on the GSA list, the VA can't find them or use them.

Because of the loophole, well-qualified veteran-owned companies are being passed over. In some cases, VA disregards the GSA contracts and finds veteran-owned companies elsewhere on their own, but this wastes resources by creating contracts similar to what the GSA already has in place.

This bill simply directs the VA Secretary to determine whether veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses are sufficiently represented on the contracts for VA to follow the law. If not, the VA must consult with the GSA to increase the representation on all the contracts and their subcategories. Should this not be possible on a particular contract or subcategory, the VA must stop using it.

I am honored that this bill has earned the support of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the National Veteran Small Business Coalition. We need to hold the VA accountable to the veterans it serves, including our veteran and service-disabled small business owners. It is the right thing to do, and I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA), one of the co-authors of this bill and a veteran himself and a champion of veterans since he has been in Congress.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2781, the Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act.

It is a bill that the kind gentleman from Florida and I have sponsored so that it is easier for the Department of Veterans Affairs to contract with the very veterans whom they serve.

As a veteran and someone who has worked with veterans, I understand the challenges our servicemembers can face when they transition from military to civilian life. That is why we in Congress are working to serve those who served us by opening every opportunity for our veterans to thrive and contribute not just to our communities, but to our country.

Throughout the United States, there are many quality veteran and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses that sell office and janitorial supplies or provide building maintenance services. Those businesses and the government would mutually benefit if the businesses seeking Federal contracts were given a fair chance to compete.

But as it stands now, veteran and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses are losing out on such opportunities because of an unintentional loophole when the VA contracts with the General Services Administration, the GSA, for office and janitorial services, equipment, and supplies.

Now, that loophole opened up last year when the VA implemented the Kingdomware Supreme Court ruling. Normally, when it comes to its contracts, the VA ensures that veteran-owned small businesses are considered in the bidding process. But the Kingdomware ruling required that the VA set aside contracts for veteran-owned small businesses when there are two or more companies that are interested, capable, and can perform at a fair and reasonable price. So when the VA contracts with the GSA for janitorial or office supplies, the GSA is not giving veteran-owned businesses the proper consideration for those types of contracts; thus, the requirement to consider veteran-owned businesses is not being implemented.

Fortunately, this bill, our bill, Democrats' and Republicans' bill, would close that loophole. It would require the VA Secretary to work with the GSA to increase the number of service-disabled veteran and veteran-owned small businesses represented in that contracting process.

The bill would eliminate that barrier that limited our veterans and their businesses from contracting with the government. It is a solution that is fair to veteran entrepreneurs. It is a bill that has strong bipartisan support. It is a bill that moved through the House Veterans' Affairs Committee with unanimous consent, and it is a bill that all of us are proud of, Democrats and Republicans, and that is why I am proud to sponsor this bill. I am proud to present it to you with the gentleman from Florida because it will do

what is smart for our country's veterans, and that is why I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), the subcommittee chair on the committee and a marine veteran.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2781, the Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act.

This important legislation clarifies that veteran-owned small businesses should be given proper consideration for contracts with the Department of Veterans Affairs. It will help to ensure that our contracting is efficient and fair to our Nation's veterans.

The VA has a special responsibility to maximize business opportunities for our heroes when they come home from serving abroad. Helping veteran-owned small businesses succeed is a bipartisan effort, as you have heard already here today. I am happy to see so many of my colleagues support it.

I want to thank my colleague, Dr. DUNN, for offering the commonsense fix to contracting at the VA, and I look forward to voting in favor of it. I urge Members to support H.R. 2781.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. Again, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2781.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee chair and a marine who served with distinction.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join Dr. DUNN and Mr. PANNETTA in supporting H.R. 2781, the Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act. This bill and my bill are complementary legislation.

In addition to the vital healthcare and benefits VA provides to our veterans, it also awards billions of dollars of contracts annually to their small businesses. The impact of these contracts to support livelihoods and create jobs all over our country cannot be overstated.

Just as veteran businessowners must abide by the rules, VA must abide by the rules and make available to them the contracting opportunities they have earned. Federal procurement is a very complicated system that sometimes produces strange outcomes. We must continue to work on that procurement and make sure that it functions properly.

I strongly urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 2781.

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

In closing, I would certainly urge everyone to support this actionable piece of legislation.

During the last 6½ months, the Veterans' Affairs Committee has been a very active committee. When we real-

ized that our Choice Program was running short of funds, the committee, in a bipartisan way, voted to extend that.

We have also realized that there are 470,000 veterans whose claims are in appeals and have not been adjudicated. We realize that program is not functioning as it should. The House acted quickly, was bipartisan. That legislation has now been passed out of the Senate VA Committee and is awaiting action by the floor. We hope to have it passed and signed into law soon.

We knew that the Secretary of the VA said he had problems, that he couldn't—most VA employees are terrific. Some of my best friends work at the VA. But there are some not good employees out of the 370,000 there, and the Secretary said, to do his job, to reform the VA, he needed a bill where he could terminate poor-performing employees, and this House and Senate gave him that. The President has signed that into law.

The Secretary has also moved in speeding up the electronic health record transformation into a modern off-the-shelf system. We debated on this floor, today, the Post-9/11 GI Bill update, which is a tremendous benefit for veterans, and decades from now we will look back on this debate we had on the floor, I think, with some admiration as I do. It has been a true privilege and pleasure to be on this committee and to work with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to take care of these important issues this committee has produced. It will make this promise to our veterans of this country; it will continue to produce results for them.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2781, 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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2333) to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the amount of leverage made available to small business investment companies, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2333

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 "Small Business Investment Opportunity Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. INDIVIDUAL SBIC LEVERAGE LIMIT INCREASE.

Section 303(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 683(b)(2)(A)(ii)) is amended by striking "\$150,000,000" and inserting "\$175,000,000".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

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

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the House Small Business Committee, a day does not go by without me hearing from our Nation's job creators. From inspiring accounts that are driven by their work ethic to stories of sacrifice all in the name of growing their company, the Nation's small businesses are the true lifeblood of the American economy.

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With over 29 million small businesses operating in the United States, they are responsible for two out of every three new jobs created in this country. However, their full potential is being held back by heavy-handed regulations and uncertainty. Unfortunately, their inability to access capital continues to prevent job creation and expansion.

As a way to increase access to capital, the Small Business Administration jump-starts and enhances the flow of venture and private equity capital through the Small Business Investment Company program, also known as the SBIC program.

Created in the 1958 Small Business Investment Act, the program utilizes a privately owned and SBA licensed model to increase access to capital. With over 300 SBICs operating in the country and more than \$24 billion of capital under management, the program in fiscal year 2015 invested more than \$5.4 billion in approximately 1,000 small businesses.

In 2015, I introduced a SBIC bill that focused on increasing the family of funds limit.

Similar to my 2015 legislation that was signed into law, the bill we have before us today concentrates on the individual leverage limit. Currently set at \$150 million, the individual limit determines how much capital can be deployed by a SBIC that has only one fund under management. To better utilize this program and allow an increase in capital to small businesses, H.R. 2333—the bill that we are considering here this afternoon—increases the individual leverage limit to \$175 million.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Contracting

and Workforce, for his leadership on this issue.

With access to capital being such a critical need for small business expansion and job creation, an increase in the individual leverage limit could deliver the needed capital that the next great American company is searching for.

This bill has broad bipartisan support and was favorably passed out of committee unanimously. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 2333.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. JUDY CHU, who is here this afternoon, I believe, on behalf of Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, who is the ranking member. We have a very strong bipartisan working committee. It is one of those in Congress that I think can be a model for other committees in how the two parties can actually work together and push forward with policies that are good for the country overall. We are not a very partisan committee. We work together. And I want to thank both Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Ms. JUDY CHU for their participation in that bipartisanship.

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

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

To date, small business investment companies have assisted thousands of high-growth businesses, providing over \$100 billion in capital. The key to the program's success is leveraging Federal funds to expand the amount of private capital invested in promising small firms.

The Small Business Administration provides funding to qualified SBICs with expertise in certain sectors of the economy. SBICs then use their own funds and leverage from SBA to invest in small businesses. Their actions have facilitated over 3 million jobs total and nearly \$6 billion per year of investment in domestic small employers.

Yet this very success has pushed many SBIC licensees against the leverage caps, in turn reducing the flow of capital to worthy small businesses. Addressing the cap should be a priority to stabilize the financial landscape. Failure to do so leaves employers without capital to create jobs and expand our economy.

In recent years, Congress has raised the leverage limits for SBICs to maximize the impact for family of funds licensees, but neglected to assist SBICs that manage just one company. That leverage cap remains at \$150 million.

H.R. 2333, the Small Business Investment Opportunity Act, would increase the cap to \$175 million for a SBIC that manages just one company. This change will enhance the flow of capital to small businesses.

I am happy to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add my appreciation to Chairman CHABOT for his support in the process. I commend his leadership and Ranking Mem-

ber VELÁZQUEZ for their willingness to work in a bipartisan manner. I am pleased to serve on a committee that takes their responsibility seriously to help our Nation's small businesses prosper.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2333, the Small Business Investment Opportunity Act of 2017.

Constantly, we hear that access to capital is a major hurdle for small businesses. Despite an improving economy, small business lending has plateaued since the Great Recession.

The Small Business Investment Opportunity Act aims to improve access to capital by increasing the amount a small business investment company can provide to small businesses.

In Kansas, communities from Hutchinson to Shawnee, Newton to Parsons, have benefited from small business investment company programs, with more than \$307 million in investments to over 110 small businesses across the State.

Small businesses are the Nation's job creators, and providing this sort of access to capital will spur job creation and growth.

Mr. Speaker, I recently finished my 39th townhall, and I dare say that at every townhall somebody asked me: Why can't Congress do anything in a bipartisan fashion?

Mr. Speaker, this is an example of both parties working together for bipartisan solutions to grow this economy.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN), the newest member of the Small Business Committee.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2333, the Small Business Investment Opportunity Act of 2017.

As a businessman, I am keenly aware of how vital small businesses are to keeping our Nation's economy moving forward.

Small businesses alone employ nearly half of America's private sector workforce. However, the dreams of many small business owners in South Carolina can't be fully realized because of the serious obstacle of accessing capital. This burden prevents the creation of more jobs and better opportunities for the hardworking American people.

H.R. 2333 will allow the SBIC program, offered by the SBA to help tackle lending roadblocks, to be utilized to its full potential by increasing the in-

dividual leverage limit from \$150 million to \$175 million. With this legislation, small businesses will have a greater chance to grow and help spur our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 2333 and for all of the small businesses nationwide.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, expanding access to capital for small businesses has been a top priority for both sides of the aisle.

The SBIC program fills the gap in the capital markets for businesses that have outgrown SBA's flagship 7(a) loan guarantee program, but remain too small or risky for the private equity industry.

H.R. 2333 will help boost this program's success by changing how much leverage a SBIC can obtain from SBA.

Specifically, this legislation is narrowly tailored to increase the leverage limit exclusively for SBICs that manage just one company. Increasing the capital will expand the flow of much-needed capital to small businesses.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to, again, commend the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) for his leadership on this particular legislation. He is the subcommittee chairman of the Contracting and Workforce Subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me reiterate the importance of this bill, which aims to increase access to capital for small businesses. It simply increases the SBIC's individual leverage limit from \$150 million to \$175 million.

This legislation really is common sense. And, as I mentioned before, it is bipartisan. I, again, want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) for her bipartisan leadership on this as well.

It will enhance the ability of small businesses to gain the needed money to expand and create jobs in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 2333, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2333, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MICROLOAN MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2056) to amend the Small Business Act to provide for expanded participation in the microloan program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2056

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 “Microloan Modernization Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term “intermediary” has the meaning given that term in section 7(m)(11) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(m)(11)); and

(2) the term “microloan program” means the program established under section 7(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(m)).

SEC. 3. MICROLOAN INTERMEDIARY LENDING LIMIT INCREASED.

Section 7(m)(3)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(m)(3)(C)) is amended by striking “\$5,000,000” and inserting “\$6,000,000”.

SEC. 4. MICROLOAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

Section 7(m)(4)(E) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(m)(4)(E)) is amended by striking “25 percent” each place such term appears and inserting “50 percent”.

SEC. 5. SBA STUDY OF MICROENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall conduct a study and submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on—

(1) the operations (including services provided, structure, size, and area of operation) of a representative sample of—

(A) intermediaries that are eligible to participate in the microloan program and that do participate; and

(B) intermediaries that are eligible to participate in the microloan program and that do not participate;

(2) the reasons why eligible intermediaries described in paragraph (1)(B) choose not to participate in the microloan program;

(3) recommendations on how to encourage increased participation in the microloan program by eligible intermediaries described in paragraph (1)(B); and

(4) recommendations on how to decrease the costs associated with participation in the microloan program for eligible intermediaries.

SEC. 6. GAO STUDY ON MICROLOAN INTERMEDIARY PRACTICES.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report evaluating—

(1) oversight of the microloan program by the Small Business Administration, including oversight of intermediaries participating in the microloan program; and

(2) the specific processes used by the Small Business Administration to ensure—

(A) compliance by intermediaries participating in the microloan program; and

(B) the overall performance of the microloan program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the microloan program at the Small Business Administration is a program that acutely targets small dollar borrowers by utilizing nonprofit intermediaries known as microlenders.

Beyond lending the needed capital that is critical to a small business, microlenders are required to provide technical assistance and training to borrowers and perspective borrowers.

The program is unique to the SBA's capital access programs because it combines capital with counseling, two ingredients for growth. However, like many Federal programs, it is in need of modernizing to fully meet the demands of America's small businesses.

H.R. 2056, the Microloan Modernization Act of 2017, does just that.

To fully service small dollar borrowers, H.R. 2056 raises the lending volume a microloan intermediary has at its disposal from \$5 million to \$6 million.

Next, the legislation provides flexibility to the outdated and antiquated 25/75 rule that limits the amount of preloan technical assistance a microloan intermediary can offer to their small business clients.

By updating the rule to a 50/50 split, more complete assistance can be offered in the early stages of the process, oftentimes, when a small business needs it the most.

To determine if the program is running at its full potential with microlenders throughout the Nation, H.R. 2056 also directs the SBA to study the utilization of the program.

Lastly, to make sure the SBA is providing the correct amount of supervision, the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, is required to study the SBA's oversight tools.

As we continue to see signs of economic improvement, we must steadfastly defend the Nation's small businesses and startups. H.R. 2056 makes important changes to the program that will enhance a small dollar borrower's ability to grow and create jobs.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) and all the members on this committee who have taken a leading role in this legislation. It has broad bipartisan support—again, the Small Business Committee working in a bipartisan fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 2056, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2056, the Microloan Modernization Act

of 2017. This bill comes at an important time, because the nature of small business financing has evolved. No longer do many banks want to take on a business loan under \$250,000, leaving much of the Nation's small employers empty-handed.

Small entities don't always want or need large amounts of capital, and find small loans sufficient to meet their needs, or they lack the qualifications necessary to qualify for a bank loan. The SBA's Microloan program helps fill this gap by serving entrepreneurs who are not served by the private sector or SBA's 7(a) loan program.

This program has provided millions of dollars in financing and technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs since its inception in 1992. By providing loans to nonprofit intermediaries who, in turn, lend funds to the smallest of small businesses, the program helps borrowers streamline their operations, grow to profitability, and create new jobs.

Microloans have proven to be incredibly valuable to prospective entrepreneurs and to communities who badly need greater economic opportunities. Despite the average microloan size being about \$13,000, these loans have changed the face of small business lending and how small companies are funding their success.

H.R. 2056 offers a much-needed change by increasing the microloan intermediary loan limit from \$5 million to \$6 million. It also raises the cap on grant funds that intermediaries can spend on technical assistance for prospective borrowers.

Microloans are labor intensive and require staff time, expense, and risk. Technical assistance grants allows intermediaries to support personalized and intensive technical assistance for those microborrowers in their portfolio. Raising the cap will better serve potential business borrowers by ensuring they are ready for that next step: taking on a loan.

These changes will increase the reach of the program and will ultimately go a long way toward creating opportunity for established enterprises and those who dream of going into business for themselves.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Microloan Modernization Act of 2017. This legislation will benefit America's small businesses by improving the Small Business Administration's Microloan program.

Small business lending has not kept pace with the improving economy after the Great Recession, and this has been especially true for small-dollar borrowers.

Early stage small businesses do not have the proven financial history and

lack access to traditional lending. Unable to borrow money from banks and credit unions, they often turn to friends, family, or credit cards to finance their businesses.

The SBA Microloan program provides access to capital through nonprofit intermediaries that will loan up to \$50,000 for their upstart companies. These intermediaries also offer technical assistance and counseling to facilitate their business' success.

H.R. 2056 will improve the SBA Microloan program by expanding the lending volume to microloan intermediaries, by giving them greater flexibility with their SBA technical assistance grants, to provide more preloan comprehensive assistance to businesses in their infancy, and by requiring the SBA to study and report to Congress on the utilization of the program.

This bill provides meaningful reforms to modernize the SBA Microloan program, and I am a proud cosponsor. This is a needed bill to support the engine of our economy: our small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY).

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2056, my bipartisan bill to improve the Small Business Administration's Microloan program.

Small businesses are the backbone of our Nation's economy. In my home State of Florida, there are 2.4 million small businesses, which is 99.8 percent of all employers in the State. These businesses employ 3.2 million workers.

In my central Florida district, we have a vibrant community of entrepreneurs, and they tell me the number one challenge they face is access to capital. As someone who counseled entrepreneurs and businesses in the private sector before I came to Congress, I know how difficult it can be to obtain the capital you need to start and grow a small business. That is why this bill to improve SBA's Microloan program is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman CHABOT and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for helping to advance this bill through the Small Business Committee, where the bill received unanimous support. I also thank the Administrator of the SBA, Linda McMahon, and her senior staff for working with my office to make modest changes to the bill after it was introduced.

These changes should better position the bill to move through Congress and then to be signed into law by the President.

The Microloan program is one of several lending programs administered by the SBA. Its goal is to help small-dollar borrowers who want to start or grow their business. Under this program, the SBA makes loans to nonprofit organizations known as inter-

mediaries. These intermediaries, in turn, make short-term loans up to \$50,000 to small businesses and nonprofit childcare centers. Recipients of microloans use these funds to finance their operations and to acquire supplies and equipment.

The Microloan program seeks, in particular, to assist small business owners with little or no credit history, women and minority businessowners, and aspiring and existing entrepreneurs who may not qualify for traditional bank loans or even for the larger loan guarantee programs that the SBA administers.

In fiscal year 2016, intermediaries provided over \$60 million in loans to small firms around the country, creating or retaining nearly 18,000 jobs in the process. While the loans may not be large, they can mean the difference between a small business starting up and succeeding or struggling and shuttering.

Despite the relative success of the Microloan program, it must be modernized. My bill would improve the program in two respects. First, the bill would increase the total amount an intermediary can borrow from the SBA from \$5 million to \$6 million. This will allow intermediaries to make more small-dollar loans to more small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Second, the bill would enable intermediaries to use a larger percentage of the technical assistance grants they receive from the SBA in order to help small business owners and entrepreneurs navigate the microloan applications process.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill, which will assist and empower more small businesses.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, SBA's Microloan program fulfills a critical need in the capital markets. It is a key resource for startup, newly established, and growing small businesses, many of which come from traditionally underserved markets, where personal and commercial credit are hard to come by.

The Microloan Modernization Act of 2017 makes targeted reforms to assist more of these small businesses, by raising the amount that the SBA may commit to an intermediary and raising the cap on the amount of grant funding for technical assistance.

These changes would further assist very small businesses to obtain loans and, in turn, provide them greater opportunity to create and retain the jobs that they need.

With no significant effect on the Federal budget, I can think of no better time to make long-sought changes to improve the program. As such, I once again would urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would note again that we have bipartisan work on this committee. I thank Mrs. MURPHY and Mr. BACON for working together and pushing this bill, which I think will benefit small businesses all across the country. I we appreciate that. Mrs. MURPHY, of course, is from Florida, and Mr. BACON is from Nebraska.

I think the Microloan program really is an important tool in the SBA's capital access toolbox, but it is in need of modernizing, and H.R. 2056 does that. These are the reforms, I think, that the Nation's job creators need.

Small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs have the ideas to create the next great American company. We just need to provide the correct environment for that growth to take place, and I think this is something that will contribute towards that possibility and, therefore, be able to create more jobs for more Americans all across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2056, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2056, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INVESTING IN MAIN STREET ACT OF 2017

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2364) to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the amount that certain banks and savings associations may invest in small business investment companies, subject to the approval of the appropriate Federal banking agency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2364

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 "Investing in Main Street Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. INVESTMENT IN SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT COMPANIES.

Section 302(b) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 682(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting before the period the following: "or, subject to the approval of the appropriate Federal banking agency, 15 percent of such capital and surplus";

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting before the period the following: "or, subject to the approval of the appropriate Federal banking agency, 15 percent of such capital and surplus"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) APPROPRIATE FEDERAL BANKING AGENCY DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘appropriate Federal banking agency’ has the meaning given that term under section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

As members of the Small Business Committee, we hear day in and day out how access to capital continues to challenge job creation and job growth. We must continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to create an environment for small businesses to flourish and grow.

One resource available to small employers is the Small Business Investment Company program, or the SBIC program, which currently runs on a zero cost subsidy to the American taxpayer.

The program enhances access to capital for small business throughout the Nation by utilizing a private sector-owned and SBA-licensed formula to increase equity capital.

Within the SBIC program, banks and Federal savings associations are limited to the amount of capital or surplus they can invest in an SBIC. Under current statute, the limit prevents no more than a 5 percent investment.

The legislation we have before us today, H.R. 2364, the Investing in Main Street Act of 2017, increases this investment threshold to 15 percent and requires any investment above the 5 percent mark to be subject to approval by the bank's regulator. This new 15 percent marker brings parity to the program with rules by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

As the Nation's small businesses continue to experience difficulties accessing capital, assistance like the SBIC program delivers, and has a track record to prove it. Some of the Nation's most prominent companies have received SBIC financing in the past. The update provided in H.R. 2364 will continue and build upon the success of the program.

This bill has broad bipartisan support and was favorably passed out of committee unanimously. I would urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 2364.

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

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 2364, the Investing in Main Street Act of 2017.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, accounting for two out of every three new jobs. So as part of our commitment to creating opportunities and growing our economy, it is our responsibility to help more small businesses succeed.

The SBA's Small Business Investment Company, or SBIC, program is an effective tool that facilitates private investment into early stage startup small businesses across the country, and all at no Federal cost.

Tesla, FedEx, Apple, Intel, and Costco are just a few examples of the thousands of small businesses that have successfully used the Small Business Investment Company program during their early stages of growth.

One of the SBIC program's greatest strengths is its hands-off approach, giving fund managers the autonomy to invest in almost any business sector they choose, from apparel to cutting-edge technology. This freedom, coupled with sound investment strategies, has led to its success.

In fact, in 2016, the SBIC program provided \$6 billion in financing to 1,200 small businesses and helped to sustain over 120,000 jobs. It has afforded America's small businesses an invaluable opportunity to grow their innovative ideas.

□ 1645

However, the SBIC program is currently restricted from taking more than 5 percent of capital investments from banks due to an outdated provision in the Small Business Investment Act of 1958. At the same time, current banking regulations established by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency allow these banks to invest up to 15 percent of their capital and surplus into SBICs.

The Investing in Main Street Act will correct this discrepancy by allowing banks and Federal savings associations to invest up to 15 percent of their holdings to these funds to match current banking regulations. This change will strengthen and grow the SBIC program, unleashing more capital to small businesses, and all at no cost to the taxpayer. That means more entrepreneurs will be able to access the capital they need to grow their businesses and hire more workers.

This legislation makes a sensible change to address the number one need of small firms: accessing capital.

I would like to thank our cosponsors, Representative KNIGHT and Representative MENG, for their support, and I ask my fellow Members to support this bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gen-

tlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS), the ranking member of the committee.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of our economy. This is particularly true in my home State of North Carolina. According to a recent report, North Carolina is the number one State in the country for starting a small business. As such, I will support programs that allow them to flourish.

Today, as vice ranking member of the Small Business Committee, I rise to express my full support for H.R. 2364, the Investing in Main Street Act.

The number one concern raised by small businesses is the lack of access to capital; and because of this access problem, small businesses tend to rely more on personal credit cards, often with higher interest rates, than on more affordable small business loans.

The Investing in Main Street Act helps free up affordable capital, and this bill increases access to capital for small businesses by raising the percentage capital banks and savings associations may invest in small businesses up to 15 percent. With increased opportunity, entrepreneurs will be able to grow and expand their businesses as well as hire more employees, allowing them to reach their full potential.

The Investing in Main Street Act is good for business, it is good for small business, and it is good for our economy.

I want to thank Chairman CHABOT and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ and all of my colleagues for supporting this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill as we may continue to give small businesses opportunities to thrive and employ American workers.

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

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, access to capital is the lifeblood of every small business. The SBIC program fills the gap between the availability of venture capital and the needs of small businesses in startup and growth situations.

The SBIC program has long been an important way of channeling capital to leading-edge, high-growth companies. In fact, some of the Nation's most successful corporations received early-stage financing from SBICs. Without it, they may not be the companies that they are today.

The key to the program's success is leveraging Federal funds to increase the amount of private capital invested in such promising startup companies. By dramatically increasing the amount of capital in the SBIC program, the changes made by H.R. 2364 will result in significant small business investment. As such, I once again urge my colleagues to support this measure.

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

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

In closing, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS) for their leadership in introducing this and pushing this important legislation forward.

Once again, it is a bipartisan piece of legislation, and we have worked together. Republicans and Democrats working together, isn't that something? So we appreciate their hard work on this.

With small businesses being the cornerstones of nearly every community in the Nation, we must continue to work together to create an environment for growth and job creation. The 29 million small businesses all across the Nation are depending on us actually working together on things like this.

I know the ranking member of the committee likes to say, "There aren't Republican small businesses; there aren't Democratic small businesses; they are just small businesses," and she is absolutely right. So I really do appreciate their working on this legislation.

H.R. 2364 is commonsense legislation that enjoys bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this.

I yield back the balance of my time. Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2364, which authorizes financial institutions to invest more of their capital in small business investment funds.

As it stands, federally insured banks and savings associations are limited to investing a maximum of 5 percent of their capital and surplus in Small Business Investment Companies (SBIC).

Small Business Investment Companies (SBIC) are private funds, licensed and regulated by the Small Business Administration, that make investments in small businesses using their own capital or loans borrowed with an SBA guarantee.

Under H.R. 2364, financial institutions would be able to invest as much as 15 percent of their capital and surplus in SBICs.

There are over 8 million small businesses in America, which account for 54 percent of all U.S. sales.

Small businesses also provide 55 percent of all jobs and 66 percent of all net new jobs since the 1970s.

With more than half of Americans either owning or working for a small business, it is clear these companies are a vital part of our nation economy.

As the representative for Houston, one of the leading cities for entrepreneurs and small businesses, I remain mindful of the significance of, and have strongly advocated for policies that will preserve and create jobs and keep our nation's small business sector strong.

When small firms are able to grow and thrive, we all benefit from their innovations, job-creating power, and ability to make the U.S. more competitive globally.

That is why I urge all members to join me in supporting H.R. 2364.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2364.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOUNDED OFFICERS RECOVERY ACT OF 2017

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3298) to authorize the Capitol Police Board to make payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund to employees of the United States Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3298

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 "Wounded Officers Recovery Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. PAYMENTS FROM UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE MEMORIAL FUND TO EMPLOYEES SUSTAINING SERIOUS LINE-OF-DUTY INJURIES.

(a) AUTHORIZING PAYMENTS FROM FUND.—Section 2 of Public Law 105-223 (2 U.S.C. 1952) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by inserting "**AND CERTAIN OTHER UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE EMPLOYEES**" before the period at the end;

(2) by striking "Subject to the regulations" and inserting "(a) IN GENERAL.—Except to the extent used or reserved for use under subsection (b) and subject to the regulations"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) PAYMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES SUSTAINING SERIOUS LINE-OF-DUTY INJURIES.—In addition to the amounts paid under subsection (a), amounts in the Fund may be paid to employees of the United States Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries, in accordance with the regulations issued under section 4(b)."

(b) REGULATIONS OF CAPITOL POLICE BOARD.—Section 4 of Public Law 105-223 (2 U.S.C. 1954) is amended—

(1) by striking "The Capitol Police Board" and inserting "(a) IN GENERAL.—The Capitol Police Board"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) REGULATIONS GOVERNING PAYMENTS TO EMPLOYEES SUSTAINING SERIOUS LINE-OF-DUTY INJURIES.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Capitol Police Board shall issue specific regulations governing the use of the Fund for making payments to employees of the United States Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries (as authorized under section 2(b)), including regulations—

"(1) establishing the conditions under which an employee is eligible to receive such a payment;

"(2) providing for the amount, timing, and manner of such payments; and

"(3) ensuring that any such payment is in addition to, and does not otherwise affect, any other form of compensation payable to

the employee, including benefits for workers' compensation under chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code."

(c) TREATMENT OF AMOUNTS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO INCIDENT OF JUNE 14, 2017.—The second sentence of section 1 of Public Law 105-223 (2 U.S.C. 1951) is amended by striking "deposit into the Fund" and inserting "deposit into the Fund, including amounts received in response to the shooting incident at the practice for the Congressional Baseball Game for Charity on June 14, 2017,".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER), chairman of the House Administration Committee, whom I want to thank for allowing me the opportunity to manage this very important bill today. I couldn't ask for a nicer, more respectful chairman.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3298, which allows United States Capitol Police officers who have sustained serious injuries in the line of duty to receive payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund.

The bill is just one of the ways that we, as an institution, can recognize the swift and heroic actions taken by the Capitol Police officers who put their lives on the line each and every day to protect the United States Capitol not just for the Members of Congress, but for all of the staff and all of the many visitors from across our country and around the world.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who were injured during the June 14 shooting, including Officers David Bailey and Crystal Griner, and we wish them a speedy recovery.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all and foremost, thoughts, again, and prayers are out for Representative STEVE SCALISE. I can't wait and hope to see him walk through these doors. I wish him well and his family well.

An inside joke: I hope he has his beans in his pocket. Both being from Italian ancestry, we carry our beans with us, and I hope that he has them with him now for a speedy recovery.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3298 and applaud my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE) for helping to introduce this measure.

Officer Bailey and Officer Griner are American heroes. It has been widely reported that their swift action saved dozens of lives. Every Member of Congress owes them an enormous debt.

Every day, thousands of our Capitol Police officers protect Members, staff, and visitors in this building. You see some at the doors, others working with canine dogs, but there are also many officers you do not see. These officers are analyzing intelligence, working with law enforcement, and performing many other tasks that keep this place safe. Should any of these officers be seriously injured performing their duties, this bill would provide some measure of relief and peace of mind for their families.

I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I do want to thank my good friend, Mr. BRADY, for being here today, managing this bill on the other side, and I also want to thank the coach of the Democrats, who won this year. I certainly liked it better when we had the trophy.

But to be able to know that the thoughts and the prayers are with so many of our Capitol Police officers every single day and also, especially, the heroic actions of Agent Bailey and Agent Griner, what you and our next speaker did with this legislation makes all of us who were a part of this time very humble and thankful.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), our manager, the sponsor of this piece of legislation today.

(Mr. BARTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, today is the 19th anniversary, if you can call it an anniversary, of a shooting in the United States Capitol in which two Capitol Police officers, Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson, were killed. They were defending the Capitol, and a gunman got in and was heading towards the majority leader at the time, Tom DeLay's office. And they, in defending that office, were shot and killed.

The Speaker at the time and the Congress at the time established a Wounded Officers Fund, but they made it specific to those two fallen officers.

As we all know, on June 14, we had another shooting, although it was at a baseball practice for the charity baseball game where the Republican Members were practicing out in Alexandria, Virginia. Two officers, Officers Bailey and Griner, were both seriously injured in defending the 20-some-odd Republican Members that were at practice that morning.

What this bill does, Mr. Speaker, is simply take an existing fund that was established for two officers that were killed in the line of duty and open it

up, now and in the future, for Capitol Police officers who were seriously injured in the line of duty defending the Capitol and defending the Members.

I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE), the Democratic manager, for being an original sponsor with me. I want to thank every member of the Republican and Democratic baseball teams who have signed on as original sponsors.

I want to thank PAUL RYAN and KEVIN MCCARTHY, STENY HOYER and NANCY PELOSI, leadership on both sides of the aisle, for making it possible to bring this bill to the floor. We introduced it last Thursday, and we are voting on it tonight; and wonder of wonders, the Senate is probably going to vote on it tomorrow, and there is a chance the President will sign it this week.

□ 1700

We are showing the American people that we can work together for a noble cause. As has already been pointed out, Officers Bailey and Griner both, at risk to their own lives, defended the Members, staff, and volunteers at that baseball practice on June 14.

I watched Officer Bailey run past me directly at the shooter, risking his life, and two other Alexandria Police officers who had arrived on the scene assisted him. Officer Griner was wounded but was providing covering fire, and that is when they brought down the shooter.

They are heroes. They have sustained injuries. They deserve some assistance. The American people have donated probably \$600,000 or \$700,000 to provide some assistance, and this technical change in the existing fund would allow that to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. DAVIS. I hope everybody can support this.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE), my friend.

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friends BOB BRADY and RODNEY DAVIS and JOE BARTON—not only good friends, but people that have been associated with the Congressional Baseball Game for a long time.

Mr. Speaker, every day, thousands of people, including Members of Congress and their staffs, rely upon the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police to protect us. Over the years, the Capitol Police have been called upon to respond to a number of violent attacks, selflessly risking life and limb to protect us and the people who visit this Capitol. As was mentioned, this is the anniversary where Officers Gibson and Chestnut made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the then-leader of the House.

I know that all of us here are very grateful to the U.S. Capitol Police for their efforts every day to keep our Capitol safe.

Everyone pretty much knows what happened. Members of the Republican baseball team were attacked a little over a month ago. Each day we would get up at about 6 in the morning to go to baseball practice. It is a wonderful tradition that has been going on for over 100 years here in the House of Representatives, one game each year, Democrats against the Republicans, with the proceeds going to three charities: the Boys and Girls Club of Washington, D.C.; the Washington Literacy Council; and the Washington Nationals Dream Foundation.

It is not a softball game; it is a hardball game. We play hardball in Washington. We get to play at the Washington Nationals' stadium, and we get to wear our home team uniforms and relive our youth. Most of us were just amateur baseball players in Little League and PONY League. We have a few guys that played at the college level. We go out there and we practice every day and give it our all. It is great comradery. We build great friendships over the years. Every year we would get about 9,000 or 10,000 people that actually come to the Washington Nationals' stadium and would raise about half a million dollars for the charities.

Well, this year, something happened that none of us ever dreamed when we got up every morning and went to the practice, and that was a shooter showed up that day at this park in Northern Virginia and started firing on the Republican baseball team.

Our team was practicing at the same time at a different location, and the first text I got on my phone during our batting practice was from one of my staff that asked me if I was okay. I couldn't understand why he was asking me that question, but about a second later news came on our telephones that there had been a shooter at the congressional baseball practice. It wasn't at first said which one it was. I knew it wasn't ours, so I knew it had to be the Republican practice.

When we called our players off the field, my thoughts immediately went to JOE BARTON's son Jack, someone whom I have become good friends with over the years.

Jack is, what, JOE, 11 years old?

I think I have known him since he was much younger than that. Jack will come here on the floor during the baseball week, and he will come over and he will say hello to me, and I will try to see if I can get any secrets from Jack about his dad's strategy against the Democratic team. Jack would always say: "I can't give you any information on that." I thought about him right away as we knew that the shots were being fired and that people were down.

We called our team into the dugout, and about the only thing we could think to do, JOE, was to sit down and to say a prayer that you were safe. I prayed that Jack was safe and that nobody was seriously hurt that day.

As we all know, our colleague and good friend STEVE SCALISE was seriously wounded and, to this day, is still

in the hospital. We want to send our prayers and best wishes to STEVE that he recovers fully, and that he and his family can get back to a normal course of life.

But what a lot of people don't realize, had STEVE SCALISE not been there that day, his protective detail, Officers Bailey and Griner, wouldn't have been there that day either. Our friends on the Republican baseball team would have been pretty much defenseless against this guy with an assault rifle and an automatic pistol.

But to their credit, Officers Bailey and Griner—this gentleman started over at the third baseline, and our friends were seeking cover in the first base dugout, which was recessed, to get some protection. But as the shooter started to move towards home plate, these officers realized that he was going to have an angle into that dugout, and there could have been a lot of people killed. They came out from their cover and literally charged at this shooter, and both of them were hit. They continued to fire on this gunman even after they had been hit, and with the help of some Alexandria Police officers, too, brought this shooter down.

Thank God no one on the baseball team or staff—all the people on that field—lost their life that day. The shooter did, but no one else did.

When you sit down and think about what it takes to make that decision to put your life at risk for someone else, Officers Griner and Bailey knew that when they came out in the open like that and started shooting at this guy that they very well could lose their life trying to make sure nobody else did. But they did their job, and they did what they were trained to do.

Both of them got hurt and both are recovering from these bullet wounds, and they have out-of-pocket costs. Their healthcare doesn't cover all of their expenses. They are on administrative leave. They are not making the same pay they would make as a protective detail officer. There was no means for us to help them because of the way this fund was structured, only to make payments if an officer lost their life in the line of duty. I think JOE was correct when he said it was almost created specifically for the two officers that lost their lives.

We both came to realize that there needed to be a change in the law if we were going to be able to help Officers Bailey and Griner and, in the future, if an officer was seriously wounded in the line of duty, for payments to be made out of this fund. That is the purpose of this piece of legislation that we have over 100 cosponsors for. I believe every member of the Democratic and Republican baseball teams has signed on as cosponsors. I know a lot of other Members who weren't on the teams have also put their names to this because we want to make sure that Crystal and David know that we care about them.

I can tell you, the night of the baseball game, David Bailey was at our

game, and if you would have seen the Members come up and hug him and express their appreciation for what he did, it was a very emotional moment. I know Crystal threw out the first pitch at the women's softball game.

Those are two heroic people. Those are two people that put their lives secondary to the lives of the people they are sworn to protect, and I think it is only fitting and proper that this body pass this piece of legislation that will allow us the opportunity to help make them whole again and to let the rest of our Capitol Police force know that they have our backs and that we are going to make sure that we have their backs.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my good friend JOE BARTON and the entire Republican and Democratic baseball teams in supporting this piece of legislation. I hope the Senate moves swiftly on it and we can get this passed.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the reason why we are here can't be stated much better than what my colleague Mr. DOYLE just so eloquently delivered today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), one of our pitchers, one of our newest members of our congressional baseball team, and a good friend.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, the morning of June 14, 2017, I elected to not attend the Republican team's congressional baseball practice. Had I been there, I would have been in the bullpen right where the shooting began. I thank God every day I was not there that morning.

For my colleagues who were there, we have no doubt their lives were saved by the heroic response of Crystal Griner and David Bailey of the Capitol Police.

In the shooting's aftermath, we should do everything we can to ensure they have the full support of the U.S. Government and are allowed the support of groups like the USCP Memorial Fund.

Mr. Speaker, in gratitude for their bravery and sacrifice for running to the battle, I encourage my colleagues to support the Wounded Officers Recovery Act. I thank them again for their heroism.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER), our starting pitcher.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. Thank you for your leadership on this, Congressman DAVIS.

Currently, the United States Capitol Police are not allowed to transfer donations from the USCP Memorial Fund to officers injured in the line of duty but only to families of deceased officers. The great thing about this legislation is that it would allow the U.S.

Capitol Police to transfer those donations to injured officers as well as families of deceased officers to help defray and cover some of the medical costs.

As a former pastor, I can tell you that one of the biggest stressors on families is when there has been an illness or injury to these families that causes additional financial strain. This is common sense. It is certainly bipartisan, across-the-aisle of doing the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this legislation. Again, I thank Representative DAVIS for his leadership, as well as Representative BRADY, and I am proud to support this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK), my good friend who was there with us that morning, somebody whom I watched act heroically and his watchful eye on the entire process, somebody who can give us his personal anecdotes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I give a special thanks to my good friend from Illinois for his thoughtfulness in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, there are times in our lifetime that leave an impact on our lives and we never forget that place or time when we experienced the event or we heard of the event. For my father, it was the attack on Pearl Harbor. He always remembered that moment and the place and the feelings he had when he heard of the attack, which motivated him to join the United States Army. For my children, it was the attacks on America on September 11, 2001.

For me, Mr. Speaker, it is Flag Day, June 14, 2017, at a baseball practice. Not only will I remember that event, but I specifically remember where I was because I was there. Not only was I there, I was within proximity of 10 to 15 feet from the officers who acted so heroically. And still, Mr. Speaker, those images of that day are vivid in my mind. There isn't a day that goes by—and I am sure it is the same thing for the other players—that I don't relive a portion of that moment.

□ 1715

But although those images are vivid, time heals all wounds, and at some point the details will be obscured by the fog of war and other events in our lives. But I will never forget the heroic actions of those two officers that day. Even at the moment when Agent Griner took a bullet—which I believe was destined for me, or definitely in my direction—which took her down and out of the fight, Agent Bailey came to check on his partner, and immediately put himself even more in the line of fire to draw the fire away from us.

I can't express how heroic these officers acted. Some may say, well, that is

their duty, but what I experienced, Mr. Speaker, was above and beyond any call of duty, setting aside their own safety, their own persons, and putting themselves in a situation where death may have been imminent.

They were in a gunfight with someone with a more powerful, more accurate rifle, and all they had was a handgun. But they never let that dissuade them from protecting the lives of those of us. I would not be here today if it wasn't for those two agents.

This is the least that we could do, as has been expressed by many other speakers. The cost upon the families is tremendous when someone is injured in the line of duty. I believe that this is all fitting, and it is an expression of our appreciation for what they do for us day in and day out.

I hope and I pray that we never have an incident like that again, but as history tells us, something like this will happen again. And I just hope that we have agents like Agents Griner and Bailey on duty when that happens again.

There were many miracles on the field that day, and one of those miracles was having the two right agents there doing their job, just like all of our Capitol Police do every day.

I support this bill. I support the intent behind it, and I hope that we move forward with this in an expeditious manner and that we have a unanimous vote on this.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My dad was a police officer, and I know what it is like when you get that phone call in the middle of the night, when he would call our house, and we would jump out of bed, even though he was just calling to find out whether I was home or not. But I know the hardship it can put on families.

On 9/11, when we were in our office buildings, and we were told to run and get out of our office buildings, our police officers were running in. Two days later, on this same floor, when there was a bomb scare and everybody cleared out, we were getting briefed, and we were clearing out running down those steps, our police officers—men and women—and first responders and firefighters were running in.

We need to let them know every day, not just today. This is a great thing we are doing here today for them. We need to let them know every day just how much we appreciate what they do.

When we come to work here, we are protected. We have dogs sniff our cars, and we go through metal detectors. Everybody goes through metal detectors. The Capitol Police come to work and leave their house every day with a vest, after they give their loved ones a kiss good-bye, the loved ones not knowing whether they are going to see them again.

So make no mistake about it, we need to let them know every single day how much we appreciate them and tell them please to stay safe.

Officer Bailey and Officer Griner saved many injuries and possibly many lives. We need to thank Officer Griner and Officer Bailey, and may God bless both of them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my colleagues, Mr. BRADY and Mr. DOYLE, for the opportunity to come here today on this floor and show America the bipartisanship that we see and we witness on this floor every single day—not just because of a baseball game—to do what is right.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank my colleague, JOE BARTON, for leading this effort—not only leading us as a manager of our baseball team, leading us as somebody who brings their son, their 11-year-old son to practice to have fun playing with a bunch of old guys who really shouldn't be playing baseball as much as we enjoy doing it, but to be able to do it, to raise money for local D.C. charities.

JOE, Jack, Barry, I, and the rest of us who were there that morning, none of us ever thought that, at approximately 7:09, we would hear the words: Run, he has got a gun. And it was mentioned by Mr. DOYLE about those of us who dove in that dugout.

Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. I think I could have beaten Usain Bolt from home plate where I was standing to that dugout that day. I dove in that dugout not knowing where the shooter was, what the shooter's motives were, and what was next.

As I was working my way outside of that dugout, I saw Agent Bailey come onto that field in the line of fire to protect every single one of us who were there that day, and it wasn't just Members of Congress. It wasn't just people who this shooter may have politically disagreed with that morning that were there that day.

It was an 11-year-old boy like Jack Barton. There were innocent people walking in that park, walking their dogs, in the line of fire that morning because this person may have disagreed with what we do on this floor.

For those people who are watching today, understand, again, what we are doing here, which is what is right to help those heroes, Agent Bailey and Agent Griner, get access to the funds that all of America put forth on their behalf in less than 24 hours after that tragic shooting. Let us all remind them that we do get along; we do work together. It is not just when tragic moments like this happen. It is a lot more often than what you see.

In less than 24 hours after that shooting, the American people stepped up, and they did what Americans do in the wake of tragedies every single time we witness them.

We had already raised a record amount of money for local D.C. charities with this year's game, \$600,000,

\$100,000 more than what was normal. And they sold, again, 10,000 seats. In less than 24 hours, the American people from all over this great Nation raised another \$900,000 to go to local D.C. charities and to the Capitol Police Memorial Fund, which was added the last day.

They also sold 25,000 tickets. I think that game that night, we outsold like three major league games in attendance. We obviously didn't play as well as they did, but we outsold them.

And that shows you what America is all about. It shows you what Republicans and Democrats are all about. It shows you that in the wake of a senseless tragedy, where we watched our friend lay on that field, not knowing what the outcome was going to be for STEVE SCALISE and his family, Matt Mika, Zack Barth, Agent Griner, and Agent Bailey, that those two saved the lives of everyone on that field that day.

Charging at gunfire is not something I ever thought I would do, and I didn't do that day. But thank God they were there, and they did. And those Alexandria police officers, the police officers I never saw arrive at that scene, thank God they were there.

Because it is the heroic actions of all of those officers, especially those two who I joked with when I walked onto this House floor when I would see them here, not knowing that we would have ever been a part of something that will bind us all together, a tragedy that happens one morning in Alexandria, Virginia, while a bunch of old guys are playing baseball.

We will forever be bound by what we saw and what we witnessed that day. There is not an hour in the day that goes by in my life that I don't think about what happened on that field that morning.

The smells, the sounds, the fear that all of us experienced that day could have been, as every speaker said before, much worse without the heroes who ran toward gunfire, sacrificing themselves for every one of us, and every innocent person in that park, in that field that day.

This is why we have got to make this technical change, Mr. Speaker. We are here. We are lawmakers. We write the laws. We can change the laws. And when this fund was set up, because of the tragedy that many still in D.C. witnessed that day with Officer Gibson and Officer Chestnut who were gunned down protecting innocent Americans in this building, this fund was set up to honor them, not knowing that years later—and today is the anniversary of that shooting—we would need to modify this bill to help two more of our heroes who were lucky and blessed enough to survive.

Today we are going to do that because of the leadership of Mr. BARTON and Mr. DOYLE. Let me go back to that day in 1998. I was actually a new staffer for a new Member of Congress named JOHN SHIMKUS. I was sitting in the district office in Springfield, Illinois,

when I heard the news that shootings were happening in the U.S. Capitol—the fear as a staffer that went through me, wondering where my friend and my boss were. But I got to see it from out there. I never thought years later I would get to witness it as a Member of Congress.

And witness it, we all did, but also we learned from it, and we learned what America was all about. And today is our day in the U.S. Congress to stand up for those heroes who protected us that day and say: We are going to help you.

I, and my family, my kids, my wife, every family member who I was able to reach out to that morning, and all of those who I wasn't able to talk to, we cannot say thank you enough to Agent Griner, Agent Bailey, and the Alexandria Police Department for making sure we have the ability to make this fix.

I urge every one of my colleagues to vote “yes” on this bill. Let's send a message back to America that we thank them for what they did for our officers, and we thank them for allowing all of us the privilege to serve in this great institution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANCE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3298, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3180) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3180

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

- Sec. 101. Authorization of appropriations.
- Sec. 102. Classified Schedule of Authorizations.
- Sec. 103. Personnel ceiling adjustments.

Sec. 104. Intelligence Community Management Account.

TITLE II—CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY SYSTEM

- Sec. 201. Authorization of appropriations.
- Sec. 202. Computation of annuities for employees of the Central Intelligence Agency.

TITLE III—GENERAL INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY MATTERS

- Sec. 301. Restriction on conduct of intelligence activities.
- Sec. 302. Increase in employee compensation and benefits authorized by law.
- Sec. 303. Congressional oversight of intelligence community contractors.
- Sec. 304. Enhanced personnel security programs.

TITLE IV—MATTERS RELATING TO ELEMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Subtitle A—Office of the Director of National Intelligence

- Sec. 401. Authority for protection of current and former employees of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.
- Sec. 402. Designation of the program manager-information sharing environment.
- Sec. 403. Technical correction to the executive schedule.

Subtitle B—Other Elements

- Sec. 411. Requirements relating to appointment of General Counsel of National Security Agency.
- Sec. 412. Transfer or elimination of certain components and functions of the Defense Intelligence Agency.
- Sec. 413. Technical amendments related to the Department of Energy.

TITLE V—MATTERS RELATING TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

- Sec. 501. Assessment of significant Russian influence campaigns directed at foreign elections and referenda.
- Sec. 502. Foreign counterintelligence and cybersecurity threats to Federal election campaigns.
- Sec. 503. Assessment of threat finance relating to the Russian Federation.

TITLE VI—REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

- Sec. 601. Period of overseas assignments for certain foreign service officers.
- Sec. 602. Semiannual reports on investigations of unauthorized public disclosures of classified information.
- Sec. 603. Intelligence community reports on security clearances.
- Sec. 604. Report on expansion of Security Protective Services jurisdiction.
- Sec. 605. Report on role of Director of National Intelligence with respect to certain foreign investments.
- Sec. 606. Report on Cyber Exchange Program.
- Sec. 607. Review of intelligence community participation in vulnerabilities equities process.
- Sec. 608. Review of Intelligence Community whistleblower matters.
- Sec. 609. Sense of Congress on notifications of certain disclosures of classified information.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CONGRESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES.—The term “congressional intelligence committees” means—

(A) the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(B) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

(2) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—The term “intelligence community” has the meaning given that term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

TITLE I—INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

SEC. 101. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Funds are hereby authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2018 for the conduct of the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the following elements of the United States Government:

- (1) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence.
- (2) The Central Intelligence Agency.
- (3) The Department of Defense.
- (4) The Defense Intelligence Agency.
- (5) The National Security Agency.
- (6) The Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, and the Department of the Air Force.
- (7) The Coast Guard.
- (8) The Department of State.
- (9) The Department of the Treasury.
- (10) The Department of Energy.
- (11) The Department of Justice.
- (12) The Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- (13) The Drug Enforcement Administration.
- (14) The National Reconnaissance Office.
- (15) The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.
- (16) The Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 102. CLASSIFIED SCHEDULE OF AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) SPECIFICATIONS OF AMOUNTS.—The amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 101 and, subject to section 103, the authorized personnel ceilings as of September 30, 2018, for the conduct of the intelligence activities of the elements listed in paragraphs (1) through (16) of section 101, are those specified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations prepared to accompany this Act.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF CLASSIFIED SCHEDULE OF AUTHORIZATIONS.—

(1) AVAILABILITY.—The classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in subsection (a) shall be made available to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and to the President.

(2) DISTRIBUTION BY THE PRESIDENT.—Subject to paragraph (3), the President shall provide for suitable distribution of the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in subsection (a), or of appropriate portions of such Schedule, within the executive branch.

(3) LIMITS ON DISCLOSURE.—The President shall not publicly disclose the classified Schedule of Authorizations or any portion of such Schedule except—

(A) as provided in section 601(a) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (50 U.S.C. 3306(a));

(B) to the extent necessary to implement the budget; or

(C) as otherwise required by law.

SEC. 103. PERSONNEL CEILING ADJUSTMENTS.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR INCREASES.—The Director of National Intelligence may authorize employment of civilian personnel in excess of the number authorized for fiscal year 2018 by the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a) if the Director of National Intelligence determines that such action is necessary to the performance of important intelligence functions, except that the number of personnel employed in excess of the number authorized under such section may not, for any element of the intelligence community, exceed 3 percent of the number

of civilian personnel authorized under such schedule for such element.

(b) **TREATMENT OF CERTAIN PERSONNEL.**—The Director of National Intelligence shall establish guidelines that govern, for each element of the intelligence community, the treatment under the personnel levels authorized under section 102(a), including any exemption from such personnel levels, of employment or assignment in—

(1) a student program, trainee program, or similar program;

(2) a reserve corps or as a reemployed annuitant; or

(3) details, joint duty, or long-term, full-time training.

(c) **NOTICE TO CONGRESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES.**—The Director of National Intelligence shall notify the congressional intelligence committees in writing at least 15 days prior to each exercise of an authority described in subsection (a).

SEC. 104. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT.

(a) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated for the Intelligence Community Management Account of the Director of National Intelligence for fiscal year 2018 the sum of \$526,900,000. Within such amount, funds identified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a) for advanced research and development shall remain available until September 30, 2019.

(b) **AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL LEVELS.**—The elements within the Intelligence Community Management Account of the Director of National Intelligence are authorized 804 positions as of September 30, 2018. Personnel serving in such elements may be permanent employees of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence or personnel detailed from other elements of the United States Government.

(c) **CLASSIFIED AUTHORIZATIONS.**—

(1) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—In addition to amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Intelligence Community Management Account by subsection (a), there are authorized to be appropriated for the Intelligence Community Management Account for fiscal year 2018 such additional amounts as are specified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a). Such additional amounts made available for advanced research and development shall remain available until September 30, 2019.

(2) **AUTHORIZATION OF PERSONNEL.**—In addition to the personnel authorized by subsection (b) for elements of the Intelligence Community Management Account as of September 30, 2018, there are authorized such additional personnel for the Community Management Account as of that date as are specified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a).

TITLE II—CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY SYSTEM

SEC. 201. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability Fund for fiscal year 2018 the sum of \$514,000,000.

SEC. 202. COMPUTATION OF ANNUITIES FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

(a) **COMPUTATION OF ANNUITIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 221 of the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2031) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(3)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting “, as determined by using the annual rate of basic pay that would be payable for full-time service in that position.”;

(B) in subsection (b)(1)(C)(i), by striking “12-month” and inserting “2-year”;

(C) in subsection (f)(2), by striking “one year” and inserting “two years”;

(D) in subsection (g)(2), by striking “one year” both places it appears and inserting “two years”;

(E) by redesignating subsections (h), (i), (j), (k), and (l) as subsections (i), (j), (k), (l), and (m), respectively; and

(F) by inserting after subsection (g) the following:

“(h) **CONDITIONAL ELECTION OF INSURABLE INTEREST SURVIVOR ANNUITY BY PARTICIPANTS MARRIED AT THE TIME OF RETIREMENT.**—

“(1) **AUTHORITY TO MAKE DESIGNATION.**—Subject to the rights of former spouses under subsection (b) and section 222, at the time of retirement a married participant found by the Director to be in good health may elect to receive an annuity reduced in accordance with subsection (f)(1)(B) and designate in writing an individual having an insurable interest in the participant to receive an annuity under the system after the participant's death, except that any such election to provide an insurable interest survivor annuity to the participant's spouse shall only be effective if the participant's spouse waives the spousal right to a survivor annuity under this Act. The amount of the annuity shall be equal to 55 percent of the participant's reduced annuity.

“(2) **REDUCTION IN PARTICIPANT'S ANNUITY.**—The annuity payable to the participant making such election shall be reduced by 10 percent of an annuity computed under subsection (a) and by an additional 5 percent for each full 5 years the designated individual is younger than the participant. The total reduction under this subparagraph may not exceed 40 percent.

“(3) **COMMENCEMENT OF SURVIVOR ANNUITY.**—The annuity payable to the designated individual shall begin on the day after the retired participant dies and terminate on the last day of the month before the designated individual dies.

“(4) **RECOMPUTATION OF PARTICIPANT'S ANNUITY ON DEATH OF DESIGNATED INDIVIDUAL.**—An annuity which is reduced under this subsection shall, effective the first day of the month following the death of the designated individual, be recomputed and paid as if the annuity had not been so reduced.”.

(2) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(A) **CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY RETIREMENT ACT.**—The Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.) is amended—

(i) in section 232(b)(1) (50 U.S.C. 2052(b)(1)), by striking “221(h),” and inserting “221(i),”; and

(ii) in section 252(h)(4) (50 U.S.C. 2082(h)(4)), by striking “221(k)” and inserting “221(l)”.

(B) **CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ACT OF 1949.**—Subsection (a) of section 14 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3514(a)) is amended by striking “221(h)(2), 221(i), 221(l),” and inserting “221(i)(2), 221(j), 221(m),”.

(b) **ANNUITIES FOR FORMER SPOUSES.**—Subparagraph (B) of section 222(b)(5) of the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2032(b)(5)(B)) is amended by striking “one year” and inserting “two years”.

(c) **PRIOR SERVICE CREDIT.**—Subparagraph (A) of section 252(b)(3) of the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2082(b)(3)(A)) is amended by striking “October 1, 1990” both places that term appears and inserting “March 31, 1991”.

(d) **REEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.**—Section 273 of the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2113) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

“(b) **PART-TIME REEMPLOYED ANNUITANTS.**—The Director shall have the authority to reemploy an annuitant in a part-time basis in accordance with section 8344(l) of title 5, United States Code.”.

(e) **EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION.**—The amendments made by subsection (a)(1)(A) and subsection (c) shall take effect as if enacted on October 28, 2009, and shall apply to computations or participants, respectively, as of such date.

TITLE III—GENERAL INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY MATTERS

SEC. 301. RESTRICTION ON CONDUCT OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

The authorization of appropriations by this Act shall not be deemed to constitute authority for the conduct of any intelligence activity which is not otherwise authorized by the Constitution or the laws of the United States.

SEC. 302. INCREASE IN EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS AUTHORIZED BY LAW.

Appropriations authorized by this Act for salary, pay, retirement, and other benefits for Federal employees may be increased by such additional or supplemental amounts as may be necessary for increases in such compensation or benefits authorized by law.

SEC. 303. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY CONTRACTORS.

(a) **OVERSIGHT BY CONGRESS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 506J the following new section:

“SEC. 506K. OVERSIGHT OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY CONTRACTORS.

“Notwithstanding the terms of any contract awarded by the head of an element of the intelligence community, the head may not—

“(1) prohibit a contractor of such element from contacting or meeting with either of the congressional intelligence committees (including a member or an employee thereof) to discuss matters relating to a contract;

“(2) take any adverse action against a contractor of such element, including by suspending or debarring the contractor or terminating a contract, based on the contractor contacting or meeting with either of the congressional intelligence committees (including a member or an employee thereof) to discuss matters relating to a contract; or

“(3) require the approval of the head before a contractor of such element contacts or meets with either of the congressional intelligence committees (including a member or an employee thereof) to discuss matters relating to a contract.”.

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 506J the following new item:

“Sec. 506K. Oversight of intelligence community contractors.”.

(b) **APPLICATION.**—The amendment made by subsection (a)(1) shall apply with respect to a contract awarded by the head of an element of the intelligence community on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 304. ENHANCED PERSONNEL SECURITY PROGRAMS.

Section 11001(d) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking “AUDIT” and inserting “REVIEW”;

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking “audit” and inserting “review”; and

(3) in paragraph (2), by striking “audit” and inserting “review”.

TITLE IV—MATTERS RELATING TO ELEMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Subtitle A—Office of the Director of National Intelligence

SEC. 401. AUTHORITY FOR PROTECTION OF CURRENT AND FORMER EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Section 5(a)(4) of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3506(a)(4)) is amended by striking “such personnel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as the Director of National Intelligence may designate;” and inserting “current and former personnel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and their immediate families as the Director of National Intelligence may designate;”.

SEC. 402. DESIGNATION OF THE PROGRAM MANAGER—INFORMATION SHARING ENVIRONMENT.

(a) INFORMATION SHARING ENVIRONMENT.—Section 1016(b) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (6 U.S.C. 485(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “President” and inserting “Director of National Intelligence”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “President” both places that term appears and inserting “Director of National Intelligence”.

(b) PROGRAM MANAGER.—Section 1016(f) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (6 U.S.C. 485(f)) is amended by striking “The individual designated as the program manager shall serve as program manager until removed from service or replaced by the President (at the President’s sole discretion).” and inserting “Beginning on the date of the enactment of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, each individual designated as the program manager shall be appointed by the Director of National Intelligence.”.

SEC. 403. TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO THE EXECUTIVE SCHEDULE.

Section 5313 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security.”.

Subtitle B—Other Elements

SEC. 411. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL COUNSEL OF NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2 of the National Security Agency Act of 1959 (Public Law 86-36; 50 U.S.C. 3602) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c)(1) There is a General Counsel of the National Security Agency.

“(2) The General Counsel of the National Security Agency shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (c) of section 2 of the National Security Agency Act of 1959 (Public Law 86-36; 50 U.S.C. 3602) shall apply with respect to any person who is appointed to serve as General Counsel of the National Security Agency on or after January 21, 2021.

SEC. 412. TRANSFER OR ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN COMPONENTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

(a) INFORMATION REVIEW TASK FORCE.—

(1) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—Effective on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, there is transferred from the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff all functions performed by the Information Review Task Force and all assigned responsibilities performed by the Information Review Task Force. Upon such transfer,

such Task Force shall be designated as a chairman’s controlled activity.

(2) TRANSITION PLAN.—

(A) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall jointly brief the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees on the plan to carry out the transfer required under paragraph (1).

(B) SUBMITTAL OF FORMAL PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall jointly submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a formal plan for the transfer required under paragraph (1).

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency may not obligate or expend any funds authorized to be appropriated for the Information Review Task Force for fiscal year 2018 after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Any such funds that are unobligated or unexpended as of such date shall be transferred to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(b) IDENTITY INTELLIGENCE PROJECT OFFICE.—

(1) ELIMINATION.—Effective on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall eliminate the Identity Intelligence Project Office, including all functions and assigned responsibilities performed by the Identity Intelligence Project Office. All personnel and assets pertaining to such Office shall be transferred to other elements of the Defense Intelligence Agency, as determined by the Director.

(2) TRANSITION PLAN.—

(A) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall brief the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees on the plan to carry out the elimination required under paragraph (1).

(B) SUBMITTAL OF FORMAL PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a formal plan for the elimination required under paragraph (1).

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency may not obligate or expend any funds authorized to be appropriated for the Identity Intelligence Project Office for fiscal year 2018 after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Any such funds that are unobligated or unexpended as of such date shall be transferred to other elements of the Defense Intelligence Agency, as determined by the Director.

(c) WATCHLISTING BRANCH.—

(1) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—Effective on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, there is transferred from the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency to the Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff all functions and all assigned responsibilities performed by the Watchlisting Branch.

(2) TRANSITION PLAN.—

(A) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff shall jointly brief the congressional intelligence committees

and the congressional defense committees on the plan to carry out the transfer required under paragraph (1).

(B) SUBMITTAL OF FORMAL PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff shall jointly submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a formal plan for the transfer required under paragraph (1).

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency may not obligate or expend any funds authorized to be appropriated for the Watchlisting Branch for fiscal year 2018 after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Any such funds that are unobligated or unexpended as of such date shall be transferred to the Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff.

(d) COUNTER-THREAT FINANCE.—

(1) ELIMINATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall eliminate the Counter-Threat Finance analysis function of the Defense Intelligence Agency. All personnel and assets pertaining to such function shall be transferred to other elements of the Defense Intelligence Agency, as determined by the Director.

(2) TRANSITION PLAN.—

(A) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall brief the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees on the plan to eliminate the Counter-Threat Finance analysis function under paragraph (1).

(B) SUBMITTAL OF FORMAL PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a formal plan to eliminate such function under paragraph (1).

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency may not obligate or expend any funds authorized to be appropriated for the Counter-Threat Finance analysis function for fiscal year 2018 after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Any such funds that are unobligated or unexpended as of such date shall be transferred to other elements of the Defense Intelligence Agency, as determined by the Director.

(e) NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE UNIVERSITY.—

(1) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—Effective on October 1, 2020, there is transferred from the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency to the Director of National Intelligence all functions and all assigned responsibilities performed by the National Intelligence University.

(2) TRANSITION PLAN.—

(A) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Director of National Intelligence shall jointly brief the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees on the plan to carry out the transfer required under paragraph (1).

(B) SUBMITTAL OF FORMAL PLAN.—Not later than April 1, 2019, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Director of National Intelligence shall jointly submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a formal plan for the transfer required under paragraph (1).

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency

may not obligate or expend any funds authorized to be appropriated for the National Intelligence University after October 1, 2020. Any such funds that are unobligated or unexpended as of such date shall be transferred to the Director of National Intelligence.

(f) CONGRESSIONAL NOTICE FOR REPROGRAMMING.—Not later than 30 days before transferring any funds relating to transferring or eliminating any function under this section, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees notice in writing of such transfer.

(g) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any function or executive agent responsibility that is transferred to the Director of National Intelligence pursuant to this section, the Director of National Intelligence may not delegate such function or responsibility to another element of the intelligence community.

(2) EXECUTIVE AGENT RESPONSIBILITY.—In this subsection, the term “executive agent responsibility” means the specific responsibilities, functions, and authorities assigned by the Director of National Intelligence to the head of an intelligence community element to provide defined levels of support for intelligence operations, or administrative or other designated activities.

(h) DEADLINE FOR POLICY UPDATES.—Not later than October 1, 2020, the Director of National Intelligence, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall ensure that all relevant policies of the intelligence community and Department of Defense are updated to reflect the transfers required to be made pursuant to this section.

(i) TREATMENT OF TRANSFERRED FUNCTIONS.—No transferred functions or assigned responsibility referred to in subsection (a), (c), or (e) shall be considered a new start by the receiving element, including in the case of any lapse of appropriation for such transferred function or assigned responsibility.

(j) REPORTS ON OTHER ELEMENTS OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.—

(1) NATIONAL CENTER FOR CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT.—

(A) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(i) the assignment of executive agency for the National Center for Credibility Assessment to the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency may be limiting the ability of the Center to effectively serve the Federal customer base of the Center;

(ii) the failure of the Director of National Intelligence, in the role of the Director as security executive for the Federal Government, to define in policy the term “Executive Agent” may be further limiting the ability of the Center to receive sufficient resources to carry out the critical Federal mission of the Center; and

(iii) the evolution of the Center from an organization of the Army to an organization serving 27 departments and agencies and responsible for all Federal credibility assessment training, oversight, and research and development, has resulted in a convoluted oversight structure based on legacy reporting requirements.

(B) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a report on—

(i) the current and projected missions and functions of the National Center for Credibility Assessment;

(ii) the effectiveness of the current organizational assignment of the Center to the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency;

(iii) the effectiveness of the current oversight structure between the Center, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, and the Director of National Intelligence; and

(iv) the resources and authorities necessary to most effectively execute the missions and functions of the Center.

(2) UNDERGROUND FACILITIES ANALYSIS CENTER.—

(A) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(i) the assignment of executive agency for the Underground Facilities Analysis Center to the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency may be limiting the ability of the Center to effectively serve the broader intelligence community customer base of the Center;

(ii) the failure of the Director of National Intelligence to define in policy the term “Executive Agent” may be further limiting the ability of the Center to receive sufficient resources to carry out the critical mission of the Center; and

(iii) the requirements of the intelligence community and Department of Defense with respect to underground facilities are not adequately being met given the scale and complexity of the problem set and the relatively small amount of funding currently received by the Center.

(B) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall jointly submit to the congressional intelligence committees and the congressional defense committees a report on—

(i) the missions and functions of the Underground Facilities Analysis Center;

(ii) the state of the requirements of the intelligence community and Department of Defense with respect to underground facilities and the ability of the Center to meet such requirements;

(iii) the effectiveness of the current organizational assignment of the Center to the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency;

(iv) the effectiveness of the current oversight structure between the Center, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Secretary of Defense, and the Director of National Intelligence; and

(v) the resources and authorities necessary to most effectively execute the missions and functions of the Center.

(k) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “congressional defense committees” means—

(1) the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives.

SEC. 413. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS RELATED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY.

(a) ATOMIC ENERGY DEFENSE ACT.—Section 4524(b)(2) of the Atomic Energy Defense Act (50 U.S.C. 2674(b)(2)) is amended by inserting “Intelligence and” after “The Director of”.

(b) NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947.—Paragraph (2) of section 106(b) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3041(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by inserting “and Counterintelligence” after “Office of Intelligence”; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (F);

(3) by redesignating subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) as subparagraphs (F), (G), and (H), respectively; and

(4) in subparagraph (H), as redesignated by paragraph (3), by realigning the margin of such subparagraph two ems to the left.

TITLE V—MATTERS RELATING TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

SEC. 501. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT RUSSIAN INFLUENCE CAMPAIGNS DIRECTED AT FOREIGN ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA.

(a) ASSESSMENT REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report containing an analytical assessment of the most significant Russian influence campaigns, if any, conducted during the 3-year period preceding the date of the enactment of this Act, as well as the most significant current or planned such Russian influence campaigns, if any. Such assessment shall include—

(1) a summary of such significant Russian influence campaigns, including, at a minimum, the specific means by which such campaigns were conducted, are being conducted, or likely will be conducted, as appropriate, and the specific goal of each such campaign;

(2) a summary of any defenses against or responses to such Russian influence campaigns by the foreign state holding the elections or referenda;

(3) a summary of any relevant activities by elements of the intelligence community undertaken for the purpose of assisting the government of such foreign state in defending against or responding to such Russian influence campaigns; and

(4) an assessment of the effectiveness of such defenses and responses described in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(b) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) may be submitted in classified form, but if so submitted, shall contain an unclassified summary.

(c) RUSSIAN INFLUENCE CAMPAIGN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Russian influence campaign” means any effort, covert or overt, and by any means, attributable to the Russian Federation directed at an election, referendum, or similar process in a country other than the Russian Federation or the United States.

SEC. 502. FOREIGN COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND CYBERSECURITY THREATS TO FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

(a) REPORTS REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As provided in paragraph (2), for each Federal election, the Director of National Intelligence, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Intelligence and Analysis and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, shall make publicly available on an internet website an advisory report on foreign counterintelligence and cybersecurity threats to election campaigns for Federal offices. Each such report shall include, consistent with the protection of sources and methods, each of the following:

(A) A description of foreign counterintelligence and cybersecurity threats to election campaigns for Federal offices.

(B) A summary of best practices that election campaigns for Federal offices can employ in seeking to counter such threats.

(C) An identification of any publicly available resources, including United States Government resources, for countering such threats.

(2) SCHEDULE FOR SUBMITTAL.—A report under this subsection shall be made available as follows:

(A) In the case of a report regarding an election held for the office of Senator or Member of the House of Representatives during 2018, not later than the date that is 60

days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(B) In the case of a report regarding an election for a Federal office during any subsequent year, not later than the date that is one year before the date of the election.

(3) INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED.—A report under this subsection shall reflect the most current information available to the Director of National Intelligence regarding foreign counterintelligence and cybersecurity threats.

(b) TREATMENT OF CAMPAIGNS SUBJECT TO HEIGHTENED THREATS.—If the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Intelligence and Analysis jointly determine that an election campaign for Federal office is subject to a heightened foreign counterintelligence or cybersecurity threat, the Director and the Under Secretary, consistent with the protection of sources and methods, may make available additional information to the appropriate representatives of such campaign.

SEC. 503. ASSESSMENT OF THREAT FINANCE RELATING TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence, acting through the National Intelligence Manager for Threat Finance, shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report containing an assessment of the financing of threat activity by the Russian Federation.

(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The report under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A summary of leading examples from the 3-year period prior to the date of the report of any threat finance activities conducted by, for the benefit of, or at the behest of officials of the Government of Russia, persons subject to sanctions under any provision of law imposing sanctions with respect to Russia, or Russian nationals subject to sanctions under any other provision of law.

(2) An assessment with respect to any trends or patterns in threat finance activities relating to Russia, including common methods of conducting such activities.

(3) A summary of engagement and coordination with international partners on threat finance relating to Russia, especially in Europe, including examples of such engagement and coordination.

(4) An identification of any resource and collection gaps.

(c) FORM.—The report submitted under subsection (a) may be submitted in classified form.

(d) THREAT FINANCE DEFINED.—In this section, the term “threat finance” means—

(1) the financing of cyber operations, global influence campaigns, intelligence service activities, proliferation, terrorism, or transnational crime and drug organizations;

(2) the methods and entities used to spend, store, move, raise, or conceal money or value on behalf of threat actors;

(3) sanctions evasion; or

(4) other forms of threat financing domestically or internationally, as defined by the President.

TITLE VI—REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 601. PERIOD OF OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS FOR CERTAIN FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS.

(a) LENGTH OF PERIOD OF ASSIGNMENT.—Subsection (a) of section 502 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3982) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) In making assignments under paragraph (1), and in accordance with section 903,

and, if applicable, section 503, the Secretary shall assure that a member of the Service may serve at a post for a period of not more than six consecutive years.”.

(b) FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS.—Section 702 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4022) is amended by—

(1) redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

“(c) FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, with the assistance of other relevant officials, shall require all members of the Service who receive foreign language training in Arabic, Farsi, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Turkish, Korean, and Japanese by the institution or otherwise in accordance with subsection (b) to serve three successive tours in positions in which the acquired language is both relevant and determined to be a benefit to the Department.

“(2) OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENTS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), at least one of the three successive tours referred to in such paragraph shall be an overseas deployment.

“(3) WAIVER.—The Secretary of State may waive the application of paragraph (1) for medical or family hardship or in the interest of national security.

“(4) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of State shall notify the Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Relations of the Senate at the end of each fiscal year of any instances during the prior twelve months in which the waiver authority described in paragraph (3) was invoked.”.

SEC. 602. SEMIANNUAL REPORTS ON INVESTIGATIONS OF UNAUTHORIZED PUBLIC DISCLOSURES OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XI of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 1105. SEMIANNUAL REPORTS ON INVESTIGATIONS OF UNAUTHORIZED PUBLIC DISCLOSURES OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—On a semiannual basis, each covered official shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report that includes, with respect to the preceding 6-month period—

“(1) the number of investigations opened by the covered official regarding an unauthorized public disclosure of classified information;

“(2) the number of investigations completed by the covered official regarding an unauthorized public disclosure of classified information; and

“(3) of the number of such completed investigations identified under paragraph (2), the number referred to the Attorney General for criminal investigation.

“(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘covered official’ means—

“(A) the heads of each element of the intelligence community; and

“(B) the inspectors general with oversight responsibility for an element of the intelligence community.

“(2) The term ‘investigation’ means any inquiry, whether formal or informal, into the existence of an unauthorized public disclosure of classified information.

“(3) The term ‘unauthorized public disclosure of classified information’ means the unauthorized disclosure of classified information to a journalist or media organization.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National

Security Act of 1947 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1104 the following new item:

“Sec. 1105. Semiannual reports on investigations of unauthorized public disclosures of classified information.”.

SEC. 603. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REPORTS ON SECURITY CLEARANCES.

Section 506H of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3104) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)(ii), by inserting “and” after the semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking “; and” and inserting a period; and

(C) by striking subparagraph (C);

(2) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c);

(3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

“(b) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REPORTS.—

(1) Not later than March 1 of each year, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on the security clearances processed by each element of the intelligence community during the preceding calendar year. Each such report shall separately identify security clearances processed by each such element and shall cover Federal employees and contractor employees.

“(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include each of the following for each element of the intelligence community for the year covered by the report:

“(A) The total number of initial security clearance background investigations opened for new applicants.

“(B) The total number of security clearance periodic re-investigations opened for existing employees.

“(C) The total number of initial security clearance background investigations for new applicants that were finalized and adjudicated with notice of a determination provided to the prospective applicant, including—

“(i) the total number that were adjudicated favorably and granted access to classified information; and

“(ii) the total number that were adjudicated unfavorably and resulted in a denial or revocation of a security clearance.

“(D) The total number of security clearance periodic background investigations that were finalized and adjudicated with notice of a determination provided to the existing employee, including—

“(i) the total number that were adjudicated favorably; and

“(ii) the total number that were adjudicated unfavorably and resulted in a denial or revocation of a security clearance.

“(E) The total number of pending security clearance background investigations, including initial applicant investigations and periodic re-investigations, that were not finalized and adjudicated as of the last day of such year and that remained pending as follows:

“(i) For 180 days or less.

“(ii) For 180 days or longer, but less than 12 months.

“(iii) For 12 months or longer, but less than 18 months.

“(iv) For 18 months or longer, but less than 24 months.

“(v) For 24 months or longer.

“(F) In the case of security clearance determinations completed or pending during the year preceding the year for which the report is submitted that have taken longer than 12 months to complete—

“(i) the cause of the delay for such determinations; and

“(ii) the number of such determinations for which polygraph examinations were required.

“(G) The percentage of security clearance investigations, including initial and periodic re-investigations, that resulted in a denial or revocation of a security clearance.

“(H) The percentage of security clearance investigations that resulted in incomplete information.

“(I) The percentage of security clearance investigations that did not result in enough information to make a decision on potentially adverse information.

“(3) The report required under this subsection shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.”; and

(4) in subsection (c), as redesignated by paragraph (2), by inserting “and (b)” after “subsection (a)(1)”.

SEC. 604. REPORT ON EXPANSION OF SECURITY PROTECTIVE SERVICES JURISDICTION.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on the feasibility, justification, costs, and benefits of expanding the jurisdiction of the protective services of the Central Intelligence Agency under section 15(a)(1) of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3515(a)). The report shall include—

(1) an explanation of the need for expanding such jurisdiction beyond the 500-foot limit specified in such section 15(a)(1); and

(2) an identification of any comparable departments or agencies of the Federal Government in the Washington metropolitan region (as defined in section 8301 of title 40, United States Code) whose protective services jurisdictions exceed 500 feet.

(b) **FORM.**—The report under subsection (a) may be submitted in classified form.

SEC. 605. REPORT ON ROLE OF DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN FOREIGN INVESTMENTS.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the heads of the elements of the intelligence community determined appropriate by the Director, shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on the role of the Director in preparing analytic materials in connection with the evaluation by the Federal Government of national security risks associated with potential foreign investments into the United States.

(b) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—The report under subsection (a) shall—

(1) describe the current process for the provision of the analytic materials described in subsection (a);

(2) identify the most significant benefits and drawbacks of such process with respect to the role of the Director, including any benefits or drawbacks relating to the time allotted to the Director to prepare such materials; and

(3) include recommendations to improve such process.

SEC. 606. REPORT ON CYBER EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on the potential establishment of a fully voluntary exchange program between elements of the intelligence community and private technology companies under which—

(1) an employee of an element of the intelligence community with demonstrated ex-

pertise and work experience in cybersecurity or related disciplines may elect to be temporarily detailed to a private technology company that has elected to receive the detailee; and

(2) an employee of a private technology company with demonstrated expertise and work experience in cybersecurity or related disciplines may elect to be temporarily detailed to an element of the intelligence community that has elected to receive the detailee.

(b) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—The report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) The feasibility of establishing the exchange program described in such subsection.

(2) Identification of any challenges in establishing the exchange program.

(3) An evaluation of the benefits to the intelligence community that would result from the exchange program.

SEC. 607. REVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN VULNERABILITIES EQUITIES PROCEEDINGS.

(a) **REVIEW.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community shall review, with respect to the 3-year period preceding the date of the review, the roles and responsibilities of the elements of the intelligence community in the process of the Federal Government for determining whether, when, how, and to whom information about a vulnerability that is not publicly known will be shared with or released to a non-Federal entity or the public.

(b) **REPORT.**—

(1) **SUBMISSION.**—Not later than 240 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on the results of the review under subsection (a).

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The report under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A description of the roles and responsibilities of the elements of the intelligence community in the process of determining whether, when, how, and to whom information about a vulnerability that is not publicly known will be shared or released to a non-Federal entity or the public.

(B) The criteria used by the Federal Government, including elements of the intelligence community, in making such determination.

(C) With respect to the period covered by the review—

(i) a summary of vulnerabilities known to elements of the intelligence community that were reviewed by the Federal Government pursuant to such process, including—

(I) the number of vulnerabilities known to the intelligence community that were reviewed; and

(II) of such number of reviewed vulnerabilities, the number for which information was shared with or released to a non-Federal entity or the public;

(ii) an assessment of whether there were any vulnerabilities known to elements of the intelligence community that were not reviewed pursuant to such process, and if so, the basis and rationale for not conducting such a review; and

(iii) a summary of the most significant incidents in which a vulnerability known to the intelligence community, but not shared with or released to a non-Federal entity or the public, was exploited by an individual, an entity, or a foreign country in the course of carrying out a cyber intrusion.

(D) A description of any current mechanisms for overseeing such process.

(E) Recommendations to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and,

consistent with national security, transparency of such process.

(F) Any other matters the Inspector General determines appropriate.

(3) **FORM.**—The report may be submitted in classified form.

(c) **VULNERABILITY DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “vulnerability” means, with respect to information technology, a design, configuration, or implementation weakness in a technology, product, system, service, or application that can be exploited or triggered to cause unexpected or unintended behavior.

SEC. 608. REVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WHISTLEBLOWER MATTERS.

(a) **REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWER MATTERS.**—The Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, in consultation with the inspectors general for the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Reconnaissance Office, shall conduct a review of the authorities, policies, investigatory standards, and other practices and procedures relating to intelligence community whistleblower matters, with respect to such inspectors general.

(b) **OBJECTIVE OF REVIEW.**—The objective of the review required under subsection (a) is to identify any discrepancies, inconsistencies, or other issues, which frustrate the timely and effective reporting of intelligence community whistleblower matters to appropriate inspectors general and to the congressional intelligence committees, and the fair and expeditious investigation and resolution of such matters.

(c) **CONDUCT OF REVIEW.**—The Inspector General of the Intelligence Community shall take such measures as the Inspector General determines necessary in order to ensure that the review required by subsection (a) is conducted in an independent and objective fashion.

(d) **REPORT.**—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a written report containing the results of the review required under subsection (a), along with recommendations to improve the timely and effective reporting of Intelligence Community whistleblower matters to inspectors general and to the congressional intelligence committees and the fair and expeditious investigation and resolution of such matters.

SEC. 609. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON NOTIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN DISCLOSURES OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that section 502 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3092) requires elements of the intelligence community to keep the congressional intelligence committees “fully and currently informed” about all “intelligence activities” of the United States, and to “furnish to the congressional intelligence committees any information or material concerning intelligence activities... which is requested by either of the congressional intelligence committees in order to carry out its authorized responsibilities.”.

(b) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the authorities described in subsection (a), together with other intelligence community authorities, obligate an element of the intelligence community to submit to the congressional intelligence committees written notification, by not later than 7 days after becoming aware, that an individual in the executive branch has disclosed covered classified information to an official of an adversary foreign government using methods other than established intelligence channels; and

(2) each such notification should include—

(A) the date and place of the disclosure of classified information covered by the notification;

(B) a description of such classified information;

(C) identification of the individual who made such disclosure and the individual to whom such disclosure was made; and

(D) a summary of the circumstances of such disclosure.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “adversary foreign government” means the government of any of the following foreign countries:

(A) North Korea.

(B) Iran.

(C) China.

(D) Russia.

(E) Cuba.

(2) The term “covered classified information” means classified information that was—

(A) collected by an element of the intelligence community; or

(B) provided by the intelligence service or military of a foreign country to an element of the intelligence community.

(3) The term “established intelligence channels” means methods to exchange intelligence to coordinate foreign intelligence relationships, as established pursuant to law by the Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Director of the National Security Agency, or other head of an element of the intelligence community.

(4) The term “individual in the executive branch” means any officer or employee of the executive branch, including individuals—

(A) occupying a position specified in article II of the Constitution;

(B) appointed to a position by an individual described in subparagraph (A); or

(C) serving in the civil service or the senior executive service (or similar service for senior executives of particular departments or agencies).

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 3180.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1730

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

Mr. Speaker, passing an annual intelligence authorization bill is the most important tool Congress has to conduct effective oversight of the intelligence activities of the U.S. Government. The Intelligence Committee has brought a bill to the floor every year since fiscal year 2010. Once again, the bill is a bipartisan product that reflects contributions from all committee members. It was reported out of committee by a unanimous voice vote.

Because most of the intelligence budget involves highly classified pro-

grams, the bulk of the Committee's schedule of authorizations and direction are found in the classified annex to the bill. This classified annex has been made available to Members since markup in the House Intelligence Committee spaces.

At the unclassified level, I can report that the overall funding authorized by this bill is slightly below the President's budget request. Furthermore, the bill funds the Military Intelligence Program in line with the levels of the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018.

The bill implements the first stage of a committee initiative to streamline and optimize defense intelligence beginning with the Defense Intelligence Agency; provides guidelines to guarantee that intelligence community contractors can meet with Congress unhindered; and enhances oversight of intelligence activities by mandating intelligence community reports on threats to Federal elections, leaks of classified information, security clearance processing, and other vital activities.

Mr. Speaker, America faces an international threat matrix more complicated than anything we have endured in the past. The recent, impressive progress made by the U.S. military and its allies against ISIS in Iraq and Syria has not ended the ISIS terror threat. In fact, based on the group's ability to inspire terror attacks through social media and other means, ISIS could remain a significant threat to the West even after it loses all the territory it controls. Additionally, al-Qaida remains active in Afghanistan and has retained its close links to the resurgent Taliban. Meanwhile, other threats from belligerent regimes like Iran and North Korea continue to intensify, while instability in failed states like Libya presents pressing security challenges to the U.S. and our European allies, including through the facilitation of waves of mass migration that provide cover for the movement of jihadists to the West.

This bill will ensure that the dedicated men and women of our intelligence community have the funding, authorities, and support they need to carry out their mission and to keep us safe, while providing Congress with the tools it needs to provide robust oversight over their actions.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, July 24, 2017.

Hon. DEVIN NUNES,
Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NUNES: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Homeland Security in H.R. 3180, the “Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018.” The bill includes provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security.

I recognize and appreciate the desire to bring this legislation before the House of

Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Homeland Security will forego seeking a sequential referral on this bill. However, this is conditional based on our mutual understanding that foregoing action on H.R. 3180 at this time does not prejudice this Committee with respect to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation.

This waiver is also given with the understanding that the Committee on Homeland Security expressly reserves its authority to seek conferees on any provision within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference that may be convened on this or any similar legislation, and requests your support for such a request.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3180, and ask that a copy of this letter and your response be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,

Washington, DC, July 24, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I received your letter regarding H.R. 3180, the “Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018.” You have asserted that Section 502 of the Act falls within your jurisdiction because it requests that the Director of National Intelligence coordinate with the National Intelligence Program (NIP) funded Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis (DHS I&A) to produce a publicly available advisory report on foreign counterintelligence and cyber threats.

Consistent with our January 11, 2017 exchange of letters, HPSCI has exclusive jurisdiction over NIP funded DHS I&A intelligence activities. However, I acknowledge that your letter in no way diminishes or alters the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security with respect to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill or any similar legislation.

I will include a copy of your letter and this response in the Congressional Record during consideration of the legislation on the House Floor. Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

DEVIN NUNES,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to taking up the Intelligence Authorization Act on suspension at a time when issues concerning the intelligence community have taken on an even greater significance and urgency, and taking up the bill this way will deprive Members of the opportunity to offer important amendments.

The Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 is a good and bipartisan bill, but even a good bill can be made better. And although we have taken up the IAA on suspension on occasion in the past, it has only been on the basis of mutual agreement, which is not the case this year.

On its merits, I believe the IAA should and will become law, and I look

forward to its ultimate approval by both the House and Senate, and enactment.

Nevertheless, I share Leader PELOSI and Whip HOYER's view that tonight's suspension vote should be opposed. This IAA should go through regular order so that Members may offer amendments. I will vote "no" today because I disagree with the expedited procedure used to bring this to the floor.

The Intelligence Committee has a unique role in this House and a special obligation to the American people.

It is our job to oversee the activities of the 17 agencies that comprise the intelligence community, ensuring that we strike an appropriate balance between protecting our country's national security and the civil liberties of everyone who calls America home.

On behalf of the House—by and through our oversight tools, including the IAA—our committee helps ensure that the activities of the U.S. intelligence community do the following: that they adhere to the Constitution and to the law; that they advance the national security interests of the United States; that they wisely expend taxpayer dollars; and that they steadfastly protect Americans' civil liberties and privacy rights.

The legislation before us today, like its predecessors, continues to fund, equip, and give policy direction to the intelligence community and military intelligence elements of the Department of Defense. It provides funding levels slightly below the President's 2018 budget request and sustains intelligence priorities provided for in previous authorizations.

In addition to the unclassified legislative text and accompanying House report, the IAA includes a classified annex, which directs the resources and spending for the IC's activities and programs. This includes a correlating schedule of authorizations that lays out funding for the IC and the DOD.

This year's IAA, once again, incorporates a number of Democratic Member oversight priorities: it improves our efforts to stamp out waste, fraud, and abuse by requiring an Inspector General-level review of existing whistleblower procedures and by permitting IC contractors to come directly to Congress without requiring permission from the IC elements that employ them.

A provision accompanying the report mandates that the ODNI notify and provide justification to Congress if the executive branch alters the existing Presidential Policy Guidance, or PPG, relating to U.S. counterterrorism actions located outside of designated areas of active hostilities. The PPG, first promulgated under the previous administration, is an important element of U.S. policymaking that seeks to ensure direct action against lawful terrorist targets is undertaken only when necessary and consistent with U.S. national security and foreign policy interests. This is the result of rig-

orous legal and policy deliberation and coordination within the U.S. Government. Reporting to Congress on any changes to it ensures proper oversight.

The bill also furthers our committee's belief that the future of the IC workforce depends on diversity; as such, this year's IAA enhances the ODNI's Centers of Academic Excellence program.

Finally, this bill reflects a clear-eyed assessment of the threat we face from a resurgent Russia determined to undermine our democratic institutions and our faith in the American political process.

As the intelligence community has determined, Moscow initiated as early as mid-2015 an active measures campaign to assault our 2016 election. The Kremlin's influence campaign consisted of cyber espionage, hacking and weaponizing stolen documents, and a propaganda machine that was used to great effect to amplify every element of their appalling campaign, and perhaps more.

This year's IAA acts on that unanimous IC judgment by directing assessments on Moscow's influence campaigns against foreign elections and the threat posed by Russian finance activities globally. It also requires ODNI to publish a report on the foreign cybersecurity and counterintelligence threats to future U.S. Federal election campaigns.

As with any product of a good-faith attempt at compromise, I do not pretend this bill is perfect. There are provisions I wish were modified, and some provisions that I would have liked to have seen included. Many of my colleagues feel the same way, and they should have been permitted to offer amendments, something I hope they will be permitted to do by voting "no" on this bill under suspension.

For example, we wish this bill had done more to codify in law some of the previous administration's counterterrorism reforms, including giving the status of law to an executive order requiring the Director of National Intelligence to continue the practice of releasing publicly available data on the total number of combatants and non-combatants killed or injured due to counterterrorism action.

I look forward to the fiscal year '18 Intelligence Authorization Act being enacted into law—not through the vehicle of the suspension calendar, but through consideration under regular order. For that reason, I urge a "no" vote here so that all Members will have a chance to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), who is one of our superb members of the committee and also one of our ranking members.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on the passage of the fiscal year 2018 Intelligence Authorization Act under suspension of the rules.

Unfortunately, I strongly oppose its passage today, not because it is a bad

bill. On the contrary, I voted for it out of committee. But today I disagree on how this bill is presented on the floor. The Intelligence Authorization Act should be on regular order and rule and not on suspension.

This critically important piece of legislation is the most substantial oversight mechanism that Congress has over the intelligence community, and it deserves full consideration and robust debate. The American public and our intelligence community deserve nothing less.

Before authorizing tens of billions of dollars for the United States intelligence community, our lawmakers should carefully consider and debate the issues our intelligence community faces, many of which directly impact our national security. Instead, today's consideration of the IAA has been fast-tracked, and debate has been cut short.

Most of the work of the intelligence community and our committee happens behind closed doors, which means that debate on the House floor over the Intelligence Authorization Act is one of the few times the public can engage with the issues facing our intelligence community. By limiting debate on this bill, we cut public engagement off as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the bipartisan way in which our committee worked to craft this year's Intelligence Authorization Act. I am excited that this year's IAA includes a provision that I drafted that provides our lawmakers, election officials, campaigns, and the public with additional information and resources to defend our democracy against emerging cyber threats. Additionally, we will continue to be able to provide a summer internship program to students from the existing Centers of Academic Excellence in intelligence. This year's IAA will also hold the IC accountable for creating a more diverse and inclusive working environment.

Nevertheless, I will oppose today's bill not because I don't support the underlying bill, but because I believe that national security issues raised by this legislation are too important to be fast-tracked.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose today's vote under suspension of the rules and to stand with us in demanding full debate and consideration under regular order.

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time to close.

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

The Intelligence Authorization Act is a critical oversight tool, one component of the legal architecture that governs the authorities and boundaries of our civilian and military intelligence professionals.

The bipartisan legislation before us today is sound, and I endorse its substance on the merits. But I agree with our leadership that the suspension process is not the appropriate venue for its adoption.

For this reason, I will vote “no” on the measure tonight, but I remain optimistic about this legislation’s ultimate passage into law after we complete its consideration under regular order.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first, I thank Mr. Phil Tubesing, who has been a congressional fellow with our committee for the last 2 years. This will be his last bill. He will be leaving us at the end of the month, so I wanted to recognize him for all his fine work on the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this bill. This is typically how the bill has come to the floor from the Intelligence Committee. As nearly all the Members know, for the last several years that is how it has occurred. Unfortunately, we are beginning to deteriorate into political theater at the Intelligence Committee. As long as I am chairman, I am going to continue to try to stop that from happening.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Intelligence Committee, I am proud of the bipartisanship that allowed us to put this bill together.

Our committee, which normally operates quietly, has gotten more attention than normal this year as we conduct the critical business of investigating Russian intervention in our elections.

But we still do our day job—overseeing intelligence programs and providing support to the men and women of our intelligence community who fight to keep our country safe.

This bill is the culmination of this cooperation.

Our country is facing a wide array of pervasive and complex threats.

Our near-peer adversaries, Russia and China, are rapidly growing their military capabilities and regularly, unashamedly violating international law.

A nuclear weapons stockpile and functioning ICBM program now sit in the hands of an unpredictable North Korean dictator.

And the so-called caliphate started by ISIS is losing ground, only to increase homegrown attacks against the United States and its allies.

My constituents, like all Americans, are rightly concerned.

But they can feel confident that we are working with the intelligence community on ways to address them.

As the Ranking Member of the Emerging Threats Subcommittee, I am particularly interested in supporting our intelligence professionals who assess and prevent terrorist threats to our homeland—while protecting the civil rights and liberties of innocent Americans.

I’m working to ensure they use their expertise, as well as that in the private sector, to find and remove online propaganda used to recruit would-be attackers.

I’m also proud to include language that will enable the IC and private sector to temporarily exchange IT talent in order to better tackle some of the toughest cybersecurity challenges.

Mr. Speaker, Chairman NUNES and Ranking Member SCHIFF have led this process with bipartisan professionalism.

This bill is stronger because it reflects the input of all of our members.

The full House should have this same opportunity—not be forced to vote up or down under suspension.

Republican leadership owes it to our members to return to regular order so our bill can benefit from the input of the full House.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and vigilant defender of our national security, I rise in support of H.R. 3180, the “Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018,” which will provide the Intelligence Community (IC) with the necessary resources and authorities to ensure they remain capable of protecting and defending the United States.

This bill authorizes appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018 for vital intelligence activities of the U.S. government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3180 comes at a critical time in the status of our national security and the IC’s ability to protect it.

As we continue to face a diverse and growing array of threats from terrorist groups, hostile nation states, and questionable or incompetent figures in the Trump administration, it is crucial that the IC receive all the resources it needs to do its job while Congress has the necessary tools to carry out rigorous oversight of its work.

This bill seeks to meet these challenges by supporting critical national security programs, particularly those focused on countering terrorism and cyberattacks.

Under H.R. 3180, the Director of National Intelligence will be required to electronically publish an unclassified advisory report on foreign counterintelligence and cybersecurity threats to federal elections.

It also bolsters intelligence oversight by ensuring that IC contractors can meet freely with Congress.

Lastly, this bill improves IC accountability to Congress by requiring the IC to provide reports on:

Investigations of leaks of classified information;

Security clearance processing timelines;

The process for reviewing information about computer vulnerabilities for retention or potential release;

And Russian influence campaigns directed at foreign elections and threat finance activities.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3180 is a necessary response to the overwhelming evidence pointing to a carefully planned and executed infiltration of our 2016 Presidential Election by the Russian government and its operatives.

The issue of cybersecurity, particularly with regards to our federal election computer system infrastructure, has been of great concern to me and the American public as more and more reports of Russian hacking efforts have come to light.

In addition, the provision requiring reports on security clearance processing timelines should shed light on the highly dubious and inscrutable security clearances of Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner.

Donald Trump’s blatant and irresponsible nepotism towards his daughter and son-in-law

have made us all vulnerable to Russian and other foreign influence at the highest levels of our federal government.

H.R. 3180 will give the American people what they crave and deserve: clarity and transparency to pierce through the haze of cover-ups and distractions surrounding the Trump Administration.

This bill also takes significant, much-needed steps to improve benefits for members of the IC, such as increasing employee compensation and authorizing \$514 million in appropriations for the CIA’s Retirement and Disability System.

Congress must do its part to adequately recompense the patriotic Americans who serve our nation through their work in the IC, especially employees with disabilities, who make up 9 percent of the intelligence workforce.

At the same time, we must continue to ensure that Congress can exercise oversight over and maintain transparency for the 17 agencies that comprise the IC.

I am heartened that my Republican colleagues in the Intelligence Committee are starting to see the light in recognizing the sinister threat of Russian infiltration and White House collusion, both of which endanger our nation’s ability to practice and protect its core democratic values.

I look forward to working with all Members of Congress to strengthen our IC, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3180, 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. SCHIFF. 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.

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 5 o’clock and 43 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. CARTER of Georgia) at 6 o’clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 111 PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION RELATING TO ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS

Mr. BUCK from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-252) on the resolution (H. Res. 468) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 111) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Arbitration Agreements", which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REQUESTING THE SENATE TO RETURN TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 76

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 469

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives request the Senate to return to the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 76) entitled "Granting the consent and approval of Congress for the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia to a enter into a compact relating to the establishment of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission."

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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.R. 3180, by the yeas and nays;

S. 114, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3218, by the yeas and nays.

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

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3180) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, 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. NUNES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 241, nays 163, not voting 29, as follows:

[Roll No. 407]

YEAS—241

Abraham	Goodlatte	Norcross
Aderholt	Gosar	Norman
Aguilar	Gottheimer	Nunes
Allen	Gowdy	O'Halleran
Amodei	Granger	Olson
Arrington	Graves (GA)	Palmer
Babin	Graves (LA)	Paulsen
Bacon	Griffith	Pearce
Banks (IN)	Grothman	Perry
Barietta	Guthrie	Peters
Barr	Handel	Peterson
Barton	Harper	Pittenger
Bera	Harris	Poliquin
Bergman	Hartzer	Posey
Biggs	Hensarling	Ratcliffe
Bilirakis	Herrera Beutler	Reed
Bishop (MI)	Hice, Jody B.	Reichert
Bishop (UT)	Higgins (LA)	Rice (SC)
Black	Hill	Roby
Blackburn	Holding	Roe (TN)
Blum	Hollingsworth	Rogers (AL)
Bost	Hudson	Rogers (KY)
Brady (TX)	Huizenga	Rokita
Bridenstine	Hunter	Rooney, Francis
Brooks (IN)	Hurd	Ros-Lehtinen
Brownley (CA)	Issa	Rosen
Buchanan	Jenkins (KS)	Roskam
Buck	Johnson (LA)	Ross
Bucshon	Johnson (OH)	Rothfus
Budd	Johnson, Sam	Rouzer
Burgess	Joyce (OH)	Royce (CA)
Bustos	Katko	Ruiz
Byrne	Keating	Russell
Calvert	Kelly (MS)	Rutherford
Carbajal	Kelly (PA)	Schneider
Carter (GA)	Kihuen	Schrader
Carter (TX)	King (IA)	Schweikert
Chabot	King (NY)	Scott, Austin
Cheney	Kinzinger	Sensenbrenner
Coffman	Knight	Sessions
Cole	Kuster (NH)	Shea-Porter
Collins (GA)	Kustoff (TN)	Shimkus
Collins (NY)	LaHood	Shuster
Comer	LaMalfa	Simpson
Comstock	Lamborn	Sinema
Conaway	Lance	Smith (NE)
Cook	Latta	Smith (NJ)
Correa	Lewis (MN)	Smith (TX)
Costa	Lipinski	Smucker
Cramer	LoBiondo	Stefanik
Crist	Loeb sack	Stivers
Culberson	Long	Suozzi
Curbelo (FL)	Loudermilk	Taylor
Davis, Rodney	Love	Tenney
Denham	Lucas	Thompson (PA)
Dent	Luetkemeyer	Thornberry
DeSantis	Lujan Grisham,	Tiberi
DesJarlais	M.	Tipton
Diaz-Balart	MacArthur	Trott
Donovan	Maloney, Sean	Turner
Duffy	Marchant	Upton
Duncan (SC)	Marino	Valadao
Dunn	Marshall	Wagner
Emmer	Mast	Walberg
Estes (KS)	McCarthy	Walden
Farenthold	McClintock	Walker
Faso	McHenry	Walorski
Ferguson	McMorris	Walters, Mimi
Fitzpatrick	Rodgers	Weber (TX)
Fleischmann	McNerney	Webster (FL)
Flores	McSally	Wenstrup
Fortenberry	Meadows	Westerman
Fox	Meehan	Wilson (SC)
Franks (AZ)	Messer	Wittman
Frelinghuysen	Mitchell	Womack
Gaetz	Moolenaar	Woodall
Gallagher	Mullin	Yoder
Garamendi	Murphy (FL)	Yoho
Garrett	Murphy (PA)	Young (AK)
Gianforte	Newhouse	Young (IA)
Gibbs	Noem	Zeldin

NAYS—163

Adams	Frankel (FL)	Nadler
Amash	Fudge	Neal
Barragán	Gabbard	Nolan
Beatty	Gallego	O'Rourke
Beyer	Gohmert	Pallone
Bishop (GA)	Gomez	Panetta
Blumenauer	Gonzalez (TX)	Pascarelli
Blunt Rochester	Green, Al	Payne
Bonamici	Green, Gene	Pelosi
Boyle, Brendan	Grijalva	Perlmutter
F.	Hanabusa	Pingree
Brady (PA)	Hastings	Pocan
Brat	Heck	Polis
Brown (MD)	Higgins (NY)	Price (NC)
Butterfield	Himes	Quigley
Capuano	Hoyer	Raskin
Cárdenas	Huffman	Rice (NY)
Carson (IN)	Jackson Lee	Richmond
Cartwright	Jayapal	Royal-Allard
Castor (FL)	Jeffries	Ruppersberger
Castro (TX)	Johnson, E. B.	Rush
Chu, Judy	Jones	Ryan (OH)
Cicilline	Jordan	Sánchez
Clark (MA)	Kaptur	Sanford
Clarke (NY)	Kelly (IL)	Sarbanes
Clay	Kennedy	Schakowsky
Cleaver	Khanna	Schiff
Clyburn	Kildee	Scott (VA)
Cohen	Kilmer	Scott, David
Connolly	Kind	Serrano
Conyers	Krishnamoorthi	Sewell (AL)
Cooper	Labrador	Sherman
Courtney	Langevin	Sires
Cuellar	Larsen (WA)	Slaughter
Davidson	Larson (CT)	Smith (WA)
Davis (CA)	Lawson (FL)	Soto
DeFazio	Lee	Speier
DeGette	Levin	Swalwell (CA)
Delaney	Lewis (GA)	Takano
DeLauro	Lieu, Ted	Thompson (CA)
DelBene	Lofgren	Thompson (MS)
Demings	Lowenthal	Titus
DeSaulnier	Lowe	Tonko
Deutch	Luján, Ben Ray	Torres
Dingell	Lynch	Tsongas
Doggett	Maloney,	Veasey
Doyle, Michael	Carolyn B.	Vela
F.	Massie	Velázquez
Duncan (TN)	Matsui	Visclosky
Ellison	McCollum	Walz
Engel	McEachin	Wasserman
Eshoo	McGovern	Wassulz
Espallat	Meeks	Watson Coleman
Esty (CT)	Meng	Wilson (FL)
Evans	Moore	Yarmuth
Foster	Moulton	

NOT VOTING—29

Bass	Jenkins (WV)	Rohrabacher
Brooks (AL)	Johnson (GA)	Rooney, Thomas
Costello (PA)	Lawrence	J.
Crawford	McCauley	Scalise
Crowley	McKinley	Smith (MO)
Cummings	Mooney (WV)	Stewart
Davis, Danny	Napolitano	Vargas
Graves (MO)	Palazzo	Waters, Maxine
Gutiérrez	Poe (TX)	Welch
Hultgren	Renacci	Williams

□ 1854

Messrs. MESSER, MEADOWS, LOEBSACK, BIGGS, ARRINGTON, GOSAR, NORCROSS, and GARAMENDI changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds not being in the affirmative) the motion was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BONUS TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 114) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain

high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 219, nays 186, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 408]

YEAS—219

Abraham	Garrett	Newhouse
Aderholt	Gianforte	Noem
Allen	Gibbs	Norman
Amash	Gohmert	Nunes
Amodei	Goodlatte	Olson
Arrington	Gosar	Palmer
Babin	Gowdy	Paulsen
Bacon	Granger	Pearce
Banks (IN)	Graves (GA)	Perry
Barletta	Graves (LA)	Pittenger
Barr	Griffith	Poliquin
Barton	Grothman	Posey
Bergman	Guthrie	Ratcliffe
Biggs	Handel	Reed
Bilirakis	Harper	Reichert
Bishop (MI)	Harris	Rice (SC)
Bishop (UT)	Hartzler	Roby
Black	Hensarling	Roe (TN)
Blackburn	Herrera Beutler	Rogers (AL)
Blum	Hice, Jody B.	Rogers (KY)
Bost	Higgins (LA)	Rokita
Brady (TX)	Hill	Rooney, Francis
Brat	Holding	Ros-Lehtinen
Bridenstine	Hollingsworth	Roskam
Brooks (IN)	Hudson	Ross
Buchanan	Huizenga	Rothfus
Buck	Hunter	Rouzer
Bucshon	Hurd	Royce (CA)
Budd	Issa	Russell
Burgess	Jenkins (KS)	Rutherford
Byrne	Johnson (LA)	Sanford
Calvert	Johnson (OH)	Scott, Austin
Carter (GA)	Johnson, Sam	Sensenbrenner
Carter (TX)	Jordan	Sessions
Chabot	Joyce (OH)	Shimkus
Cheney	Katko	Shuster
Coffman	Kelly (MS)	Simpson
Cole	Kelly (PA)	Sinema
Collins (GA)	King (IA)	Smith (NE)
Collins (NY)	King (NY)	Smith (NJ)
Comer	Kinzinger	Smith (TX)
Comstock	Knight	Smucker
Conaway	Kustoff (TN)	Stefanik
Cook	Labrador	Stivers
Costa	LaHood	Taylor
Cramer	LaMalfa	Tenney
Culberson	Lamborn	Thompson (PA)
Curbelo (FL)	Lance	Thornberry
Davidson	Latta	Tiberi
Davis, Rodney	Lewis (MN)	Tipton
Denham	LoBiondo	Trott
Dent	Long	Turner
DeSantis	Loudermilk	Upton
DesJarlais	Love	Valadao
Diaz-Balart	Lucas	Wagner
Donovan	Luetkemeyer	Walberg
Duffy	MacArthur	Walden
Duncan (SC)	Marchant	Walker
Duncan (TN)	Marino	Walorski
Dunn	Marshall	Walters, Mimi
Emmer	Mast	Weber (TX)
Estes (KS)	McCarthy	Webster (FL)
Farenthold	McClintock	Wenstrup
Faso	McHenry	Westerman
Ferguson	McMorris	Wilson (SC)
Fitzpatrick	Rodgers	Wittman
Fleischmann	McSally	Womack
Flores	Meadows	Yoder
Fortenberry	Meehan	Yoho
Fox	Messer	Young (AK)
Franks (AZ)	Mitchell	Young (IA)
Frelinghuysen	Moolenaar	Zeldin
Gaetz	Mullin	
Gallagher	Murphy (PA)	

NAYS—186

Adams	Barragán	Bera
Aguilar	Beatty	Beyer

Bishop (GA)	Green, Gene	Pallone
Blumenauer	Grijalva	Panetta
Blunt Rochester	Hanabusa	Pascarell
Bonamici	Hastings	Payne
Boyle, Brendan	Heck	Pelosi
F.	Higgins (NY)	Perlmutter
Brady (PA)	Himes	Peters
Brown (MD)	Hoyer	Peterson
Brownley (CA)	Huffman	Pingree
Bustos	Jackson Lee	Pocan
Butterfield	Jayapal	Polis
Capuano	Jeffries	Price (NC)
Carbajal	Johnson, E. B.	Quigley
Cárdenas	Jones	Raskin
Carson (IN)	Kaptur	Rice (NY)
Cartwright	Keating	Richmond
Castor (FL)	Kelly (IL)	Rosen
Castro (TX)	Kennedy	Roybal-Allard
Chu, Judy	Khanna	Ruiz
Cicilline	Kihuen	Ruppersberger
Clark (MA)	Kildee	Rush
Clarke (NY)	Kilmer	Ryan (OH)
Clay	Kind	Sánchez
Cleaver	Krishnamoorthi	Sarbanes
Clyburn	Kuster (NH)	Schakowsky
Cohen	Langevin	Schiff
Connolly	Larsen (WA)	Schneider
Conyers	Larson (CT)	Schrader
Cooper	Lawson (FL)	Schweikert
Correa	Lee	Scott (VA)
Courtney	Levin	Scott, David
Crist	Lewis (GA)	Serrano
Cuellar	Lieu, Ted	Sewell (AL)
Davis (CA)	Lipinski	Shea-Porter
DeFazio	Loeb sack	Sherman
Reed	Lofgren	Sires
DeGette	Lowenthal	Slaughter
Delaney	Lowey	Smith (WA)
DeLauro	Lujan Grisham,	Soto
DeBene	M.	Speier
Demings	Luján, Ben Ray	Suozi
Rogers (AL)	Lynch	Swalwell (CA)
Rogers (KY)	Maloney,	Takano
Rokita	Carolyn B.	Thompson (CA)
Rooney, Francis	Maloney, Sean	Thompson (MS)
Ros-Lehtinen	Massie	Titus
Roskam	Matsui	Tonko
Ross	McCollum	Torres
Rothfus	McEachin	Tsongas
Rouzer	McGovern	Veasey
Royce (CA)	McNerney	Vela
Russell	Meeks	Velázquez
Rutherford	Meng	Visclosky
Sanford	Moore	Walz
Scott, Austin	Moulton	Wasserman
Sensenbrenner	Murphy (FL)	Schultz
Sessions	Nadler	Waters, Maxine
Shimkus	Neal	Watson Coleman
Shuster	Nolan	Wilson (FL)
Simpson	Norcross	Woodall
Sinema	O'Halleran	Yarmuth
Smith (NE)	O'Rourke	
Smith (NJ)		
Smith (TX)		
Smucker		
Stefanik		
Stivers		
Taylor		
Tenney		
Thompson (PA)		
Thornberry		
Tiberi		
Tipton		
Trott		
Turner		
Upton		
Valadao		
Wagner		
Walberg		
Walden		
Walker		
Walorski		
Walters, Mimi		
Weber (TX)		
Webster (FL)		
Wenstrup		
Westerman		
Wilson (SC)		
Wittman		
Womack		
Yoder		
Yoho		
Young (AK)		
Young (IA)		
Zeldin		

NOT VOTING—28

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1903

So (two-thirds not being in the affirmative) the motion was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF OFFICER JACOB J. CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE JOHN M. GIBSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would ask all present to rise for a moment of silence.

The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in memory of Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the United States Capitol Police who were killed in the line of duty defending the Capitol on July 24, 1998.

HARRY W. COLMERY VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE 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. 3218) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, 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 Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 405, nays 0, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 409]

YEAS—405

Abraham	Cárdenas	Diaz-Balart
Adams	Carson (IN)	Dingell
Aderholt	Carter (GA)	Doggett
Aguilar	Carter (TX)	Donovan
Allen	Cartwright	Doyle, Michael
Amash	Castor (FL)	F.
Amodei	Castro (TX)	Duffy
Arrington	Chabot	Duncan (SC)
Babin	Cheney	Duncan (TN)
Bacon	Chu, Judy	Dunn
Banks (IN)	Cicilline	Ellison
Barletta	Clark (MA)	Emmer
Barr	Clarke (NY)	Engel
Barragán	Clay	Eshoo
Barton	Cleaver	Espallat
Beatty	Clyburn	Estes (KS)
Bera	Coffman	Esty (CT)
Bergman	Cohen	Evans
Beyer	Cole	Farenthold
Biggs	Collins (GA)	Faso
Bilirakis	Collins (NY)	Ferguson
Bishop (GA)	Comer	Fitzpatrick
Bishop (MI)	Comstock	Fleischmann
Bishop (UT)	Conaway	Flores
Black	Connolly	Fortenberry
Blackburn	Conyers	Foster
Blum	Cook	Fox
Blumenauer	Cooper	Frankel (FL)
Blunt Rochester	Correa	Franks (AZ)
Bonamici	Costa	Frelinghuysen
Bost	Courtney	Fudge
Boyle, Brendan	Cramer	Gabbard
F.	Crist	Gaetz
Brady (PA)	Cuellar	Gallagher
Brady (TX)	Culberson	Gallo
Brat	Curbelo (FL)	Garamendi
Bridenstine	Davidson	Garrett
Brooks (IN)	Davis (CA)	Gianforte
Brown (MD)	Davis, Rodney	Gibbs
Brownley (CA)	DeFazio	Gohmert
Buchanan	DeGette	Gomez
Buck	Delaney	Gonzalez (TX)
Bucshon	DeLauro	Goodlatte
Budd	DeBene	Gosar
Burgess	Demings	Gottheimer
Bustos	Denham	Gowdy
Butterfield	Dent	Granger
Byrne	DeSantis	Graves (GA)
Calvert	DeSaulnier	Graves (LA)
Capuano	DesJarlais	Green, Al
Carbajal	Deutch	Green, Gene

Griffith	Lynch	Ruppersberger
Grijalva	MacArthur	Rush
Grothman	Maloney,	Russell
Guthrie	Carolyn B.	Rutherford
Hanabusa	Maloney, Sean	Ryan (OH)
Handel	Marchant	Sánchez
Harper	Marino	Sanford
Harris	Marshall	Sarbanes
Hartzler	Massie	Schakowsky
Hastings	Mast	Schiff
Heck	Matsui	Schneider
Hensarling	McCarthy	Schrader
Herrera Beutler	McClintock	Schweikert
Hice, Jody B.	McCollum	Scott (VA)
Higgins (LA)	McEachin	Scott, Austin
Higgins (NY)	McGovern	Scott, David
Hill	McHenry	Sensenbrenner
Himes	McMorris	Serrano
Holding	Rodgers	Sessions
Hollingsworth	McNerney	Sewell (AL)
Hoyer	McSally	Shea-Porter
Hudson	Meadows	Sherman
Huffman	Meehan	Shimkus
Huizenga	Meeks	Shuster
Hunter	Meng	Simpson
Hurd	Messer	Sinema
Issa	Mitchell	Sires
Jackson Lee	Moolenaar	Slaughter
Jayapal	Moore	Smith (NE)
Jeffries	Moulton	Smith (NJ)
Jenkins (KS)	Mullin	Smith (TX)
Johnson (LA)	Murphy (FL)	Smith (WA)
Johnson (OH)	Murphy (PA)	Smucker
Johnson, E. B.	Nadler	Soto
Johnson, Sam	Neal	Speier
Jones	Newhouse	Stefanik
Jordan	Noem	Stivers
Joyce (OH)	Nolan	Suozzi
Kaptur	Norcross	Swalwell (CA)
Katko	Norman	Takano
Keating	Nunes	Taylor
Kelly (IL)	O'Halleran	Tenney
Kelly (MS)	O'Rourke	Thompson (CA)
Kelly (PA)	Olson	Thompson (MS)
Kennedy	Pallone	Thompson (PA)
Khanna	Palmer	Thornberry
Kihuen	Panetta	Tiberi
Kildee	Pascarell	Tipton
Kilmer	Paulsen	Titus
Kind	Payne	Tonko
King (IA)	Pearce	Torres
King (NY)	Pelosi	Trott
Kinzinger	Perlmutter	Tsongas
Knight	Peters	Turner
Krishnamoorthi	Peterson	Upton
Kuster (NH)	Pingree	Valadao
Kustoff (TN)	Pittenger	Veasey
Labrador	Pocan	Vela
LaHood	Poliquin	Velázquez
LaMalfa	Polis	Visclosky
Lamborn	Posey	Wagner
Lance	Price (NC)	Walberg
Langevin	Quigley	Walden
Larsen (WA)	Raskin	Walker
Larson (CT)	Ratcliffe	Walorski
Latta	Reed	Walters, Mimi
Lawson (FL)	Reichert	Walz
Lee	Rice (NY)	Wasserman
Levin	Rice (SC)	Schultz
Lewis (GA)	Richmond	Waters, Maxine
Lewis (MN)	Roby	Watson Coleman
Lieu, Ted	Roe (TN)	Weber (TX)
Lipinski	Rogers (AL)	Webster (FL)
LoBiondo	Rogers (KY)	Wenstrup
Loeback	Rokita	Westerman
Lofgren	Rooney, Francis	Wilson (FL)
Long	Ros-Lehtinen	Wilson (SC)
Loudermilk	Rosen	Wittman
Love	Roskam	Womack
Lowenthal	Ross	Woodall
Lowey	Rothfus	Yarmuth
Lucas	Rouzer	Yoder
Luetkemeyer	Roybal-Allard	Yoho
Lujan Grisham,	Royce (CA)	Young (AK)
M.	Ruiz	Young (IA)
Luján, Ben Ray		Zeldin

NOT VOTING—28

Bass	Jenkins (WV)	Rohrabacher
Brooks (AL)	Johnson (GA)	Rooney, Thomas
Costello (PA)	Lawrence	J.
Crawford	McCaul	Scalise
Crowley	McKinley	Smith (MO)
Cummings	Mooney (WV)	Stewart
Davis, Danny	Napolitano	Vargas
Graves (MO)	Palazzo	Welch
Gutiérrez	Poe (TX)	Williams
Hultgren	Renacci	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1911

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.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 24, 2017, I was unavoidably detained attending to a funeral in my home state. Thus, I was not present for the rollcall votes that were cast. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

1. H.R. 3180—Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018—I would have voted “no.”

2. S. 114—A bill to authorize appropriations for the Veterans Choice Program—I would have voted “no.”

3. H.R. 3218—Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act—I would have voted “yes.”

REPORT ON H.R. 3362, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-253) on the bill (H.R. 3362) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BIGGS). Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

MILITARY RESIDENCY CHOICE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 282) to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers to elect to use the same residences as the servicemembers.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VA PROVIDER EQUITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on

suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 1058) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BONUS TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 1690) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1915

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL SCRIBE PILOT ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 1848) 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, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “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, and for other purposes.”.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VA PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 2006) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the procurement practices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 2749) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the oversight of contracts awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENSURING VETERAN ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGIC SOURCING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 2781) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the sufficient participation of small business concerns owned and controlled and owned by veterans and small business concerns owned by veterans with service-connected disabilities in contracts under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY TO LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS

(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 would like to congratulate Log Cabin Republicans as it celebrates 40 years of advocating and advancing equality and justice for LGBT Americans. Formed by a small group of LGBT conservatives in California, Log Cabin Republicans emerged to defeat what is known as the Briggs Initiative, a measure prohibiting gay teachers from teaching in public schools.

This measure was rejected, thanks to the tireless work of this organization and President Reagan with his forceful opposition to the discriminatory policy.

Since then, Log Cabin Republicans have expanded their presence and created over 50 chapters across our great Nation, including in my hometown of Miami. Together we have won many great victories and have taken a historic stride toward equality with the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, and the legalization of marriage equality.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud ally of the LGBT community, I commend Log Cabin Republicans for advancing our principles of limited government, individual freedoms, and personal responsibility to create a more inclusive party that ensures fairness and equality for all Americans.

Happy 40th to LCR.

RECOGNIZING THE 27TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 27th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was signed into law on July 26, 1990.

This landmark, bipartisan civil rights legislation enables people with disabilities, including me, to experience more inclusive and fulfilling lives.

The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of a disability has helped to promote equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that we have made incredible progress since 1990, but we still have work ahead. Too many people with disabilities still lack ac-

cess to affordable housing, public transportation, education, healthcare, and employment. Full access and inclusion remains a fundamental aspiration, but it is not yet a reality.

Mr. Speaker, we must remain vigilant in defending the intent of the ADA so that future generations can live in an inclusive, accessible world, where the unique talents and abilities of individuals with disabilities are innately recognized.

REMEMBERING KATE FRONEK

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Kate Fronek, an extraordinary 13-year-old from Eden Prairie who just passed away this last week.

Kate was an active girl who played hockey, lacrosse, and soccer throughout our Eden Prairie community. She attended Central Middle School, and people often noted her love for music.

This past February, Kate was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. In the following months, she underwent multiple rounds of chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. Amid these challenges, Kate was brave and spirited, and friends and family remember her positively and, above all, her warm smile.

But over the weekend, in memory of Kate, neighbors and friends began putting orange balloons outside their homes, on the streets, and the bridges as a part of a tribute. Driving around Eden Prairie and seeing the streets lined with these balloons to honor her memory shows that she clearly touched very many lives.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to extend my thoughts and prayers to the Fronek family. She will be missed, but her spirit will not be forgotten.

PRESIDENTIAL PARDONS SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT

(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, last week, The Washington Post reported that President Trump was considering pardoning his aides, his relatives, and even himself. Any of these actions would disrupt the investigation of Special Counsel Mueller.

Beyond simply pardoning those convicted of crimes, the President has the power to grant a pardon before charges are even brought, as President Ford's pardon of President Nixon demonstrated.

There is no requirement that Presidential pardons be publicly announced, meaning that President Trump could grant pardons in secret to prevent his associates from cooperating with the special counsel. That is why I am introducing the “Presidential Pardon

Transparency Act." The President may have the power to pardon, but the American people have a right to know how and when he does it.

This bill requires the White House to publicly disclose every pardon the President grants. Our Founders established the Presidential power to pardon to protect the American people from their government, not for the President to protect himself. This bill upholds that principle.

REMEMBERING ROY HERRINGTON

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, recently, the Appling County community mourned the loss of lifelong resident Roy Herrington.

He was a loving husband to his wife of 59 years, Georgia, and a dedicated father to his three children: Tami, Jeff, and Julie. Roy was an active member of the community. He was a member and a deacon at the Baxley First Baptist Church; a past director of Appling County Chamber of Commerce; and a recipient of the Chamber Award of Excellence in Agriculture.

Roy was awarded the Appling County Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year award in 1981.

During my time traveling the 12th District of Georgia, Roy was one of those people who I would always make sure to visit to gain insight on serving the great folks of the 12th District.

Mr. Speaker, we are losing our greatest generation, but as Members of Congress and as Americans, we must not forget the lessons they have taught us. Every village, every community, has a man of peace and influence. In Appling County, that man was Roy Herrington.

Baxley, Georgia, is a better place because of Roy Herrington. He will be remembered often.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL HOUSING WEEK OF ACTION

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today in support of National Housing Week of Action and to stand up for a better deal for hardworking Americans.

Access to affordable housing directly impacts the ability of Americans to have a better job, better wages, and a better future. However, far too many families are struggling to keep a roof over their heads as the cost of rent is rising, mortgages are harder to get, and wages remain stagnant.

Due to cuts in Federal rental assistance, only one in four people eligible for it actually are receiving it. Our constituents deserve a better deal. I join Democrats in standing up to create millions of good-paying jobs, full-time jobs by investing in our crumbling

infrastructure, and offering apprenticeship programs to new workers.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to fight for affordable housing programs so all Americans can have the ability to achieve the American Dream.

REMEMBERING HEROES JACOB CHESTNUT AND JOHN GIBSON

(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, every day on Capitol Hill, we have heroes among us, our Capitol Police. Five weeks ago, three of these heroes saved lives. They killed a deranged man who opened fire on the Republican baseball team. Two heroes were wounded, Crystal Griner and David Bailey. Our brave Capitol Police prevented a massacre.

Another massacre was prevented by the Capitol Police on June 24 of 1998, 19 years ago today. My hometown of Sugar Land, Texas, still hurts over a hero we knew well, Detective John Gibson. He was killed a few feet from where I am standing.

Like Crystal and David, Detective Gibson was assigned to protect a member of House leadership, my neighbor, and my predecessor, Majority Leader Tom DeLay. Gibson heard Officer Jacob Chestnut being killed by an intruder. He shot the attacker, despite being mortally wounded.

Our Capitol Police are true heroes. May we always remember two special heroes, Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson.

NO APPROPRIATIONS FOR BORDER WALL

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

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the House appropriations package that will provide \$1.6 billion for the construction of President Trump's border wall.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have heard from many military leaders who all agree, a wall won't make our borders more secure or our Nation safer.

There are more effective ways and technology that would be a better investment of our limited resources. Moreover, the President has failed to provide a cost for this wall, and it would be irresponsible for Congress to write him a blank check, especially after he promised over and over that the American taxpayers would not foot the bill.

This wall only serves as a symbol of xenophobia and hate, while doing nothing to address our broken immigration system. Immigrants strengthen the fabric of our Nation, they serve in our military, they teach in our schools, and some, like myself, are fortunate enough to serve as Members of Congress.

□ 1930

SNAP UPDATE AFTER PATHWAYS HEARING

(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, last week the Nutrition Subcommittee hosted a hearing on how eligible SNAP participants can improve their education and labor force involvement as they aim for independence.

Over the past 2½ years, the House Agriculture Committee has done a comprehensive review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. We have looked at how it is administered and how it can be improved. We have also looked at how we can help Americans climb the ladder of opportunity and get out of poverty.

The subcommittee hearing looked at ways to sync employers with work-capable SNAP participants whose education, skill set, and backgrounds match their needs. This comprehensive approach brings together resources, funding, data, policies, partnerships, and, perhaps most importantly, shared performance measures that continue to allow the development, scaling, and sustainability of these pathway programs.

Stable employment that provides a living wage is essential to helping individuals and families rise out of poverty. As chairman of the subcommittee, I am committed to exploring ways to couple services with employment and education to empower work-capable recipients and help them achieve self-reliance.

FIRST, DO NO HARM

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

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, over this weekend, I heard nonstop from people—people from all walks of life—who are living each day in fear that this Congress is going to strip them of the healthcare insurance they so desperately need, causing them to lose access to affordable care.

These good, decent, and hardworking people have told me again and again, in no uncertain terms, that they or someone whom they love dearly will suffer or die if our Republican colleagues carry out their catastrophically ill-conceived plan to repeal and replace or repeal and delay. They scoff at the oft-repeated Republican plan that they would merely be choosing not to have coverage, for they know the bitter truth.

To strip these people of the very coverage that keeps them, their children, and their parents alive would be as immoral an act as was ever perpetrated under the guise of governance.

When it comes to setting healthcare policy, this Congress, like every decent

doctor since the days of Hippocrates, should be guided by that eternal principle: First, do no harm.

RECOGNIZING F.X. MATT BREWING COMPANY OF UTICA, NEW YORK

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize F.X. Matt Brewing Company, located in Utica, New York. Founded in 1888, Matt's Brewery is the fourth oldest family-owned brewery in the United States.

An award-winning brewery, F.X. Matt Brewing Company is famous for their pale ale lager, Utica Club, the first beer licensed for sale after Prohibition, in addition to international taste test winner Saranac beer and soda lines.

F.X. Matt Brewing Company is currently among the 15 largest beer producers in the Nation, and the Matt family continues to develop new recipes each year.

Matt's Brewery has played an important role in our local community by hosting Saranac Thursdays, a weekly summer concert series, where a portion of the proceeds are donated to the United Way of Utica. Matt's Brewery also hosts the post-race celebration for the world famous Utica Boilermaker 15K road race.

I am grateful to Fred Matt, Nick Matt, and everyone at the brewery for their hard work, ingenuity, and dedication to our community as they continue this historic family business. I encourage my colleagues to stop by my office to try some of their great products.

On a personal note, as a lifelong friend of the Matt family, I will always be grateful to Lillian "Duffy" Matt, affectionately known as Duff, who taught me how to ride a bicycle.

SUPPORTING THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Fulbright Program, which more than 370,000 people from the United States and over 180 countries have participated in since its founding in 1946.

For 70 years, the Fulbright Program has promoted strong relationships between Americans and other people and stimulated international education and progress. Some 57 Fulbright Fellows have received Nobel Prizes; 82 have received the Pulitzer Prize; 33 have gone on to serve as head of state; and 10 have been elected to the U.S. Congress.

All over the world, more than 370,000 Fulbright alumni are making waves in science, medicine, public service, art, business, philanthropy, and education.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump now proposes a staggering 55 percent cut to

the Fulbright Scholar Program. This would devastate a successful and flourishing project.

Our country benefits enormously from Fulbright Fellows past, present, and future, and I urge all of my colleagues to continue supporting this excellent program on a full basis.

SECRETARY PRUITT WELCOMED TO SOUTH CAROLINA

(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, this morning at Cameron, South Carolina, I was grateful to join EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, Attorney General Alan Wilson, and Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers to discuss the waters of the United States rule published by the prior administration.

This harmful rule geometrically expanded intrusion of the Federal Government, imposing greater Federal overreach, dictating the definition of waterways, and destroying jobs of original conservationists who promote a clean environment.

I appreciate Administrator Scott Pruitt who facilitated the roundtable to learn directly from local agricultural community leaders about the harmful consequences of the rule. The men and women of the roundtable, hosted by Jim and Karen Roquemore, clearly explained the real impact overreaching regulations have on environmentally positive development for jobs.

I am grateful that President Donald Trump and Administrator Pruitt have committed to review the rule and, most importantly, considered the input from grassroots organizations about the negative impact.

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

I appreciate Rusty Shannon of Sandy Run, South Carolina, for alerting me to the destructive consequences of the rule.

MEDICAID

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, within hours, the Senate will begin a sinister unraveling of the safety net for millions of Americans—\$774 billion cut from Medicaid—and they will throw on the ground some \$200 billion that is just a bait to be able to bring votes in.

It was sad to see the administration speak today about having people lose their lives because, without healthcare, they will. I ask the Senate to vote "no." Kill this bill.

It would be important if the President would also have an agenda—6 months and he has no jobs bill, no insurance, and no infrastructure bill.

I hope also to restore constitutional integrity, and I expect to introduce legislation dealing with preventing the President from firing the special counsel and from abusing the pardon power to pardon people who are under investigation.

I ask that we work together, and that is to save lives. Vote "no" on that Senate bill.

HONORING EUGENE WING OF FAIRFIELD, MAINE

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

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, throughout America's 241-year history, millions of brave men and women have fought for our freedom, and we are grateful for their service.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we find an American hero who worked behind the scenes to keep us free. Eugene Wing of Fairfield, Maine, in central Maine, is one of these heroes.

Gene was a gifted student who graduated from Bowdoin College in 1905 and then studied economics at Oxford University in England. He was then hired, Mr. Speaker, by The International Banking Corporation and sent to the Philippines, where he became an expert on the trade of natural resources in the Far East.

At the start, Mr. Speaker, of World War I and, later, World War II, the Army Intelligence Service asked Gene to help defeat the enemy and save the world. Mr. Wing took extraordinary risks to locate and help control the flow of coal, oil, gold, silver, and iron ore which were desperately needed by the enemy's war machine. His daring spirit and extraordinary knowledge of these raw materials gave America and our Allies the upper hand to win both World Wars. Mr. Wing's unusual skill made him a target of our enemies, and he was eventually captured and put to death.

Mr. Speaker, Eugene Wing from Fairfield, Maine, is a true American hero. Millions of people around the world who live in freedom today are the beneficiaries of his sacrifice, his bravery, and his patriotism. We are grateful for Mr. Wing, and we will never forget.

REMEMBERING JIM VANCE

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, Jim Vance, our local NBC news anchor in this region, who died Saturday at 75, probably set a record, local or national, as news anchor.

For 45 years, while being only himself, Vance presented the news to a region that challenged D.C. TV news with vast changes racially and ethnically, economically and politically. Jim Vance took the dare and told our ever-changing story straight.

He made us see ourselves, from a city with too much crime to today's D.C. with low crime and a big surplus. Only a combination of consummate professionalism and enduring affability could have covered so much quick-moving news without ever missing a beat.

Jim Vance brilliantly told our story throughout our first era of home rule. These years also encapsulated Jim Vance's service and now join his legacy with the District's own history.

SUPPORTING CARE CORPS

(Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support the Care Corps Demonstration Act. As a caregiver myself, I know how tough a job it is and how critical it is that we support family caregivers and the paid direct care workforce.

But as our population continues to age, our country faces a critical shortage of caregivers. In 2010, there were seven potential caregivers for every person over the age of 80; by 2030, that ratio is projected to drop by almost half, to about 4 to 1. At the same time, our economy continues to feel the effect of the Great Recession, and many young people are unemployed or underemployed.

That is why I am introducing this bipartisan bill which creates a grant program that would place Care Corps volunteers in communities across the country to provide services that help seniors and individuals with disabilities remain independent. The program would help meet the need for more caregivers and provide opportunity in a growing career field by offering benefits and educational assistance to the volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to quickly pass this important bill.

NO BORDER WALL

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

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand against a proposal that we will vote on later this week to spend more than \$1.6 billion to build a wall that we don't need at our border with Mexico.

We have never had lower apprehensions coming from Mexico in my lifetime. We had 105 apprehensions per Border Patrol agent 10 years ago; last year, it was 25.

The border has never been safer. We have never spent more money—\$19.5 billion a year—and instead of putting this \$1.6 billion toward jobs or healthcare or reducing student loan debt, we are trying to solve a problem that we don't have in this country.

We need to instead look to the example of El Paso, Texas, one of the safest

cities in the United States. It is the safest not in spite of its connection with Mexico, not in spite of the fact that so many people whom I represent in that community were born in another country—most of them Mexico—but because of those things.

When we treat each other with respect, dignity, and compassion, we also create security, safety, and success. Mr. Speaker, that is the example that we should be following, not a \$1.6 billion investment in a wall that we don't need.

□ 1945

FAILURE TO GOVERN: THE FIRST 6 MONTHS UNDER REPUBLICAN CONTROL

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to anchor the CBC Special Order hour.

For the next 60 minutes, we have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

Led by our chair, CEDRIC RICHMOND from Louisiana, it is our duty, we feel, as the conscience of the Congress, to speak to all people in this hour on the issues that we deem are important and that our constituents have told us are important.

For this Special Order hour, we will spend this time to talk about Failure to Govern: The First 6 Months Under Republican Control.

President Trump's first 6 months have been defined by his often angry and personal tweets, his efforts to denigrate and undercut the multiple investigations into Russian influence in the 2016 election, and most importantly, the stalemated legislative battle to repeal and replace ObamaCare.

President Trump has signed dozens of executive actions and Presidential proclamations. Some have fared better than others. His travel ban plan, for instance, first caused chaos and was effectively shut down by a series of legal challenges. But the second effort, which also faced a flurry of lawsuits, was ultimately allowed to take effect on a limited basis by the Supreme Court.

In all, our President has signed 42 bills into law. But when it comes to big

ticket items, like infrastructure, tax reform, and a repeal and/or replacement of ObamaCare, President Trump is sitting on zero. With healthcare seemingly on ice, tax reform is expected to be the big challenge next on our agenda.

Budgets are about priorities, and this President's priorities are clear. His budget hollows out our economy, endangers working families all across this country, in my district of the Virgin Islands, and the other districts that we all represent.

The \$2.5 trillion in cuts to entitlement programs, which include \$192 billion to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, otherwise known as SNAP, and the \$800 billion to Medicaid, will devastate localities like the Virgin Islands and elsewhere, where one in five children are covered under Medicaid and one-fifth of our population receives SNAP benefits.

The President has a budget with massive cuts that would shred social safety nets and cripple longstanding governmental functions. This administration has created uncertainty in the Nation's healthcare system by sending inconsistent administrative signals and supporting legislation that could deprive millions of people of health insurance coverage, undermine Medicaid health support for low-income Americans, and give wealthy taxpayers a massive tax cut.

He has mismanaged the Federal Government by failing to fill top spots. He has expanded the policy of deporting dangerous and illegal aliens by including many people with minimal records, stable jobs, and American families.

Most recently, we saw this with the Secretary of Homeland Security ordering the 50,000-plus Haitians here under protective status, due to the devastating natural disasters in Haiti, to leave. These are decent, hardworking people who are sending money back home, supporting an economy which is faltering under collapse.

We have seen a reversal of decades of bipartisan cooperation in extending environmental preservation of national landmarks. He has hired foxes to watch the chicken coops by filling his administration with arch-conservatives, many with records opposing the very agencies with which they work, and curbing civil rights and environmental enforcement.

All of these things we have seen in these first 6 months, and we will hear more.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), to speak on behalf of what we have seen in these last 6 months.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, who has demonstrated great leadership in leading these CBC Special Order hours. It is not an easy task, but she has done remarkable work in terms of finding topics that are important to our communities and our Nation.

As the gentlewoman stated, Mr. Speaker, this month we marked 6 months of the Trump Presidency and 6 months of congressional Republican inaction.

Republicans made promise after promise to the American people. The President called himself the ultimate dealmaker. I wonder if we are witnessing the first Manchurian President. Instead of the promise of jobs, infrastructure, and a new and improved healthcare plan, we get chaos and seemingly never-ending controversies.

Where is the Republican agenda? Where are their accomplishments? Where are all those wins?

Let's take a look at the numbers. President Trump has a job approval rating of 36 percent, the lowest of any President ever at this point in their Presidency. Republicans can point to zero legislative accomplishments. The President has no plan to lower healthcare costs, no jobs bills, no infrastructure bills, no tax reform, and no clean budget. These simply are the facts.

Instead of doing what is right for the American people, it appears that Republicans are more occupied with taking away healthcare from millions of our constituents to give tax cuts to the wealthy, or defending the administration's most recent controversy.

This week, we will vote on a dishonest security spending package that will force American taxpayers to pay for the President's border wall. Who is going to pay for it? It looks like the American people.

During his campaign and the rhetoric that we heard up until this point, Mexico was going to pay for the wall. Now, here we are, with our Republican colleagues supporting an effort that says that the American people will pay for the wall. Well, we will get the money from Mexico later. Yeah, all right.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I am alarmed by President Trump's and the congressional Republicans' determination to further break down our alliances and ignorance of matters related to the security of this Nation.

Instead of funding the border wall, we should focus on building strong transportation and infrastructure systems that will create good-paying jobs and lay a foundation for a strong economy. Instead, we are weakening America. Let's build America with a strong infrastructure bill and adequate training and apprenticeship programs that will benefit our constituents.

Make it in America is something I heard last week, which sounds magnificent, if we could do it. But if you are going to be the leader of this country and make such pronouncements, you have to live by what you are talking about.

Make it in America is to strive to make sure that we do everything in America. We hear of two buildings Trump erected in Chicago that used Chinese steel or steel from outside the

United States. If you look at his ties, his shirts, his suits, the soap in his hotels, nothing is made in America. Who are we trying to kid with this? There is nothing.

Maybe his daughter. Well, no, her shoes aren't made in America. Her dresses are not made in America. Who are we kidding? Who are we fooling?

The American people have to open their eyes and see the sham that is going on. How this President says one thing and does absolutely the opposite is an atrocity. Make it in America? He stood up there in front of the American people and said that, with the suit, shirt, and tie that he had on? Absolutely unconscionable.

Where are the jobs? I am going to be the best job creator you have ever seen. When? You are going to win so much, you are going to get tired of winning. When? The American people deserve better.

The American people deserve better than a Congress that cares more about pushing an agenda that puts wealthcare in front of healthcare. The American people deserve better than a Congress that will pass legislation that will harm our environment, contaminate our air, and pollute our waterways.

The American people deserve better than a Congress that continues to ignore important issues that disproportionately affect African-American communities, such as criminal justice reform, gun violence prevention, and voting rights.

While this administration and congressional Republicans turn their backs on the American workers, we will continue to demand real action to create jobs, raise wages, and create a brighter future for American families.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, when the gentleman was talking about what has happened in these last 6 months, it reminded me of when the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, CEDRIC RICHMOND, on March 22 went with the executive members to visit with the President to speak with him specifically about those things that African Americans and the people who we represent—the 17 million African Americans and the 20-plus million Americans that members of the Congressional Black Caucus represent—to outline for him in a very succinct and systematic manner those issues that are important to us.

You mentioned criminal justice reform. You talked about expansion of voting rights, jobs creation, support to small businesses, infrastructure. These are the things that the President said he was interested in.

These are the things that the Congressional Black Caucus said: We are willing to work with you. We have an agenda. We have specific language, specific legislation that we would like to have a discussion with you. And not a photo op, but really to sit down around a table and discuss actual legislation and how we can be supportive of an

agenda that supports the people we represent.

And what have we gotten out of that? Zero to date, 6 months in.

Mr. PAYNE. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. PLASKETT. I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, to the gentlewoman's point, I believe there was a document that was created to give to the President on those issues, and we are still waiting to hear back from the administration in reference to anything that was in that document.

We don't need photo ops. We don't need to go to the White House and be trucked up there and lollygag and use us for whatever they deem proper for them. We need help for the American people. We need an administration that is going to look at these issues, be serious about them, and continue to move this country forward, as it was in the previous 8 years.

□ 2000

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), the freshman who is not a freshman, who represents Philadelphia, who has been a legislator for many years and comes here. He is so thoughtful. He is very quiet just like yourself, Mr. PAYNE, and he sits back and is really more observant but is ready to do the work.

He is about policy, is discussing—on a regular basis I hear him talking about middle communities, middle America, those communities that are on the edge. There are places in Newark, New Jersey, and other places that you represent, in neighborhoods in my own district in the Virgin Islands where working class, hard working class people are there but they are on the edge of losing those homes, losing their health insurance, neighborhoods which they have worked so hard over 20, 30 years to create to be vibrant areas in this country that may be lost under this administration and the lack of action.

So I yield to Congressman EVANS this evening to discuss what he has seen happen in these last 6 months of this administration and how it speaks to those individuals that we represent.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Virgin Islands for her leadership in terms of being provided this opportunity that she has demonstrated clearly that she has been leading these efforts for the Congressional Black Caucus. So I want to again compliment her for all that she has done not just through words, but through action. And then my neighboring legislator from New Jersey, he and I worked very close together and I have known him an awful long time. So I thank both of you.

I have always said there is a big difference between campaigning and governing. I will say that again. There is a big difference between campaigning and governing. President Trump, it is time to govern.

When I talk to people in my district, they are scared about what President Trump and the Republicans are doing when it comes to their healthcare. They know that the Republicans want to take away their healthcare, and they do not know where to turn. We know that the Republican healthcare bill does not protect our family members and friends from preexisting conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you the story of a small businessowner in my district named Andrea. Andrea owns a small pet store, Spot's—The Place for Paws, in Narberth, Pennsylvania. Andrea left her Philadelphia law practice to pursue her dream of owning a small business. Andrea has type 1 diabetes, and without the ACA, she would not be able to get the well-priced coverage that covers her health expenses and medication and allows her to keep her shop open.

We are talking about passing a bill that will make life harder for those trying to get ahead. That is wrong, and that is a risk we cannot take.

Even though the President has yet to deliver on a single promise in 6 months, Pennsylvanians are still anxious and fearful of his plans for the future. President Trump has been in office for 6 months, and we have had 6 months of court cases, stalling, and tweets. Let me repeat that. We have had 6 months of court cases, stalling, and tweets.

The Trump administration is still clearly not ready for prime time. From healthcare to the Russians, to the budget, the Republican party has left the American people with nothing but broken promises.

Philadelphia and Montgomery County residents in my district deserve better. The American people deserve better. For 8 years, the "Party of No" constantly criticized President Obama. Yet, even with control of the House, the Senate, and the White House, they have yet to deliver on a jobs plan, healthcare, tax reform, and the list goes on.

Our Federal workers who help secure our Nation's borders, protect and monitor our food supply, and support businesses through agencies like the SBA should not have to wait for Republicans to continue to make decisions that are not in the best interest of the country.

Our neighborhoods have a lot to lose if we don't stand united and fight for what is right. It is time to roll up our sleeves and work across party lines to fight for sound economic policies that give our schools and students and our small businessowners and entrepreneurs, our seniors, and our veterans the resources they need to prosper and build stronger neighborhoods block by block.

It is time for a better deal. We deserve a better deal and a better opportunity. It is clear to me that we need to build on that opportunity for the future, and the only way we can do it is

we have to stop campaigning, Mr. President, and we have to begin to govern.

The over 300 million Americans deserve all of us functioning together, and the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of this body, is prepared to lead.

My colleague, who has been leading this effort, she has been demonstrating over and over again a message of hope and optimism. She, too, knows that we can have a better deal, and that better deal is an optimism of people working together.

So I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your leadership and what you have demonstrated.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. EVANS so much for talking about the optimism of the American people. There is a better deal that is out there, and there is a better way that we all, as Members of Congress, need to demonstrate.

I was looking at a fact Street Sheet that was put together talking about the 200 days of the 115th Congress by the numbers. This is a Congress that is controlled by the Republicans in the House, the Republicans in the Senate, and the Republican administration. You would think that so much legislation could get done, and we are a stalled body at this time.

That is not what the American people brought us to Washington to do. We all represent people who are looking for a better deal, looking for an expansion of the American Dream, a realization of the American Dream in their own lives, and having security for their own children and their grandchildren to be able to realize that dream.

When I looked at these numbers, I was aghast at what has not been done in this Congress and flabbergasted at the things that have been done by this Congress. Zero number of bills to create jobs have been brought to the House floor by House Republican leadership. Zero number of bills that have been considered under an open rule so far this Congress.

The same open rule that, Mr. Speaker, you said that you would exact when you were a young gun coming to Washington, you said that you would use the open rule, but we have not seen that done in this 115th Congress.

Three times, House Republicans blocked a vote on H.R. 685, Bring Jobs Home Act, which ends tax breaks for corporations sending jobs overseas and creates new incentives to create good-paying jobs here in the United States.

There have been zero times that Speaker PAUL RYAN has spoken out in opposition to President Trump's dangerous and unconstitutional Muslim and refugee ban. Zero votes on the expansion and correction to the Voting Rights Act.

234 Republicans blocked a vote on H.R. 2933, a critical bill that promotes effective apprenticeships that gives students and workers the skills they need to find good-paying jobs.

Twice, House Republicans voted against Made in America amendment requiring that specific infrastructure and construction projects use materials and equipment made in the USA.

Mr. Speaker, 229 Republicans voted for a GOP antiworker, bait-and-switch bill that undermines the existing right to hard-earned overtime pay, giving employers the flexibility to substitute overtime pay with comp time while giving employees no guarantee that they can use their comp time when they need it.

Mr. Speaker, 217 Republicans voted for the disastrous TrumpCare bill, which would result in 23 million Americans losing their health insurance coverage, raises out-of-pocket healthcare costs for millions of American families, imposes a crushing age tax on those 50 to 64, shortens the life of the Medicare trust fund, and guts the protections for people with preexisting conditions.

Mr. Speaker, 233 Republicans voted to gut the Dodd-Frank Act, Wall Street reforms, rolling back key consumer protections, and take us back to pre-2008 era of unchecked risky financial market abuses that resulted in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

There have been zero amount of funding in President Trump's budget for Social Services Block Grants, which provide States with funding for services such as childcare and adult care programs. And there are 1.6 million school-age children that would lose afterschool and summer programs as a result of the President's budget.

When we talk about the President's budget, we need to discuss exactly what those numbers mean and how it is going to affect the American people—people, Mr. Speaker, that we say we represent, but that we are not standing up for against this administration.

The budget would cut SNAP funding by over 190 billion—with a "B"—over the next 10 years, jeopardizing benefits for an estimated 44 million Americans and reduce nutritional foods for women, infants, and children, the WIC program.

The budget also includes SNAP policy changes that would charge food stores using USDA approval to accept food stamps, which could drive smaller food retailers out of the program.

Why is this important?

Because many people in urban areas that are using food stamps are doing so in virtual food deserts. They do not have transportation to go to the large suppliers, the large grocery stores. They go to these smaller grocery stores. They go to these small places to use the food stamps to be able to provide food for their families. These changes would cap benefits, require localities to pay 25 percent of benefits, and limit local waivers for Federal work requirements that many communities are not appropriate because there are no jobs, because we also are not supplying individuals with the job skills, the work skills to be able to find employment in some of these areas.

The budget would reduce Education Department investments by \$9 billion, including through the elimination of preschool and afterschool programs, literacy grants, and funding to improve teacher and principal quality. It also proposes cuts to higher education programs, including elimination of grants for lower income students, low-interest Perkins loans, and cutting by half a program that helps students work to pay off their loans.

The budget also calls for the elimination of NASA Space Grant education programs that prepare students, such as in my district at the University of the Virgin Islands, for careers in science and technology industries.

The budget would reduce USDA Rural Development funding by \$9.2 million, approximately 30 percent. This is vital in areas like my district in the Virgin Islands with the elimination of rural business cooperative services and rural water and wastewater disposal programs.

The budget would zero out important rural housing assistance, such as single-family housing direct loans; would slash funding for rural broadband, distance learning, telemedicine, and needed community facilities improvement.

Mr. Speaker, these are in rural areas that President Trump won in the election. You would think that he would want to support these rural communities in areas of housing, the most American of American ideals, home ownership.

In the Labor Department, the budget would reduce Labor Department investments by \$2.4 billion, including large cuts to Job Corps. Job Corps, a place that would allow young people to have training for jobs, activities meant to prepare disadvantaged youth, the same youth that we say we are concerned about being on the streets in these urban areas that are so dangerous, those are the individuals going to Job Corps, looking to be prepared for the workplace, and we are going to reduce that by \$2.4 billion? That doesn't make any sense.

The budget request for the Department of Energy would slash research funding and move away from investments in renewables, including a 70 percent cut to the Department's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and zeroing out its weatherization assistance in State energy programs that aid low-income families with reducing energy costs.

□ 2015

The Department's Office of Science would be cut by 17 percent. That budget slashing to NOAA coastal science programs includes eliminating NOAA's Sea Grants program, coastal research at our university, and the coastal zone management grants that aid with climate change mitigation—climate change mitigation—which is needed in areas that I live in, like the Virgin Islands, Florida, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and in coastal areas that are seeing a

tremendous loss of economy and loss of homes because our environment is, in fact, changing.

The Environmental Protection Agency would be cut by approximately 30 percent, partly through elimination of all EPA climate change programs, lead control programs, the Energy Star program that encourages energy-efficient consumer products, and the environmental justice office that investigates the concentration of pollution in low-income communities.

Now we want people to be in communities where pollution is greatest, those inner cities that our President has said he wants to fight so strongly for. We are going to keep them in polluted areas because we are cutting out EPA funding in some of those places.

In transportation and housing, the budget would eliminate \$500 million per year in TIGER grants, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, which has been important to ports and transshipment projects around this country, in the Virgin Islands, and the Community Development Block Grant program that provides grant funding to localities for economic development activities.

The Department of Housing would be cut nearly 20 percent, including elimination of several housing assistance grant programs and slashing its core rental housing program, Section 8 housing choice vouchers, which assists private rental housing, which is a win-win program. You allow individuals who have private homes, who are renting those out, to receive a voucher to support individuals who are looking to be placed in those homes.

An estimated 250,000 housing vouchers would be taken away over the next fiscal year, vouchers which primarily benefit seniors and individuals with disabilities. Support for local public housing authorities would also see cuts.

The budget would eliminate Commerce Department subdivisions that support businesses and entrepreneurship, such as the Economic Development Administration, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, and the Minority Business Development Agency.

Healthcare, of course we could go on for forever, but the budget calls for phasing out enhanced Federal matching funds for expanded Medicaid populations by 2020 for people living in territories and in other areas that are heavily relying on Medicaid. It would be far more expensive for those localities to cover individuals, and our hospitals would be faced with even more uncompensated care costs.

The budget also proposes cuts of \$1.3 billion from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC, and more than \$7 billion from the National Institutes of Health, NIH. In the alternative, stronger budgets for NIH and CDC would benefit in preparation for public health threats and pandemics.

These are the things that we, the members of the Congressional Black

Caucus, are seeing that are happening in these first 6 months. We are concerned. We are not here just to bash the President. That is not the objective with bringing these issues out.

The objective is to make the American people aware, to call on our colleagues here in this House, in the House next door to us in the Senate, to be better stewards of what the American people have given us: the ability, the right, the job of legislating, the job of being a check and balance to an administration which has been caught in a morass of ineffectiveness and inaction to support the American people of this great country.

We are asking, Mr. Speaker, that we would wake up to what is happening, see with clear eyes, not with fake news, not with our own vision of what we would like things to be, but what things are and where this is taking us now, the people who are going to be left behind, that a better deal needs to be made for the American people who have sent us here to Washington to do what is right, to do what is good for them, to represent all the people, not the wealthy.

Listen, I was raised in New York, and I don't have anything against New Yorkers, of course, but we can't just be looking out for those people who are living on the Upper West Side, the Upper East Side, in Tribeca and SoHo, the fat cats of Wall Street. We need to be for all Americans.

I know that each one of us is here sent by the people who have sent us not just for ourselves and not just for our constituents, but for all Americans: those who can't vote, those who rely on us to be the stewards of this great legacy—the Constitution and all that America represents, the land of opportunity. People will be losing that opportunity based on what we have seen in these last 6 months.

We, the Congressional Black Caucus, as the conscience of Congress, are relying and awakening the conscience of this Congress to wake up and see what is happening, to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, and to do the right thing, to make a better deal with the American people—not with Pennsylvania Avenue, not among ourselves, not in our private little meetings, not with what can be done for us and for our small group, but for all Americans, those Americans that are going to be left behind by those billions and trillions in tax cuts that are coming to the social safety net of this country.

It cannot be relied on by many of the States. Many of the States do not have the wherewithal to pick up that slack. And there will be even greater—greater—demise to this country if we continue to allow it to work this way.

We have got to take up the call of those people who cannot speak for themselves and do what is right and tell our President that these 6 months cannot continue for another 3 years. We cannot have it. We will not tolerate

it. You must awaken to what is the best deal for all Americans, not just those within your inner circle.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague Congresswoman PLASKETT for hosting this special order for members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to speak about the first 6 months of Republicans' failure to govern in the White House and in Congress.

Today marks 185 days since the inauguration of Donald Trump, and 203 days since the start of this Republican Congress.

Despite the countless promises Trump made to the American people, the Trump presidency has been defined by chaos and incompetence from Day 1.

In addition to being mired in controversy, Trump lacks an agenda and has no major accomplishments to tout after six months in office.

Following in the footsteps of their leader, Republicans in both chambers of Congress have utterly failed to produce legislation that actually improves the lives of everyday Americans in any meaningful or measurable way.

Of the 43 bills that have been signed into law, 58 percent of these were noncontroversial suspensions and 33 percent were partisan GOP special-interest bills that strip vital protections away from the American people.

The Republican leadership has demonstrated a remarkable incapacity to actually lead their respective majorities in the House and Senate; instead their "leadership" has been marred by empty legislation, regressive policies, and damage control to rein in each new scandal spiraling out from the White House.

On January 20, 2017, Trump restated his trademark campaign promise to the American people: "Together we will make America great again."

Six months later, and that slogan rings hollower with each passing day.

Six months later, he has forged virtually no deals; he has not achieved his goal of "insurance for everybody," nor has he put forward a single jobs or infrastructure bill, nor has he achieved tax reform, nor has he negotiated a single trade agreement.

Donald Trump promised that his extensive business experience would lead to better deals for the American people, and that he would be the "greatest president for jobs that God ever created."

Six months later, he has taken no action to support job creation or grow the economy.

Instead, the Trump budget includes draconian cuts to education, research, infrastructure, and other key areas that support job creation and the American economy.

Before he entered office, Trump showed off his infamous "deal-making skills" when he promised to make Carrier Corp. keep their furnace factory jobs on American soil.

On the 6-month anniversary of his inauguration, Carrier announced plans to cut 632 workers from the very Indianapolis factory Trump visited last December.

These manufacturing jobs will move to Monterrey, Mexico, where minimum wage is \$3.90; the White House has not addressed this failure of Trump's strong-man, isolationist economic policy.

During his campaign, Trump claimed that he would save the coal industry—a sector that only employs 0.03 percent of the economy—

and in June, 2017, Scott Pruitt of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that the U.S. had miraculously created 50,000 coal jobs since 2016.

This staggering figure turned out to be a staggering lie; according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the coal sector has added about 1,000 jobs since October, 2016; it appears as though Mr. Pruitt "miscalculated" his estimate by 5,000 percent.

Not only have Trump's predictions for unparalleled job creation and economic growth proved to be pipe dreams or outright lies—the White House's budget proposal cruelly imposes drastic cuts to food stamps, student loans, and disability payments among a host of critical programs.

Trump promised that there would be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid—that everybody was going to be taken care "much better than they're taken care of now."

Six months later, the Republicans do not have a plan that would ensure all Americans have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

Six months later, the existing Trumpcare plan, which has completely stalled in the Senate, would make 23 million Americans lose their health coverage and increase costs for millions more.

Trumpcare cuts Medicare and Medicaid, and his budget proposal cuts Social Security.

Trumpcare would allow discrimination against Americans with preexisting conditions and imposes an age tax on older Americans.

Thousands of Americans—both Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, old and young, healthy and sick—have cried out to their Congressmembers to keep the Affordable Care Act and to prevent Trumpcare from ever seeing the light of day.

Americans oppose Trumpcare by a three-to-one margin, but this overwhelming majority sentiment seems to have fallen on deaf ears for Donald Trump and the Republican leadership.

Trump also promised clean air and water in America.

Six months later, the Trump Administration and G.O.P. Congressmembers are rolling back vital environmental protections.

In a move that drew universal ire from the international community and concerned Americans, Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement.

He has signed executive orders rolling back the Clean Power Plan and Clean Water Rule, and 37 Congressional Review Act bills, several of which roll back environmental protections.

His budget proposal would seek to inflict a 31 percent cut to the EPA and eliminates clean water programs for the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay.

On the campaign trail, Trump made repeated declarations about restoring national security and being "tough on Russia."

Six months later, Trump has failed to put forward a plan to defeat ISIS or strategies to address the situations in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, or Yemen.

Every week, a new report indicating collusion between the Trump Administration and the Russian government seems to come to light.

American citizens and lawmakers alike have responded to this growing list of scandals with growing anxiety, animosity, and exasperation.

In this and a few other respects, Trump has excelled.

For instance, he racked up 991 tweets since his inauguration; even more impressive, he has made 836 false or misleading claims according to the Washington Post's Fact Checker team.

He has spent a record 40 days at his own golf properties.

His approval rating is without equal at 36 percent—the worst of any president ever at the 6-month mark.

To recap, Trump's legislative accomplishments total at exactly zero:

No plan to lower healthcare costs;

No jobs bill;

No infrastructure bill;

No tax reform;

No plan to avoid defaulting on our debt;

And no budget.

By stark contrast, former President Obama had made great strides at this point in his presidency.

By the 6-month mark, Obama had:

Signed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law to improve protections for the American worker;

Outlined an extensive new energy policy;

Published an op-ed piece in 30 global newspapers simultaneously to discuss the growing economic crisis;

Passed an historic climate change bill through Congress;

Set out a new approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan;

Announced a new auto emission policy aimed at getting greener cars on the road;

Launched his successful campaign to overhaul the U.S. healthcare system;

And much more.

Americans want a President who can inspire them; they want a President who can lead effectively, with all the dignity and tact befitting the most powerful office in the world.

To our collective dismay and frustration, Trump and the Republicans have been their own worst enemy in preventing major, commonsense legislation from being voted on or signed into law.

I commend my colleague, Congresswoman PLASKETT, for hosting this special order examining the disastrous results that have resulted from 6 months of Republican control over our federal government.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, as Congress draws closer to the August recess, we are no closer to considering comprehensive legislation to shore up our nation's crumbling infrastructure remains than we were when Republicans took control of Congress. Republicans in Congress have had control over both chambers since January, yet the American people are still left waiting more for a plan to repair our roads and bridges, bolster funding for the Highway Trust Fund, and provide stable funding to local communities for transportation projects.

The costs of Congress' inability to act are staggering. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) estimates that every American household will lose \$3,400 each year between 2016 and 2025, due to infrastructure deficiencies. Our failure to act will cost the U.S. economy nearly \$4 trillion in GDP by 2025 through diminished productivity, lost jobs, and the increased cost of goods. The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be to repair our roads, electricity grid, and water and wastewater infrastructure.

The Republican House has been in session for 110 days. I am deeply disappointed that the Republican leadership has chosen to ignore important bills that I have supported, such as H.R. 1664—the Investing in America: A Penny for Progress Act. H.R. 1664 would shore up the Highway Trust Fund through new investment in America bonds and a modest increase in the fuel excise tax. Another bill, H.R. 1265—the Rebuilding America's Airport Infrastructure Act, would eliminate the cap on passenger facility charges, allowing local airports the ability to raise additional funds in order to build up more airport infrastructure such as new terminals and runways. H.R. 2510—the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2017 would help bolster financing for new water and wastewater infrastructure projects all across the United States. These are real bills already introduced in Congress that we could consider today.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to wait. There are a number of solutions already before us that this chamber could consider. It will take a display of political will by the Republican Party to consider these practical solutions to our nation's infrastructure woes. The American people are demanding that we act swiftly on these policies so that we can focus on what is most important—the efficient movement of the people, goods, and services which drive our economy forward. The time to act is now. I strongly urge my colleagues to support a comprehensive plan to shore up our nation's infrastructure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNN). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

PARALYSIS RESOURCE CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) for 30 minutes.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the important work of the Paralysis Resource Center at the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

Christopher Reeve put a face on spinal cord injury and had an unrelenting drive to pursue the best research in the world. It was his vision, it was his passion, and it was his brilliance that attracted young scientists to take on the cause and advance the field of spinal cord research.

And while his wife, Dana, was universally known as the model for caregiving, her real legacy is the creation of the foundation's Paralysis Resource Center that has reached so many of those living with paralysis and their families with life-changing resources.

The President's budget eliminates all funding for the Paralysis Resource Center and suggests that the program is duplicative. Fortunately, my colleagues in the House appreciate the unique nature of the work that the PRC does.

The PRC consists of a variety of services, communities, and programs, including:

Information specialists trained to help anyone, from newly paralyzed individuals and their family members to persons who have lived with disabilities for quite some time, by providing individualized support and information;

The Peer and Family Support Program, which builds peer-to-peer connections to help individuals find support and resources among the communities that best understand the day-to-day realities and long-term challenges of individuals living with paralysis;

The Quality of Life Grants Program, which has awarded over 2,900 grants, totaling more than \$22 million, to broaden the impact of nonprofits across the country that foster community engagement and involvement while promoting health and wellness for individuals living with paralysis; and

The Military and Veterans Program, the MVP, which supports the unique needs of current servicemembers and veterans regardless of when they served or how their injury was obtained.

I urge my colleagues to reach out to the Paralysis Resource Center to learn of the important work that they are doing for vulnerable constituents in their districts. If you do, you can see that the PRC is so much more than a line item in a budget. It is more than dollars and cents. It is more than just another program.

The value of these programs can only be appreciated when you learn the stories of the thousands of Americans that the PRC has helped with their services. Tonight, I would like to tell some of those stories. It is through these stories that we can see the amazing work of the Paralysis Resource Center, the lasting legacy of Christopher and Dana Reeve, and the bright future of so many who have been served through the PRC's programs.

You will notice that, throughout these stories, you hear the same names pop up again and again. That is because the PRC builds community and it builds connections.

When a spinal cord injury leaves Americans with no place else to turn, the PRC steps in to help guide the way; and, in return, many of those who have benefited from PRC turn back and look to help others with spinal cord injuries, to support their journey of recovery and rehabilitation.

Mr. Speaker, in order to move forward and to tell these stories, I would like to start by yielding to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), my friend, who will share some thoughts with us now.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), my colleague, for yielding. It is an honor to join him this evening to discuss the cause and mission that is very close to my heart.

As many of my colleagues know, I was injured back in 1980, as a young police cadet, when I was accidentally shot and paralyzed in the police locker room when a police officer's gun accidentally discharged. So, the cause of finding a cure and better treatments for spinal cord injuries and supporting family members as caregivers of people with spinal cord injuries has, again, been a passion of mine and mission for many years.

In late 2001, it was my privilege to join Christopher and Dana Reeve, two very dear friends of mine whom I got to know very well over the years, in announcing the creation of the Paralysis Resource Center, or the PRC, which was officially established in 2002 as part of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. These were two remarkable individuals, as I said, I got to know and who became friends of mine over the years.

I can remember back when Christopher Reeve was paralyzed in his horse riding accident and how, instead of being quiet and introverted and just dealing with his recovery, he made it his mission to call attention to the cause of spinal cord injuries and the need for further research to be done and support services to be provided. He was an amazing inspiration to me because he gave voice and was a face of spinal cord injuries and the work that needed to be done to find a cure.

Because of his work and that of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, we are getting closer and closer every day to finding a cure for spinal cord injuries; and we are getting closer and closer every day to providing support for better quality of life for people with disabilities and paralysis and further support for the families of those who care for people with disabilities, especially those with spinal cord injuries.

In 2009, I was so proud to support the enactment of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act, which formally authorized some of the programs that have led to the success of the PRC. This center has grown to include a network of information specialists, a number of veterans programs, a Peer and Family Support Program, a substantial Quality of Life Grants Program, and a neurorecovery rehabilitation network.

It really is an inclusive center. It conveys the message that people dealing with spinal cord injuries or nerve-related conditions are not alone, that there are people and organizations around them who care and are willing to give the advice and counsel support that they need. So whether you are living with paralysis or you are the caregiver of a loved one who is paralyzed, the PRC provides resources and information to help serve the specific needs of those affected by spinal cord injuries.

We know there are more than 43 million caregivers in the U.S. providing support to loved ones with chronic disabling conditions on a variety of disabilities, whether it is a sick child or a

sick parent or, in particular, those living with spinal cord injuries and paralysis.

Reports estimate that the annual economic value, if we had to put a price tag on this uncompensated care of family caregivers, to be somewhere approximately at the level of \$470 billion annually—\$470 billion annually, if we had to put a dollar figure on this uncompensated care. That is more than the total Medicaid spending was in 2013. That is when this study was done and those statistics were made public.

The benefits of family caregiving, of course, are plentiful and it is what families do for one another. If you have a sick child or a sick parent or a loved one, families so often step up to the plate and they provide that uncompensated care. Again, it is what families do. But, at the same time, it can also take an emotional, mental, and physical toll.

□ 2030

As a result, respite is the most frequently requested support service among family caregivers. Respite is that little bit of assistance where you have someone coming in to give the caregiver a break during the course of a week. Maybe it is an hour or two a day or a few hours during the course of a week that can make all the difference in allowing the caregiver themselves to go to the doctor or go do their grocery shopping, the things that are important to the rest of the family, or bringing a child to a baseball game or soccer practice; again, just those little everyday things that maybe we often take for granted that a family caregiver may not be able to do but for the fact that they have respite coming in. As a result, respite is, again, the most frequently requested support services among family caregivers.

Supported by the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, the Lifespan Respite Care Program, which I helped to create back in 1996 with then-Congressman Mike Ferguson, a Republican from Pennsylvania, it was a bipartisan effort in creating this program, which operates now in 35 States and the District of Columbia, complements the PRC's efforts to help paralyzed individuals achieve a high quality of life by ensuring that caregivers who help them also receive relief and care, again, and support themselves.

Access to respite services has been shown to promote caregiver health and well-being, promote family stability, reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect, and delay or even avoid the need for admission to costlier, long-term institutional settings, resulting in significant savings for the healthcare system and ultimately taxpayers, but ultimately helping the loved one who needs the care receive better care, because the loved one providing the care gets the support and the break that they need.

So beyond supporting access to respite for caregivers, we know the PRC's

services and programs have touched the lives of people across the country, including those residing in the Ocean State, where I am from in Rhode Island.

For instance, Sarah Galli of Rhode Island spoke about her brother, Jeff, who was injured in 1998, and I would like to share her impactful words on the importance of the PRC now. She wrote:

"July 4, 1998, was the day that my family changed forever. My healthy, strong, athletic 17-year-old brother dove into the shallow end of a swimming pool and was rendered a high-level quadriplegic.

"Each Independence Day that followed has been a reminder of how quickly and irrevocably Jeff had his physical independence taken from him. It is also a reminder of how grateful I am for the support that has enveloped my family with care.

"I can't speak for my brother's experiences as a quad. That is his story to tell. But here is mine. In the years following his accident, I have counted on the Paralysis Resource Center and the Reeve Foundation for support. I have referred friends and strangers to them who require information and advocacy.

"And as a theater major in college, I started a student cabaret, *Born for Broadway*, that expanded an annual gala in the years since, raising awareness and funds for paralysis organizations, including Reeve. And I have also picked up the phone on several occasions to call the PRC and cry. Sometimes you just need to know that you are not alone.

"A friend of mine, Reeve supporter Jeff Ruben, wrote a song about a pal who lives with paralysis, using the lyrics, 'I believe in miracles.'

"I don't believe in miracles, but I do believe in Jeff. And I believe in Reeve. Do you?"

Mr. Speaker, we know the PRC's network of support remains strong to this day. When another Rhode Islander, 21-year-old Jack Calbi, was injured in a mountain bike accident this past April and left paralyzed from the chest down, the PRC immediately reached out to Jack's family to discuss the array of resources available.

Nearly 6 million Americans live with paralysis, depend on robust services and supports, respite for caregivers that love them, and a continued investment in the science and innovation that will lead to the treatments and cures of tomorrow.

The PRC has become a beacon of hope for so many. And as my dear friend Christopher Reeve said, "Once you choose hope, anything is possible."

Christopher and Dana Reeve were friends of mine. I miss them dearly. They truly did provide hope to me and millions of others, whether affected by paralysis or some other nerve disorder or disabilities in general, or the families that are affected by this condition as well. They made a difference, as has the PRC. I am grateful for their work

and I am grateful for all the efforts to keep the PRC going strong so that they can continue to help those living with paralysis, their families, and for those who may be affected in the future.

And together I know that one day, because of all the efforts that are going on through amazing research right now, as we get closer step by step every day to finding a cure for spinal cord injuries, that families will know that they are not alone, that we are in this together, and that PRC and the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation are helping us to one day get one step closer to finding the cures and those treatments that we so desperately look for.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida for raising attention to this issue and for yielding to me.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Rhode Island, Representative LANGEVIN. I thank him for his leadership here in the House on these important issues.

But just as you spoke about your friends Christopher and Dana Reeve and talked specifically about how Christopher Reeve was not quiet and introverted, that he was an inspiration to you, I think it is fair to say, and I am comfortable actually speaking in this one instance on behalf of my colleagues here in the House in saying that just as Christopher Reeve was an incredible leader and an inspiration to you, so, too, Representative LANGEVIN, are you an inspiration to all of us in the House. I thank you for participating tonight.

There are so many other stories to tell. Representative LANGEVIN shared some. I would like to share just a few others.

One is the story of Eric LeGrand. On October 16, 2010, Rutgers University football star Eric LeGrand sustained a spinal cord injury at his C3 and C4 vertebrae.

After a kickoff in the fourth quarter against Army, Eric sprinted down the field and he made the tackle, but after the collision, he stayed down on the field at MetLife Stadium. Eric was paralyzed from the neck down, and doctors gave him a zero to 5 percent chance of regaining neurologic function.

From the moment he was injured, the Paralysis Resource Center was by Eric's side with a wealth of services and support. To conquer the immediate challenges of paralysis, his mother, Karen LeGrand, spoke regularly with the PRC's information specialists, who provided a roadmap of the resources that helped Eric transition to the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in West Orange, New Jersey. At that point, Eric was already exceeding expectations for his recovery and was weaned off of his ventilator and his feeding tube.

To help his family understand the long-term realities of a spinal cord injury, Eric and Karen were put in touch with Alan Brown, a dear friend of mine I will speak more about in a bit. Alan is a certified peer mentor and staff

member of the Reeve Foundation, and he offered advice from his own personal experience living with quadriplegia for over 25 years.

Eric was also enrolled in the Reeve Foundation's NeuroRecovery Network, the NRN. The NRN is a growing network of rehabilitation centers that develop and provide cutting-edge therapies, like Locomotor Training.

Thanks to the NRN therapies and Eric's determination, he recovered the ability to move his neck and his shoulders. He has also improved trunk, cardiovascular, and pulmonary control.

His quality of life, well-being, and health have dramatically improved through the efforts of the PRC.

To pay forward his gratitude and help others, Eric founded Team LeGrand of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to speed the development of treatments for spinal cord injury. Since its inception in September 2013, Team LeGrand has raised close to \$1 million.

Karen LeGrand was also inspired by her experience with the PRC, and became a certified peer mentor to offer guidance and support to parents who have children living with paralysis.

Elizabeth Forst is someone else whose story we should focus on. An avid traveler and diver, Elizabeth "E.B." Forst's life changed in 2014 when a dive into a swimming pool resulted in a C4–C5 spinal cord injury.

In the aftermath of her injury, Elizabeth's family struggled with how to move forward and to ensure that Elizabeth could still live life to the fullest.

Her older brother, Tracy, reached out to the Reeve Foundation to tap into the constellation of programs and resources offered by the Paralysis Resource Center. He spoke with information specialists to get a better understanding of his sister's condition and how his family could help her adapt physically, emotionally, and socially to living with a spinal cord injury.

Tracy also regularly referred to the Reeve Foundation's website to educate himself on life after paralysis from both Elizabeth's perspective and his role as her family member and caregiver.

Thankful for the support she received from the Paralysis Resource Center, Elizabeth became a trained and certified peer mentor to help fellow paralysis community members find beauty and joy after a life-changing injury.

She has also resumed her passion for diving and traveling, as well as blogging for the Reeve Foundation to share her tips for traveling with a disability. E.B. has said she still has a lot of travel destinations on her list, and the PRC is surrounding her with support to make sure she can continue to travel the world.

Denna Laing is someone else we should think about tonight. On December 31, 2015, Denna Laing, a standout hockey player for the NWHL Boston Pride, was playing in the Women's Winter Classic at Gillette Stadium

when she crashed headfirst into the boards and sustained a spinal cord injury at her C5 vertebra.

While she was in the hospital, the Reeve Foundation mobilized a network of support through the Paralysis Resource Center to help her family understand the short-term and the long-term challenges of living with paralysis.

They spoke with information specialists who provided tailored assistance on transitioning Denna from the hospital to acute care, and then adjusting to life back in her community.

Denna and her family connected with certified peer mentors like Alan Brown, who offered support and guidance based on their own personal experiences.

She is currently building up her strength and working to improve her health by participating in a comprehensive therapy regime at Journey Forward in Canton, Massachusetts, which is part of the Reeve Foundation's NeuroRecovery Network.

□ 2045

Denna recently tackled the Boston Marathon with help from former NHL player Bobby Carpenter, who pushed her racing wheelchair to the finish line.

Known for her vibrant personality, she credits the support she received from the Reeve Foundation and paralysis community as the reason that she keeps smiling. In her words: "I know the best of my life has yet to come."

J.D. Bruning and Kelly Lamb are from Arkansas. After graduating from the University of Arkansas, J.D. was enjoying the warm weather with his friends when they decided to take a float trip on a local river. Near the end of the float trip, J.D. dove into what he thought was deep water, but it was too shallow, and he sustained a high-level spinal cord injury.

Since that life-changing moment over 4 years ago, J.D. and his family have tapped into the wealth of resources provided by the Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center to help J.D. live a full and active life in his community.

Given the scarcity of resources for the paralysis community in Arkansas, the PRC was critical in establishing the best possible care for J.D. and helping to navigate the path forward for his family.

His girlfriend, Kelly Lamb, was so inspired by the Reeve Foundation's programs and mission that she ran both the Chicago and New York City Marathons in 2016, under the Team Reeve banner, and raised over \$20,000 to accelerate innovative research.

Kelly has cited the Paralysis Resource Center as a lifeline for thousands of families impacted by paralysis in the State of Arkansas and across the Nation.

Sabrina Cohen is from Florida. Born and raised in Miami Beach, Sabrina sustained a C3–5 spinal cord injury in 1992, when a teenager driver, who

promised to give Sabrina a ride to a party, started drag racing and, unfortunately, slammed into a tree. She was 14 years old, and her life was changed forever.

When Sabrina was first injured, there was no centralized resource to learn how to live with paralysis or connect with fellow community members.

When the Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center was founded in 2002, it became and since remains a lifesaving resource for 5.4 million Americans living with paralysis from spinal cord injury, ALS, MS, spina bifida, stroke, and cerebral palsy.

However, physical barriers still existed in Sabrina's community as there was no beach in the Miami Beach area that was accessible to wheelchair users. Through the Sabrina Cohen Foundation, she applied for a Reeve Foundation Quality of Life Grant to fund her dream of a fully accessible beach and playground for the disabled, including seniors, veterans, and children with special needs.

The Quality of Life Grants Program is funded through the Paralysis Resource Center and awards financial support to nonprofits that foster greater health, quality of life, community involvement, and independence for individuals living with paralysis and their caregivers.

She made the most of a Quality of Life Grant to establish Miami Beach's first-ever dedicated public beach with improved wheelchair access and outdoor adaptive fitness and watersport activities.

Finally, I would like to talk about two other people, both also from Florida, and both good friends of mine.

Alan Brown, I mentioned earlier. He is a resident of Aventura, Florida, who was injured in 1988, at the age of 20, when his neck was crushed by an ocean wave while on vacation in the Caribbean. The accident caused a C5–6 spinal cord injury and left Alan a quadriplegic with no movement below his chest.

For nearly 30 years since the accident, Alan and his family have, through the Alan T. Brown Foundation to Cure Paralysis, provided support, education, and advocacy for the paralysis community.

Initially, the focus for the foundation was on finding a cure for paralysis, a magic bullet that would help everyone living with paralysis to walk again. But after years in a wheelchair, and the difficult challenges to overall health and emotional well-being that paralysis presents, he and his family decided to overhaul the mission of the foundation.

Today, they focus on improving the lives of people living with paralysis through peer mentoring, outreach, and fundraising to help others with basic needs like wheelchairs and ongoing medical care. And now, Alan and his foundation have partnered with the Reeve Foundation to extend the reach and impact of his message to the paralysis community.

Alan travels the country on behalf of the Reeve Foundation to advocate, to increase awareness, and to make an impact on the quality of life of other people living with paralysis and their families.

He currently serves as manager of public impact at the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, and in this role, he focuses on extending the reach of the foundation's impact on the greater public, creating new opportunities for partnership with peer organizations, increasing the visibility of PRC and other Reeve Foundation programs, bolstering fundraising efforts, and developing the national Peer & Family Support Program.

I have been with Alan and been inspired by him on a regular basis, close up, and the work that he does in the paralysis community and for those who are experiencing paralysis firsthand. The work that he does at those early moments is extraordinary.

Finally, Shawn Friedkin, who is from my community in south Florida. In March of 1992, Shawn was injured in a motor vehicle accident 2 weeks before his 27th birthday. He was married with one child, and he spent much of the early years following his injury working to increase medical research funding for spinal cord injuries.

For his efforts, he was invited to the White House to meet with Hillary Clinton, then-First Lady, as part of her healthcare initiative.

Shawn testified before Congress on the need for an increase in research funding. And based on his desire to help others in the community, Shawn left his career in finance, where he worked as a hedge fund manager, to create Stand Among Friends in 1997.

Stand Among Friends, based in Boca Raton, Florida, is a cross-disability advocacy organization. It is focused on helping people with disabilities find employment through vocational training and adaptive technology. It has provided services to more than 4,000 people and helped over 1,000 people find employment. Shawn has grown the services and mission to become one of the top disability service providers in the State of Florida.

And each year, Shawn and the Stand Among Friends organization hosts the "emb(race)." The emb(race) is a day of diversity awareness that includes a half marathon, a 5K, and a family fun walk; and it is, indeed, a way for all of us to embrace one another.

Shawn, as I said, is a dear friend and an inspiration in his community and to all who know him.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank all of those who make the Paralysis Resource Center at the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation what it is today.

As you can see from these stories, the PRC comes in at a family's most vulnerable moment. These are the most serious injuries and illnesses one can imagine. They are life-changing, and they come in with an immediate

response to help guide families who are hurting to help them create a positive vision of a new life and build a community of support for Americans living with paralysis.

I would like to leave with the words of Christopher Reeve. He said: "I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Paralysis Resource Center in their work to help empower more American heroes in the fight against spinal cord injuries.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. POE of Texas (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. CUMMINGS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week, on account of attending to her husband's health situation in California.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, July 25, 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:

2048. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Report to Congress from the Chairman of the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policies, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 262r(a); Public Law 95-118, Sec. 1701(a) (as amended by Public Law 105-277, Sec. 583); (112 Stat. 2681-202); to the Committee on Financial Services.

2049. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Teacher Preparation Issues [Docket ID: ED-2014-OPE-0057] (RIN: 1840-AD07) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

2050. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2016, pursuant to Sec. 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY 1988 and 1989, as Amended (22 U.S.C. 2656f); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2051. A letter from the Architect of the Capitol, transmitting the semiannual report

of disbursements for the operations of the Architect of the Capitol for the period of January 1, 2017, through June 30, 2017, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 1868a(a); Public Law 113-76, div. I, title I, Sec. 1301(a); (128 Stat. 428) (H. Doc. No. 115-56); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

2052. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment (RIN: 3133-AE67) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

2053. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0187; Directorate Identifier 2017-NE-08-AD; Amendment 39-18893; AD 2017-10-19] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2054. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0125; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-193-AD; Amendment 39-18946; AD 2017-14-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2055. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-3984; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-119-AD; Amendment 39-18945; AD 2017-14-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2056. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9504; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-107-AD; Amendment 39-18932; AD 2017-12-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2057. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9391; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-129-AD; Amendment 39-18931; AD 2017-13-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2058. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; DG Flugzeugbau GmbH Gliders [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0343; Directorate Identifier 2017-CE-005-AD; Amendment 39-18936; AD 2017-13-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2059. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of

Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9573; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-149-AD; Amendment 39-18938; AD 2017-13-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2060. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-8185; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-050-AD; Amendment 39-18940; AD 2017-13-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2061. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-7529; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-207-AD; Amendment 39-18939; AD 2017-13-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2062. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9437; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-131-AD; Amendment 39-18941; AD 2017-13-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2063. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9071; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-019-AD; Amendment 39-18942; AD 2017-13-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2064. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Eugene, OR [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0224; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ANM-10] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2065. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace, Sacramento, CA [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9476; Airspace Docket No.: 16-AWP-28] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2066. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Grayling, AK [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9333; Airspace Docket No.: 16-AAL-4] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2067. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-

ment's final rule — Amendment of and Establishment of Air Traffic Service (ATS) Routes; Northcentral United States [Docket No.: FAA-2016-8944; Airspace Docket No.: 16-AGL-21] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2068. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31137; Amdt. No.: 3750] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2069. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace for the following North Dakota Towns; Wahpeton, ND; Hettinger, ND; Fargo, ND; Grand Fork, ND; Carrington, ND; Cooperstown, ND; Pembina, ND; Rugby, ND; Devils Lake, ND; Bottineau, ND; Valley City, ND and Gwinner, ND [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9118; Airspace Docket No.: 16-AGL-3] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2070. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Chief Counsel, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Competitive Passenger Rail Service Pilot Program [Docket No.: FRA-2016-0023; Notice No. 4] (RIN: 2130-AC60) received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2071. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Surface Transportation Board, transmitting the Board's final rule — Publication Requirements for Agricultural Products [Docket No.: EP 528 (Sub-No. 1)]; Rail Transportation of Grain, Rate Regulation Review [Docket No.: EP 665 (Sub-No. 1)] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2072. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Surface Transportation Board, transmitting the Board's final rule — Offers of Financial Assistance [Docket No.: EP 729] received July 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2073. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (OOREG), Office of the Secretary (OOREG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — VA Veteran-Owned Small Business Verification Guidelines (RIN: 2900-AP93) received July 18, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

2074. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled, "Report to Congress on Ways to Improve Upon the Part D Appeals Process", pursuant to Sec. 704 of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) (Public Law 114-198); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

2075. A letter from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting the Commission's June 2017 Report to the Congress: Medicare and the Health Care Delivery System, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395b-

6(b)(1)(D); Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, title XVIII, Sec. 1805(b)(1)(D) (as amended by Public Law 111-148, Sec. 2801(b)(2)); (124 Stat. 332); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

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:

[Pursuant to Sec. 5 of H. Res. 454, the following reports were filed on July 21, 2017.]

Mr. DIAZ-BALART: Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3353. A bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-237). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CALVERT: Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3354. A bill making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-238). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CARTER of Texas: Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3355. A bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-239). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

[Submitted July 21, 2017]

Mrs. BLACK: House Committee on the Budget. House Concurrent Resolution 71. Resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2018 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2019 through 2027. (Rept. 115-240). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

[Filed July 24, 2017]

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1927. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-241). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. S. 249. An act to provide that the pueblo of Santa Clara may lease for 99 years certain restricted land, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-242). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 2749. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the oversight of contracts awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-243). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COLE: Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3358. A bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-244). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 282. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers to elect to use

the same residences as the servicemembers (Rept. 115-245). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 2006. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the procurement practices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-246). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 3218. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-247, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 2772. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees (Rept. 115-248). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 1690. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; with an amendment (Rept. 115-249). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 2781. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the sufficient participation of small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and small business concerns owned by veterans with service-connected disabilities in contracts under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-250). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. NUNES: Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. H.R. 3180. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-251). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 468. Resolution providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 111) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Arbitration Agreements" (Rept. 115-252). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky: Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3362. A bill making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-253). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Armed Services discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3218 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

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. COLLINS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MARINO, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. ISSA, and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 3356. A bill to provide for programs to help reduce the risk that prisoners will recidivate upon release from prison, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (for herself, Mr. WALZ, Mr. HECK, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mr. LYNCH):

H.R. 3357. A bill to allow the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to provide greater protection to servicemembers; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MCCAUL (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. KATKO, Mr. HURD, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. GARRETT, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 3359. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Oversight and Government Reform, and Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. HARPER (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. BLACK, and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 3360. A bill to promote and expand the application of telehealth under Medicare and other Federal health care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. SUOZZI):

H.R. 3361. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require federally licensed firearms importers, manufacturers, and dealers to meet certain requirements with respect to securing their firearms inventory, business records, and business premises; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. BLUM, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee):

H.R. 3363. A bill to reform uniformity and reciprocity among States that license insurance claims adjusters and to facilitate prompt and efficient adjusting of insurance claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ROYCE of California (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MCCARTHY, and Mr. HOYER):

H.R. 3364. A bill to provide congressional review and to counter aggression by the Governments of Iran, the Russian Federation, and North Korea, and for other purposes; to

the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Intelligence (Permanent Select), the Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, Financial Services, Rules, Ways and Means, and Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. DUNCAN of Tennessee:

H.R. 3365. A bill to amend title 41, United States Code, to require executive agencies to use competitive procedures for procurement contracts valued at an amount equal to or greater than \$10,000,000, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 3366. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow, in certain cases, an increase in the limitation on the exclusion for gains from a sale or exchange of a principal residence; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:

H.R. 3367. A bill to terminate the prohibitions on the exportation and importation of natural gas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. HIGGINS of New York (for himself and Ms. BROWNLEY of California):

H.R. 3368. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the access to child care for certain veterans receiving health care at a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HUDSON (for himself, Mr. MCHENRY, Ms. FOX, Mr. JONES, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. BUDD, Mr. MEADOWS, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. WALKER, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. HOLDING):

H.R. 3369. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 225 North Main Street in Spring Lake, North Carolina, as the "Howard B. Pate, Jr. Post Office"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 3370. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program to cover recipients of Marine Gunner Sergeant John David Fry scholarship, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LAMALFA:

H.R. 3371. A bill to provide for the conveyance of an obsolete Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System receiving station in Modoc County, California, to promote economic development of the site; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3372. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the restoration of entitlement to educational assistance and other relief for veterans affected by school closure of disapproval, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3373. A bill to amend the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 to extend for an additional 50 years the lease under which the government of the District of Columbia uses the ground under and the parking facilities associated with Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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 Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 3374. A bill to improve the safety of individuals by taking measures to end drunk driving; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. VELA (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. MCSALLY, and Mr. CARTER of Texas):

H.R. 3375. A bill to designate the checkpoint of the United States Border Patrol located on United States Highway 77 North in Sarita, Texas, as the "Javier Vega, Jr. Border Patrol Checkpoint"; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida (for herself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. ADAMS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. BASS, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CLAY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia):

H.R. 3376. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to create a pilot program to award grants to units of general local government and community-based organizations to create jobs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. MEEHAN (for himself, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SPEIER, and Mr. CARTER of Texas):

H. Con. Res. 72. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that child safety is the first priority of custody and visitation adjudications, and that state courts should improve adjudications of custody where family violence is alleged; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BUCK:

H. Res. 469. A resolution requesting the Senate to return to the House of Representatives House Joint Resolution 76; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HIMES (for himself, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. KEATING, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. DONOVAN):

H. Res. 470. A resolution recognizing that international education and exchange programs further national security and foreign policy priorities, enhance economic competitiveness, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation among nations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. HECK, and Mr. KILMER):

H. Res. 471. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, in Ballard, Washington; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. NORTON:

H. Res. 472. A resolution expressing support for the designation of July 29, 2017, as "National Dance Day" and recognizing dance as

a form of valuable exercise and artistic expression; to the Committee on 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. DIAZ-BALART:

H.R. 3353.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: "The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. CALVERT:

H.R. 3354.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: "The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. CARTER of Texas:

H.R. 3355

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: "The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 3356.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1, 3, and 18.

By Mrs. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 3357.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. COLE:

H.R. 3358.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: "The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. MCCAUL:

H.R. 3359.

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, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. HARPER:

H.R. 3360.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

"Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution."

By Mr. SCHNEIDER:

H.R. 3361.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky:

H.R. 3362.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: "The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee:

H.R. 3363.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitutional Authority on which this bill rests is the explicit power of Congress to regulate in commerce in and among the states, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, the Commerce Clause, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROYCE of California:

H.R. 3364.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 3 and 18 of article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee:

H.R. 3365.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 9 of the U.S. Constitution, Clause 7: No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.

Under Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H.R. 3366.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:

H.R. 3367.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. Art. I Sec. 8 cl. 18

By Mr. HIGGINS of New York:

H.R. 3368.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, which allows Congress to make all laws "which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution" any "other" powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States.

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 3369.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The power to establish post offices found in Clause 7 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 3370.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 12, 13 or 14 of the Constitution.

By Mr. LAMALFA:

H.R. 3371.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3372.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3373.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 2 of section 3 of article IV of the Constitution.

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 3374.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. VELA:

H.R. 3375.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18;

and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 3376.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 19: Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. TIBERI, and Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 38: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 44: Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. HURD, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.

H.R. 48: Ms. LEE.

H.R. 95: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 122: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 127: Ms. MOORE, Mr. JONES, and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 154: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 252: Ms. PINGREE and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.

H.R. 254: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 282: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 370: Mr. CARTER of Georgia and Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 466: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 525: Mr. BUDD.

H.R. 529: Mr. COLE.

H.R. 548: Mr. DUNN and Mr. FLORES.

H.R. 632: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. MARCHANT.

H.R. 635: Ms. ROSEN.

H.R. 719: Mr. MESSER, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. PITTINGER, Mr. FARENTHOLD, and Mr. BABIN.

H.R. 747: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.

H.R. 785: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 790: Mr. SABLAN.

H.R. 821: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 828: Mr. BERA.

H.R. 830: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 846: Mr. GRIFFITH and Mr. BABIN.

H.R. 849: Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 850: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. PITTINGER, and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.

H.R. 866: Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 873: Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. MARINO, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 917: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 918: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 930: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 970: Mr. RUSH, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CLAY, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 982: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 1017: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1057: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS.

H.R. 1098: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 1136: Mr. MARINO, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 1148: Mr. SMUCKER and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1156: Mr. ARRINGTON.

H.R. 1164: Mr. HUNTER, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Mr. WALDEN.

H.R. 1194: Ms. BASS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CLEAVER, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. EVANS, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 1225: Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 1239: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1267: Mr. GALLEG0, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. ESPAILLAT.

H.R. 1291: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1298: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.

H.R. 1341: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1359: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.

H.R. 1384: Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.R. 1406: Mr. TONKO, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. UPTON, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 1456: Ms. SINEMA, Mr. NEAL, and Mr. MARCHANT.

H.R. 1472: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. AGUILAR, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1491: Mr. VALADAO and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.

H.R. 1528: Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 1546: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1553: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1555: Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. POSEY, and Mr. JEFFRIES.

H.R. 1562: Mr. KHANNA.

H.R. 1606: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. RUSSELL.

H.R. 1626: Mr. COLLINS of New York and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 1629: Mr. LAWSON of Florida.

H.R. 1639: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 1661: Mr. KNIGHT.

H.R. 1676: Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 1686: Mr. SMUCKER.

H.R. 1690: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1699: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 1718: Mr. CARTER of Georgia and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 1730: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 1735: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 1757: Mr. RASKIN and Mr. CROWLEY.

H.R. 1777: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1796: Mr. MACARTHUR and Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1811: Mr. POLIQUIN and Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 1825: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 1828: Mr. RASKIN and Mr. MEEHAN.

H.R. 1861: Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. BARR, Mr. FLORES, Mr. PERRY, Mr. DENT, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. UPTON, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 1864: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 1868: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1900: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1928: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 1955: Mrs. BUSTOS.

H.R. 1974: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 2158: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2182: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.

H.R. 2206: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 2215: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 2248: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2259: Mrs. BEATTY and Mr. COOK.

H.R. 2267: Mr. FOSTER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. ZELDIN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. AMODEI.

H.R. 2272: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2310: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2315: Mr. WALDEN, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. RATCLIFFE.

H.R. 2327: Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. YODER, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. VEASEY, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. WOMACK, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. MCNERNEY, and Mr. BRADY of Texas.

H.R. 2358: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY.

H.R. 2366: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 2404: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 2408: Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. SHERMAN, Mrs. DEMINGS, and Mr. SARBANES.

H.R. 2431: Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 2452: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 2472: Mr. WELCH.
 H.R. 2482: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. YARMUTH, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. DELANEY.
 H.R. 2499: Mr. JEFFRIES.
 H.R. 2519: Mr. VEASEY, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. BARRAGAN, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mrs. HARTZLER, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. COOK, and Ms. SÁNCHEZ.
 H.R. 2537: Mr. GARRETT.
 H.R. 2544: Mr. POCAN.
 H.R. 2545: Mr. HUFFMAN.
 H.R. 2584: Ms. ROSEN and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
 H.R. 2589: Mr. RICHMOND.
 H.R. 2617: Mr. CONYERS and Mr. LABRADOR.
 H.R. 2651: Mr. COOK, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Ms. TENNEY.
 H.R. 2666: Mr. TAKANO.
 H.R. 2687: Mr. HARPER and Mr. KILMER.
 H.R. 2690: Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. CUELLAR.
 H.R. 2712: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 2723: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. BABIN, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
 H.R. 2733: Mr. TURNER.
 H.R. 2740: Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. SOTO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and Mr. NORMAN.
 H.R. 2747: Mrs. BEATTY.
 H.R. 2796: Mr. LABRADOR.
 H.R. 2797: Mr. CARSON of Indiana and Mr. RASKIN.
 H.R. 2801: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
 H.R. 2805: Mrs. WAGNER.
 H.R. 2838: Mr. SCHIFF.
 H.R. 2856: Ms. DELAURO and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
 H.R. 2870: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
 H.R. 2871: Mr. BABIN and Mrs. BEATTY.
 H.R. 2899: Mr. COHEN.
 H.R. 2901: Mr. DEFazio, Ms. SINEMA, and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
 H.R. 2908: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
 H.R. 2918: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 2924: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
 H.R. 2946: Mr. BUDD and Mr. SMUCKER.
 H.R. 2968: Ms. NORTON.
 H.R. 2976: Mr. DESAULNIER and Mr. RASKIN.
 H.R. 2989: Mr. SMUCKER.
 H.R. 2991: Mr. SHUSTER.
 H.R. 2997: Mr. MESSER.
 H.R. 3031: Mr. WITTMAN.
 H.R. 3048: Mr. CRIST and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
 H.R. 3071: Mr. BABIN.
 H.R. 3111: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. LEE, and Ms. MATSUI.
 H.R. 3117: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 3139: Mr. GOSAR.
 H.R. 3151: Mr. BABIN, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. GAETZ, and Mr. KING of Iowa.
 H.R. 3174: Mr. KINZINGER.
 H.R. 3178: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and Mr. SESSIONS.
 H.R. 3184: Mr. GOODLATTE.
 H.R. 3197: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. ESTES of Kansas, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
 H.R. 3218: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. POSEY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. SCHRAEDER, Mr. BERA, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. KILDEE, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 3222: Mr. BERA and Ms. SÁNCHEZ.
 H.R. 3223: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
 H.R. 3239: Ms. ROSEN.
 H.R. 3242: Mr. MARSHALL.
 H.R. 3246: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
 H.R. 3255: Ms. SÁNCHEZ.
 H.R. 3258: Ms. ROSEN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. WELCH, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
 H.R. 3274: Mr. MESSER, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. BEYER, Mr. LANCE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. BANKS of Indiana.
 H.R. 3282: Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. NORMAN, and Mr. MASSIE.
 H.R. 3298: Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. COHEN, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. CLAY, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. VELA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. FERGUSON, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. SABLON, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BARLETTA, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. KINZINGER.
 H.R. 3302: Ms. SHEA-PORTER and Ms. KAPTUR.
 H.R. 3312: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mrs. LOVE.
 H.R. 3320: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 3323: Mr. EVANS.
 H.R. 3325: Mrs. WAGNER.
 H.R. 3330: Mr. GARRETT.
 H.R. 3345: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
 H.J. Res. 33: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
 H.J. Res. 51: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
 H.J. Res. 111: Mr. SESSIONS.
 H. Con. Res. 27: Mr. KATKO.
 H. Con. Res. 60: Mr. GARRETT.
 H. Con. Res. 70: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
 H. Res. 30: Ms. CHENEY.
 H. Res. 199: Mr. DESANTIS.
 H. Res. 220: Mr. WALZ.
 H. Res. 311: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
 H. Res. 317: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H. Res. 319: Mr. BABIN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. HUIZENGHA, and Mrs. NOEM.
 H. Res. 336: Mr. COFFMAN.
 H. Res. 357: Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. TROTT, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. UPTON, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. EVANS, Mr. SENBRENNER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
 H. Res. 359: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
 H. Res. 395: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
 H. Res. 401: Mrs. TORRES, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. POSEY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. NORCROSS.
 H. Res. 428: Mr. POCAN.
 H. Res. 442: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CLAY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. HECK, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. KIHUEN, and Ms. JAYAPAL.
 H. Res. 443: Mr. DUFFY.
 H. Res. 445: Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SHERMAN, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
 H. Res. 446: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GALLEGU, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. NADLER, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
 H. Res. 447: Ms. JAYAPAL.
 H. Res. 449: Mr. GRIJALVA and Ms. NORTON.
 H. Res. 458: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.
 H. Res. 462: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
 H. Res. 464: Mr. PETERSON and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. HENSARLING

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Financial Service in H.J. Res. 111 do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.



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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 24, 2017

No. 124

Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, our souls long for You, for we find strength and joy in Your presence. Guide our lawmakers to put their trust in You, seeking in every undertaking to know Your will. Lord, when they go through difficulties, may they remember that with Your help they can accomplish the seemingly impossible. Give them a faith that will trust You even when the darkness is blacker than a hundred midnights. May they renew their commitment to You, finding strength and courage from Your guidance. Inspire them to always trust You to direct their steps.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 7 years ago, Democrats forced ObamaCare on the American people. It was supposed to lower health costs, but, of course, they skyrocketed. It was supposed to provide more health options, but they plummeted.

At ObamaCare's launch, millions lost the health plans they liked and were

promised they could keep. In the years since, Americans have continued to lose access to plans, hospitals, and doctors they know and they trust.

Now ObamaCare teeters on the edge of total collapse, threatening to drag even more of the men and women we represent right down with it. That shouldn't be an acceptable outcome to any of us. It certainly is not acceptable to me.

I made a commitment to the people I represent. I told the people of Kentucky that I would vote to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare. The Senate did so in 2015, but President Obama wielded his veto pen. The Senate can do so again now, and President Trump will use his pen to sign such legislation.

The first step this time, the first vote we will take soon, is on whether or not to begin the debate at all—whether to have the debate. I believe my mandate from the people of Kentucky is to vote yes, and I certainly intend to do so.

I know many colleagues feel the same. I know many of us have waited literally years for this moment to finally arrive, and, at long last, it has. I urge every colleague to join me.

I know many have ideas on how to improve healthcare. Some of these ideas have real potential. Others, like applying temporary band-aids or quadrupling down on ObamaCare, are not going to move us forward. That doesn't mean Senators shouldn't have the chance to offer those ideas.

The only way we will have an opportunity to consider ideas is if Senators are allowed to offer and debate them. That means voting to begin the open amendment process. That means voting to kick off a robust debate in which Senators from all parties can represent the views of their constituents. It means voting to proceed, and that will occur tomorrow.

ObamaCare has been a disaster from the start. The added tragedy is the utter predictability of it all. Repub-

licans warned about higher costs and fewer choices. We warned that Americans would lose their plans. We warned that ObamaCare would inevitably collapse under its own weight.

Our concerns were all waved away all the time. It turns out that we were right to be concerned. ObamaCare has hurt the people we represent. We have seen all the statistics—the higher costs and the reduced choices—but this is about more than just numbers on a page. What we are talking about here are the lives of real people, constituents of ours who have struggled under this failed leftwing experiment literally for years.

Through calls, letters, meetings, and dozens of healthcare forums across my State, thousands of Kentuckians have shared their ObamaCare horror stories. I have seen the pain in their eyes. I have heard their struggles to make ends meet. I have come to the Senate floor time and again to relay their heartbreaking stories. I know many colleagues have done the same.

Our constituents deserve better than the pain ObamaCare has brought them. They deserve a new direction on healthcare. When that vote comes, I will keep my commitment to vote to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare. I will vote yes on the motion to proceed. I urge all of our colleagues to do the same.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S4123

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Bernhardt nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Bernhardt, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, July 24 marks a significant milestone in the history of my home State of Utah. On this day, 170 years ago, Brigham Young and the Mormon pioneers first entered the Salt Lake Valley. Facing violence and discrimination at every turn, Utah's early settlers crossed the Nation in search of a land where they could practice their religion free from prejudice and abuse. In the cradle of the Rocky Mountains, they found a home.

Each year, we remember the sacrifice of these courageous men and women and the miraculous events that led to the founding of our State by observing Pioneer Day. This special holiday is a celebration of the pioneer spirit, that unique mix of industry, ingenuity, and innovation that transformed an arid desert plain into one of the most prosperous States in the Nation.

Pioneer Day is a perennial reminder of how a people—left to their own devices and empowered to follow their dreams—can accomplish incredible things. It is a testament to what westerners can achieve when the government steps out of the way and allows the human spirit to flourish.

It seems only fitting then that on Pioneer Day I speak in support of David Bernhardt, a man who immediately understands the western way of life and has dedicated his career to defending it.

As my colleagues know, Mr. Bernhardt has been nominated to serve as the next Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Today, I wish to express my support for his confirmation in the strongest possible terms.

Mr. Bernhardt has a distinguished record of public service, having served for nearly 10 years in the Department of Interior as Solicitor, Deputy Solicitor, Deputy Chief of Staff, and Director of Congressional Affairs. Now that Mr. Bernhardt works in private practice, Mr. Bernhardt is regarded as one of the Nation's most experienced and authoritative legal minds on natural resource policy.

Broad support for Mr. Bernhardt's confirmation is a testament to the sterling reputation he has built over an accomplished career in both the public and private sectors. State wildlife management agencies, Native American Tribes, environmental conservation and wildlife protection groups, and the Congressional Western Caucus are

among the many organizations that have strongly endorsed Mr. Bernhardt's nomination. He has also garnered the support of hundreds of recreationists, sportsmen, anglers, agricultural producers, and ranchers.

Nominating Mr. Bernhardt is in keeping with the President's promise to restore trust between westerners and the Federal Government. After just 6 months in office, our President has already made tremendous progress in repairing the broken relationship between local communities and the executive branch.

Of course, significant challenges remain, especially in my home State of Utah, where reduced access to Federal land has hurt the rural economy. Fortunately, as a former Interior Solicitor, Mr. Bernhardt has the legal and political background necessary to tackle some of the greatest challenges facing Utah and the West. He is well-equipped to improve sage grouse management practices, streamline permitting on Federal lands, and increase recreational access.

Mr. Bernhardt is also committed to fostering cooperation between Interior agencies and State and Tribal governments, in addition to reducing the National Park Service's backlog. Reducing the maintenance backlog is critical to tourism in Utah, which is home to the Mighty 5 national parks.

I applaud the nomination of Mr. Bernhardt. His breadth of experience makes him uniquely qualified to serve as Deputy Secretary, and I look forward to working with him and Secretary Zinke to further the important work of the Department of the Interior.

In that regard, I also praise Secretary Zinke, who, I think, is doing a terrific job in that Department, understanding the needs of the West, especially the needs of all those areas that we know are supervised by the Interior Department. He is a terrific human being, and I have a great deal of respect for him. The reason he is so good is because he has had all the experience working in the West and living in the West and doing the things that really have made the West a great place to begin with.

Mr. Bernhardt is going to be a great addition to our government, and I want to applaud Secretary Zinke for helping to push him forward.

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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.
HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as soon as tomorrow, we could be voting on a motion to proceed to the Repub-

lican healthcare plan. What that plan is, I am not sure anybody really knows. My friend the majority whip, when reporters asked him if his own Members would know what they would be voting on, said: "That's a luxury we don't have."

We have been on the topic of healthcare for 7 months. Republicans have been talking about repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act for over 7 years. Yet here we are, 1 or 2 days from a vote on the motion to proceed, and we don't even know what the Republicans plan is to vote on. We are potentially 1 or 2 days away from a vote on a bill that would reorganize one-sixth of the American economy and impacts tens of millions of American lives, and no one knows what it is. It is sort of like "Alice in Wonderland" around here. It comes down to this bizarre game where the Republican leader has basically said: Let's spin a wheel and see what we are going to vote on. This is no way to treat a matter as serious as healthcare—so near and dear to the lives of so many Americans.

I don't know how a single one of my Republican friends can in good conscience vote to proceed to a truncated debate on something as important as healthcare without knowing what bill they will ultimately be voting on. Isn't this the same party that shouted "Read the bill, read the bill" from the rafters when the Affordable Care Act was debated? It is completely bewildering.

Maybe we will be voting on the Republican repeal-and-replace bill, which will cause costs to go up and care to go down, which will cause 22 million Americans to lose their insurance, and which will so cruelly exchange healthcare for millions of working Americans for another tax break for the wealthy and the special interests. Maybe we will be voting on repeal without replace, which is even worse, which will cause our healthcare system to implode, creating chaos for 32 million Americans who would lose their insurance and chaos for millions more who would see their coverage diminish or their premiums rise. No one knows what we will be voting on. We know one thing: All the options are bad.

There is no good way out of this. The truth is, the Republicans are completely stuck when it comes to healthcare. Every single version of their repeal-and-replace bill is rotten at the core. Repeal without replace is even worse. The American people don't want tax breaks for the wealthy or the slashing of Medicaid. They don't want to repeal all the progress we made in healthcare without any plan to put in its place.

It is time to start over. It is time to go back to the drawing board—abandon tax cuts for the wealthy, abandon cuts to Medicaid, abandon repeal and run—around a set of nonideological proposals to improve our healthcare system. That is what we Democrats want to do.

I have called several Republicans. Some in their leadership are saying: Leader SCHUMER doesn't want people to talk to each other and won't let that happen if the bill fails. Well, first, I couldn't prevent it if I wanted to, and second, I don't want to. I want us to sit down and come up with ways to improve ACA. No one said it is perfect.

So if the bill fails tomorrow, we will start right away trying to work with our Republican colleagues to stabilize the marketplace and improve the cost and quality of healthcare. Whether they join us in that effort is entirely up to them.

ECONOMIC POLICIES TO HELP AMERICAN FAMILIES

Madam President, on another matter, today in Berryville, VA, the Democratic Party began presenting our vision for the future of the country. As I have traveled New York State, from upstate, rural, Republican areas, like Sodus Bay, where I was Friday, to suburban Long Island, to the inner-city Bronx, I have found one thing in common: Average families feel they have been pushed around by large economic forces, and they are losing that traditional, American faith in the future. Too many families in America feel as though rules of the economy are rigged against them. They feel as if they are getting a raw deal. And they are right. American families deserve a better deal so this country works for everyone, not just the elites and special interests. Today, Democrats started presenting that better deal to the American people.

There used to be a basic bargain in this country that if you worked hard and played by the rules, you could own a home, afford a car, put your kids through college, and take a modest vacation every year, while putting enough away for a comfortable retirement. I should know. I grew up in that America. My father was an exterminator, and he worked very hard but managed to—not making a whole lot of money—build a good life for his family. But things have changed.

Today's working Americans are justified in having greater doubts about the future than almost any generation since the Depression. Corporate interests and the superwealthy are allowed to spend unlimited, undisclosed money on campaigns and lobbying so they can protect their special deals in Washington. And for too long—far too long—government has played along, tilting the economic field in favor of the wealthy and the powerful, taking the burden off them and putting it on the backs of hard-working Americans. The result is an economy that has created enormous wealth at the top, while producing less work and less pay for average Americans. Incomes and wages have flatlined while everyday costs are skyrocketing.

Democrats, frankly, have too often hesitated from directly and unflinchingly taking on the misguided policies that got us here—so much so that

Americans don't know what we stand for. Well, not after today. Democrats are showing the country that we are the party on the side of working people and that we stand for three things: First, we are going to increase people's pay; second, we are going to reduce their everyday expenses; and third, we are going to provide workers the tools they need for the 21st-century economy.

Today we announced three new policies to advance these goals.

Right now, there is nothing to stop vulture capitalists from egregiously raising the price of lifesaving drugs without justification. We are going to fight for rules to stop prescription drug price gouging and demand that drug companies justify price increases to the public. And we are going to push for empowering Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices for seniors.

Right now, our antitrust laws are designed to allow huge corporations to merge, padding the pockets of investors but sending costs skyrocketing for everything from cable bills and airline tickets to beer, food, and healthcare. We are going to fight to allow regulators to penalize big companies if they are hurting consumers and to make it harder for companies to merge if it reduces competition.

Right now, millions of unemployed or underemployed people—particularly those without a college degree—could be brought back into the labor force and retrained to secure full-time, higher paying work. We propose giving employers—particularly small businesses—a large tax credit to train workers for unfilled jobs, with a requirement to hire that worker at a good wage once the training is complete.

In future weeks, we will offer additional ideas, from rebuilding rural America to fundamentally changing our trade laws to benefit workers, not multinational corporations. Now, we are in the minority in both Houses of Congress. We know that. We cannot delude anyone that this Congress will begin passing our priorities tomorrow, but this is the start of a new vision for our party. This set of economic policies will form the backbone of our agenda, and we welcome our Republican colleagues to join with us in any of these ideas they might find acceptable.

"A better deal" is not just a slogan; it is a mission. It is about reorienting government to work on behalf of people and families. It is not going to be the work of only one Congress. It shouldn't be the work of one party. As I said, we welcome any Republicans willing to work with us on these issues because there is an American imperative and a moral imperative to do what we are doing here.

If that torch, held by the lady in the harbor of the city in which I live—that symbol of optimism and hope for the future—starts flickering, it is a different America, an America no one will like.

American families deserve a better deal, a government that has their back and helps make the economy work for them. That is how we will restore the fundamental optimism that defines the American spirit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, first, let me thank the Democratic leader for his statement on a better deal for all Americans.

I had a chance over the weekend to travel throughout my State, and I heard over and over again the people of Maryland talking about what we need to do on a better deal. I had an interesting forum on healthcare, and Marylanders want a better deal on healthcare. They want to make sure healthcare is affordable, that they can get access to quality care, and they can make sure we maintain the highest quality healthcare.

What they don't want to see is us moving in the wrong direction. I heard over and over again their concerns about what is happening with the consideration of the bill the Republican leadership is anticipating having a vote on later this week. That bill would proceed on legislation that would eliminate healthcare coverage for, at least, 22 million Americans, maybe as high as 33 million Americans. I must tell you that is not a better deal for Americans on their healthcare needs. We could do much better moving in the opposite direction and making healthcare more affordable, not cutting people out of healthcare insurance.

In my State of Maryland, in 2018 alone, 221,000 people in my State would lose coverage under the proposals the Republican leadership is suggesting, including 4,200 veterans, 164,000 people in the Medicaid system, and 62,000 people in the individual marketplace. That is going to hurt. These are people today who have healthcare coverage who would lose their healthcare coverage. It would hurt our seniors in the coverage they get under the Medicaid system for long-term care. It would hurt those who are working to try to end this opioid drug addiction issue.

Under the current law, mental health, behavioral health, and drug addiction is covered under the essential health benefits. It is covered under private insurance. It is covered under the Medicaid system. That is in danger of being lost under the legislation being considered.

I heard from public health and law enforcement over the weekend how that would move our community in the wrong direction if those bills were considered.

I also heard from the majority leader that all he wants to do is get on this bill, and then we can offer amendments. Well, that is not accurate. You can't offer any amendments you want on a bill that is under reconciliation instructions, and we certainly aren't

going to get a fair shot at trying to make this bill a better bill under the restrictions we are operating under: We had no committee hearings. We had no committee markups. That is not the way legislation should be considered.

The other issue I heard about from people in Maryland—I think you will hear this from people around the country—is they want to bring down the cost of their healthcare coverage. They want to bring down the cost of their healthcare. They want to reduce the high growth rate in healthcare costs in this country. Yet the Senate Republican bill increases the average premium by as much as \$1,700 in Maryland by 2020 and preserves what we call the age tax—a 5-to-1 difference.

So if you happen to be 55 years of age, you are going to pay a lot more than that in increases in your health insurance premiums. That is not what people in Maryland want to see. That is not what people in this country want to see. They are concerned that we should be building on the Affordable Care Act to bring down the cost of their premium increases, not to increase it by that dramatic amount of money.

The increase in deductibles in Maryland could be as high as \$3,300 for a person making \$42,000 per year and \$5,600 for a person making about \$18,000 a year. Those are increases in deductibles. They can't afford that. The concerns we have—people like the Affordable Care Act, and they want us to improve it. They want us to improve it. They don't want us to add to their costs, and the bill the majority leader is asking us to consider would have people in Maryland and around the country paying more—not less, which they want.

The people in Maryland and around this country like the consumer protections we have under the Affordable Care Act. They like the idea that there is no annual cap or lifetime cap. I had several people who came up to me to tell me about their own personal circumstances. One father explained to me that his child was born with serious issues and that they reached their cap within a matter of months. Without the protection in the Affordable Care Act, they would have had no other insurance coverage. Yet, under the bill being considered by the Republican leadership, that family could lose that protection because you could see the imposition of caps.

All of us know of people who are very concerned about preexisting conditions. The bill that is being considered under the Republican leadership weakens those protections against discrimination of preexisting conditions.

Let me just remind my colleagues of what we saw before the Affordable Care Act in discriminatory practices by private insurance companies. We had reined much of that in under the Affordable Care Act. All of that could be lost if we proceed on legislation—and move it forward—that doesn't provide

the consumer protections, allows the elimination of caps, allows discriminatory practices in regard to preexisting conditions, restricts the amount of money going into the Medicaid system so our States are forced basically to cut back on the Medicaid system. We lose the expanded coverage—the Congressional Budget Office has already told us that—and we go back to the days of job lock. I want to talk about that for one moment because I think this is one of the untold stories. We haven't had a lot of discussion on the floor.

If you go in the wrong direction and you do what the Republican leadership is talking about doing and repeal the Affordable Care Act and either repeal and later replace or replace it now with a program that will eliminate a lot of coverage and once again eliminate these consumer protections we have in health insurance, what you do is people get locked into employment. They are afraid to leave their job because they have insurance that covers their family—they have a spouse with cancer or they have a child with a major disability. Yes, they would like to do what this country is best known for, and that is set out with an entrepreneurial spirit, start a company or go and take risks, but they can't do it because they know they are jeopardizing their family's healthcare because they can't get the type of insurance they need to cover their risks. That is called job lock and that works against the growth of our economy.

There are so many reasons to be concerned about what the majority leader is asking us to do—to proceed on this bill that all the options we have seen will cost tens of millions of people their coverage, take away a lot of the consumer protections we have seen in the law, and discriminate against our elderly, discriminate against minorities and women. That would be returning to our old healthcare system. No, that is not the right way to do it.

I am frequently asked: Well, what should we do? The Affordable Care Act, doesn't it have problems? Doesn't it need to be fixed?

The Affordable Care Act has done a lot of good. It has given people coverage who never had coverage before. It has reined in the discriminatory practices of health insurance companies. It has made a dramatic improvement on dealing with minority health and health disparities. It has provided essential health benefits so we deal with mental health and addiction. It has done a lot of really good things, but, yes, we could improve it. There has never been a major law passed without us going back and revisiting.

Why haven't Democrats been part of this process? Well, we could not get engaged in this process because the way this bill came to the floor, it didn't come through the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, it didn't come in through the Finance Committee, the two committees of ju-

risdiction that deal with the healthcare system in this country. Instead, it came in through the majority leader using the rule XIV process to bring out a reconciliation bill that can be jammed through, with limited time and no open amendment process, from the point of view that amendments have to be germane to the reconciliation instructions so we don't have an opportunity to fix this bill.

We weren't part of the process to develop the bill. You are not giving an opportunity for the democratic system to work. There was no on-ramp for Democrats to get engaged in the process.

About 2 weeks ago—maybe 3 weeks ago now—I filed legislation and sent letters to my Republican colleagues telling them: I want to work with you. I do. I have worked with Republicans in the Finance Committee on healthcare bills. We have gotten some good things done. Democrats and Republicans want to work together, so let's work together.

The legislation I filed dealt with the two major problems that I hear about, as I travel throughout Maryland, regarding what we need to fix on the Affordable Care Act and how we can make it better.

Problem No. 1, we need more stability and competition within the individual marketplace. Yes, we have seen large proposed increases in premiums in the individual marketplace—not in the group plans where most Americans have their insurance but in the individual marketplace. Why? Because we don't have enough people who have signed up in the exchanges. Younger, healthier people, because there really hasn't been a penalty imposed, have chosen not to join. They will say: Look, we will join if we have a need.

We have also found that with President Trump indicating he may not fund the cost-sharing provisions that go directly to the insurance carriers that keep the premiums low and the deductibles and copays low, this also has a lot of insurance companies nervous. As a result, the premium increases are larger than what we had anticipated. We need to do something about it.

How can we keep those premium increases at a more reasonable growth rate rather than what we have seen? One way we could do it is a proposal that, I believe, has bipartisan support; that is, deal with what is known as reinsurance. Reinsurance is a way we spread the risk over a greater group of people, therefore dealing with those high-risk pools in a way in which their premium costs are much more affordable.

Another way we can do it is by Congress mandating that the President fund the cost-sharing with the insurance carriers so we don't have the threat that they are going to pull out those funds that are used to keep copays and deductibles low.

Another way we can do it is to increase our support for those who are of

modest income and the funds they have to lay out for their premiums because we know you can make a good salary, but because of the cost of healthcare, if you don't have an employer providing part of those benefits, it is very hard for you to be able to afford that without some help. We can do all of that.

Another thing we could do is bring more competition into the individual marketplace. We have had those who have suggested a Medicare for all. We have had those who have suggested Medicare for the near elderly—the 55 to 65 age group or something similar to that. We have others who have suggested that we have a public option under the exchanges. All those, to me, make sense because it just brings in more competition. There is no additional government cost here because they are not subsidized any differently than any other insurance plan, but it gives more options, more choice, more competition, and therefore more stability in the individual marketplace. We could do all that and all that can help.

The other thing we really need to deal with is to deal with the overall cost of healthcare. Here, again, Democrats and Republicans have had ideas. Why don't we take on the pharmaceutical industry? Why do Americans pay twice what Canadians pay for the same medicines that are manufactured here in the United States? Why don't we have rebates in the Medicare system like the rebates we have in the Medicaid system? Why don't we organize our purchasing power in a larger pool so we can get greater discounts for the government taxpayers? All those things will bring down the cost of prescription medicines. The President has talked about it. Democrats and Republicans have talked about it. It is time we act.

We have acted in several areas to try to deal with more value-based reimbursements in our healthcare system, recognizing we should treat the person, not the particular disease. Many people have more than one ailment, and they have to go back to the doctor multiple times. Why don't we have a more coordinated, integrated care model?

I talked on the floor about 2 weeks ago about the coordinated care model between Sheppard Pratt Hospital in Baltimore and Mosaic, which deals with behavioral health issues and how they deal with it in an integrated, coordinated care model, which saves money. It saves money. There are fewer tests, more timely interventions.

How can we use telemedicine? They are using telepsychiatry. How can we use that to bring down the cost of care? When I am asked in my district, asked in my State as to what I can do—where is my plan, and how can we fix the Affordable Care Act—my answer is quite simple: I am proud of the progress we have made under the Affordable Care Act. I invite Democrats and Republicans through our committees to work together to improve it. Yes, we can im-

prove it. We can provide more stability in the individual marketplace. We can bring down the high annual growth we have seen in premiums in the individual marketplace. We can continue to bring down the growth rate of healthcare costs by working together on some of these commonsense approaches in order to deal with healthcare in America. All of this I think we can do, with Democrats and Republicans working together. But the first order of business—and I urge my colleagues—the first order of business is to stop this process of trying to jam a repeal of the Affordable Care Act and a replacement that would cost tens of millions of people in this country their health coverage and would move in the wrong direction on how we should improve healthcare in America. Let's get that off the table.

Let's reject this motion to proceed that the majority leader is talking about voting on later this week. Let's do what Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee has suggested. Let's have hearings in our committees. Let's work together, and let's bring legislation that stabilizes the Affordable Care Act and deals with the two major problems that the people in this country are talking about; that is, bringing down the growth rate of premium costs and bringing down the overall growth rate of healthcare costs in America. I believe we can do both by working together. There are suggestions I have made, and I am sure other Members have. Let's work on those. Let's work together and get it done. Let's do what is in the best interest of the people in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MONTANA WILDFIRES

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, it has been a long, hot, dry summer in Montana. That is why I rise today to honor the brave men and women in Montana who are fighting wildfires throughout our great State, the families who are facing devastating losses due to drought and fire, and to call on Congress to do their job and help these folks.

Due to the drought and high temperatures, Montana has turned into a tinderbox. Unfortunately, fires have sparked all across our State, some 24 of them—which changes by the hour, I might add. Across Montana, over one-quarter million acres have already burned, and many of these fires continue to rage. Montana is burning, and our heroic firefighters are protecting lives, our lands, our homes, our way of life.

HONORING TRENTON JOHNSON

Madam President, I would be remiss if I didn't mention one firefighter in particular, Missoula's Trenton Johnson. Trenton lost his life last week while he was on the fire line. Trenton's bravery and sacrifice will not be forgotten.

LODGEPOLE COMPLEX FIRE

Madam President, communities across the State are coming together to protect their homes and livelihoods, and families are concerned about their homes, property, and health. The largest fire is the Lodgepole Complex fire in Garfield County. This afternoon, 30-mile-per-hour winds ballooned the Lodgepole Complex to more than 230,000 acres. Over the weekend, the fire jumped the highway, and as of today it is nowhere near containment.

The Lodgepole Complex fire is made up of three different fires that have turned Eastern Montana's farm and grazing land into an ashtray, leaving an unknown number of farms and ranches with an uncertain future, forcing families to evacuate and communities to join local fire departments, with anyone willing and able to join in the firefight.

Sadly, Montana is used to this. Fire season has been as common as the autumn and the spring. As I stand here, nearly two dozen uncontained, large fires are raging in Montana. It has taken more and more resources to fight fires, and these resources are becoming more and more difficult to come by.

Places like Garfield County are being forced to ask for donations to get volunteer firefighters the fuel they need to save lives and protect property, and this is unacceptable. Protecting our communities from disaster and coming to help our fellow Americans in their time of need is a fundamental pillar of government.

I was pleased to see Governor Bullock declare Montana a fire emergency, which will go a long way to bring much needed resources into our State. Last night, the regional director of FEMA denied emergency assistance for the Lodgepole fire, so this afternoon, I called Administrator Brock Long of FEMA to make sure he heard from me about the situation on the ground and asked him to cut loose much needed relief into Montana.

Firefighters from all levels of government have bravely fought fires across our State. Folks across Federal, State, and local agencies have been working around-the-clock to contain the havoc. Montana's communities are strong, tight-knit, and they always persevere, but they expect the government to have their backs. Congress can assist these communities by changing the way we fund fighting wildland fires. Fires are a devastating natural disaster and should be treated that way. We need to raise the disaster cap so that we can budget for the real cost of fighting fires, making sure the folks on the ground have the resources they need to keep our communities safe.

As an example, Forest Service resources are already stretched thin. When a fire starts, they are forced to take money they use for managing the forest and use that for fighting fires. Twenty years ago, firefighting took up about 20 percent of the Forest Service budget. In 2016, more than half of the

Forest Service budget was spent on fighting fires. This is not sustainable.

When Montana's communities are burning, I don't want a bureaucrat in Washington, DC, weighing the pros and cons of sending help to these communities. We want the fire to be contained. As Montana burns, Congress cannot afford to wait. We need to act and allow catastrophic wildfires to be treated as what they are—natural disasters. It is the least we can do for the rancher in Jordan who lost his cattle, the rancher in Sand Springs who no longer has a fence around his pasture, or any Montanan who is forced to leave the home they have known because a fire may be descending upon them.

Fire season is always a testament to the strength of Montana's communities. Everyone works together, they put aside their differences, and they play their part to achieve a common goal. Neighbors open their homes to displaced families; churches and community centers turn into places to get food and other essentials. Congress can learn a thing or two from these Montana communities. These communities and firefighters work around-the-clock. Now is the time for Congress to help out. We can do that by fixing how we fund firefighting.

In the meantime, I hope you all will join Sharla and me in sending thoughts and prayers to all the Montanans who have been changed by wildfire. Our thoughts and prayers are with those heroes on the frontlines.

I yield the floor.

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.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HEALTHCARE

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, it is unconscionable that the U.S. Senate will soon be voting on a measure that would force between 22 and 32 million people to lose their health insurance. This vote is particularly unconscionable when you consider that each Member of this Chamber has high quality health insurance that will be there whenever we need it—and we all will, as I recently found out.

I know as well as anyone that we are all one diagnosis away from a serious illness. When I was diagnosed with kidney cancer not too long ago, I had the peace of mind of knowing that I was covered and that insurance would make the cost of treating my illness more manageable. Many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have found comfort in having high quality health insurance as they confront serious illnesses and injuries of their own.

Every American deserves that same peace of mind. That is why I am fighting for universal healthcare that is a right for every American, not a privi-

lege reserved only for those who can afford it. This is something we can and should be working on in a bipartisan fashion. There are a lot of great ideas we could be debating and considering to move us toward this bipartisan goal.

Instead, the majority leader and his allies are forcing a vote on TrumpCare, a mean, ugly bill that will deprive tens of millions of people across our country of the healthcare they deserve.

Although some have argued over the past week that this vote is doomed to fail, we can't be complacent. We have to keep fighting because if TrumpCare becomes the law of the land, it would be devastating for tens of millions of people across the country, harming the poorest, sickest, and oldest members of our society. It would undermine protections for Americans living with serious and chronic conditions, who could face a reimposition of yearly and lifetime caps on their care. It would impose an age tax on people 50 to 64 years old, which would allow insurance companies to charge them up to five times more for insurance because of their age. I could go on.

For hundreds of thousands of people in Hawaii and tens of millions more across the country, TrumpCare is not an abstract proposal that would have no relevance to their lives. I have heard literally from tens of thousands of people from across Hawaii about the devastating consequences TrumpCare would have on their lives. Hawaii is a small State. To think that literally over 20,000 people in Hawaii have contacted my office to tell me the devastation that TrumpCare will bring to their lives—this is because insurance is personal. They have spoken out against this bill loudly and clearly because healthcare is personal.

Keith Moniz from Maui has a particularly compelling story to tell. Keith's brother, Lester, after working as a custodian for more than 40 years at St. Anthony School, lost his job and his health insurance. Only a few short months later, Lester had a debilitating stroke that left him permanently disabled. Fortunately, Keith's brother was able to obtain Medicaid coverage and is now a long-term resident at Hale Makua Health Services on Maui, where nearly 80 percent of all patients and residents rely on Medicaid to pay for their necessary care.

Keith was very clear about what would happen if TrumpCare succeeded in making large cuts to Medicaid.

I quote Keith:

It would be devastating. We had a difficult time taking care of him—

His brother, Lester—

when he was at home, and he's gotten the care that he needs at Hale Makua. It would be a big loss . . . I don't know what we would do, where we would be able to move him to.

Alvin, another resident at Hale Makua, was paralyzed in a car accident in 2006. Alvin lived with his aunt and uncle for a short time after his accident, but the complexity of his care was too much for them to handle on

their own. Alvin has lived at Hale Makua for almost 11 years now. He gets daily physical therapy and receives the supportive, life-sustaining care he needs. He would not be able to afford to live at Hale Makua without support from Medicaid.

When asked, Alvin had a simple message for people in Washington, DC, who are trying to make huge cuts to Medicaid.

I quote Alvin:

I'm not a politician, but I know that these programs really help those who are in need. I really hope that they would take a longer look at it and realize that these are programs the elderly and disabled need.

People like Lester and Alvin are depending on us to keep up the fight against this mean, ugly bill until it is defeated for good. As we contemplate what is next, I hope we can come together across party lines to stabilize insurance markets and continue our work to provide universal healthcare for every American.

I should think that each and every one of us who represents some 800,000—well, our entire State. I used to be in the U.S. House. There, you have districts, and I represented about 800,000 people. Of course, as a Member of the Senate, I represent the whole State. I should think that all of us who represent literally the 300 or so million people all across our country would care about the healthcare of every single one of our constituents, and TrumpCare is not the way to ensure that.

The fight continues.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. 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.

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, it has been 2 months since Ambassador Lighthizer notified Congress of the administration's intent to enter into negotiations with Mexico and Canada on the North American Free Trade Agreement. During that time, I launched something called NAFTA 4 AZ, which is an initiative to allow Arizonans to share their stories about how NAFTA has changed their lives for the better.

I have heard from Arizonans across the State who work in a multitude of industries—from dairy farmers to call center employees—and the responses I have received are overwhelmingly positive. For example, Matt Mandel, who serves as chief operating officer for SunFed, a company based in Rio Rico, shared his personal story.

Matt wrote:

Fresh produce trade has kept my family working here in the State of Arizona for three generations. Arizona imports over 17

billion pounds of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables—bilateral trade between the United States and Mexico representing over \$40 billion. Let's modernize NAFTA.

Mignonne Hollis with the Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation tweeted:

NAFTA and our trade partners in Mexico have allowed us to grow the aerospace industry in southern Arizona, which is key to our economic development.

Dairy farmer Jim Boyle notes:

Most of our customers are local—right here in our State—but our biggest customer outside of Arizona is Mexico. We ship daily loads of cheese, powder, and tank loads of cream all the way through Mexico. Please, let's keep NAFTA working for the American farmer.

Other comments I have received through my website include statements like "I have enjoyed a constant supply of fresh fruits and vegetables in these years of NAFTA. I have also noticed . . . how relatively inexpensive many household items have been since" and "We supply parts that cross the border multiple times before they reach final assembly in the U.S. Free trade is vital to our success and the success of our customers who not only get us where we need to go but protect our shores and vital interests."

The Arizona Chamber of Commerce noted in its comments on NAFTA:

Agreement is central to the State's economic prosperity.

The NAFTA agreement, that is.

Mexico is Arizona's leading trade partner. Canada is the State's second leading trade partner.

In an interview focused on the NAFTA renegotiation process, the CEO of Arizona's Hispanic chamber stated: "We know that Mexican nationals spend over a billion dollars a year in just Pima County." That is just one county.

It is hardly surprising to hear such overwhelmingly positive support for NAFTA, considering the benefits it has had on Arizona's economy.

NAFTA 4 AZ has helped to put on paper what Arizonans know all too well: NAFTA plays a critical role in supporting jobs, opportunity, and economic growth. It has been great to hear from people all over the State talking about how NAFTA has helped them and asking the administration to modernize NAFTA, not to end it.

NAFTA 4 AZ submissions, as well as comments submitted to the USTR from Arizona stakeholders, share one common plea: Do not harm the trilateral structure and the reciprocal market access of NAFTA.

Earlier this week the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative made public its negotiating objectives for NAFTA. Based on what the USTR released, it appears the administration has recognized the importance of this central tenet of NAFTA. I am pleased that it appears that the administration will seek to modernize NAFTA along the well-worn lines of what was negotiated for the now defunct Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

I think we can all agree that addressing the issues of digital trade and intellectual property in the agreement, which is more than 20 years old, is the key to NAFTA's continued success. Let's modernize it, not end it.

However, these negotiating objectives mark the next step in a long process that will have tremendous impact on Arizona's economy, for better or for worse. Unfortunately, the path forward for NAFTA remains uncertain and there is a long road to travel before we get to a place where the United States, Mexico, and Canada can all agree to an updated NAFTA.

From the vegetable fields of Yuma to the warehouses in Nogales, to the small retailers along the southern border, to the hotels throughout the valley, to the ranches up north where I grew up in Snowflake, NAFTA is important to all Arizonans.

I will review the administration's objectives closely as I continue to talk to Arizonans about what they need to ensure vibrant cross-border trading.

I look forward to continued consultation between Congress and the administration as this process to modernize NAFTA moves forward.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to speak this evening in support of the confirmation of David Bernhardt to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

The Deputy Secretary is the department's COO, or chief operating officer. This is the individual who holds the position to really execute the strategy and oversee the initiatives that are undertaken by thousands of employees as they carry out their statutory duties and the administration's agenda. It is a very key position.

I believe very strongly that Secretary Zinke has chosen a strong individual for this position of Deputy Secretary. Mr. Bernhardt is a fellow westerner. He comes from the small town of Rifle, CO. He understands the management of Federal lands and how it affects those who live near them, the implications of Federal policies, and the need for balance between conservation and development.

David is an avid sportsman. He likes to hunt. He likes to fish. He likes to get outside and enjoy the outdoors.

Mr. Bernhardt also has extensive experience at the Department of the Interior. He previously spent several years as its solicitor, and this is a position for which he was confirmed by this Senate Chamber by voice vote. So he has gone through this process before and was endorsed strongly at the time.

Throughout his time at the Department of the Interior, Mr. Bernhardt gained expertise about a range of Alaska and western issues. He also has a strong reputation as a manager which, of course, is critical for a Deputy Secretary.

Mr. Bernhardt's nomination is supported by dozens of Members of this Chamber and by dozens of stakeholder groups. He has been endorsed by a broad coalition of sportsmen's groups as well, including Ducks Unlimited, the Safari Club, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the National Water Resources Association, the Family Farm Alliance, NCAI, or the National Conference of American Indians, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe are just a few more that have weighed in favorably on his behalf.

Mr. Bernhardt also fared well throughout the confirmation process, proving again that he is a good choice for this role. We held a hearing on his nomination on May 18. We reported him favorably from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support. We moved that out on June 4. So we have had about 6 weeks now where others have had an opportunity to review him and review his credentials. It is unfortunate that he has had to wait 6 weeks. I know that Secretary Zinke is anxious to put him to work. He is now ready this evening to be confirmed by the full Senate.

I would like to thank David Bernhardt for his willingness to return to Federal service. I think he will be a very capable second-in-command for Secretary Zinke, helping to steer the Department in a positive direction. Alaskans, especially this one, are looking forward to working with him.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Bernhardt's confirmation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to complete my remarks.

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

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, David Bernhardt is a well-qualified nominee to serve as our next Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

The Department of the Interior is charged with managing our wildlife, our public lands, including our national parks and refuges, and our Nation's rich natural resources, which are key to American energy independence. They are charged with the sacred responsibility of protecting the Federal Government's trust responsibility to Indian Tribes.

Managing the Department of the Interior is a complex balancing act. We need someone who is able to balance these competing interests, and we need someone who understands the importance of our public lands.

David Bernhardt has spent his life balancing competing interests, weighing the stewardship of our natural resources and wildlife with the letter of the law. His relationship to our lands and the western way of life is not second nature; it is first.

Mr. Bernhardt was confirmed unanimously by the Senate in 2006 as the Solicitor of the Department. As Solicitor he proved he was capable of upholding the law, even under difficult situations. My colleagues may remember that he wrote the opinion that decided to list the polar bear and drafted a workable rule. As we know, Secretary Salazar then upheld this rule.

As Solicitor, he prioritized establishing a robust ethics team at the Department. That ethics team still exists today.

Mr. Bernhardt has proven to have the highest level of integrity and work ethic. For heaven's sake, he is a westerner. He is from Rifle, CO, and the importance of our public lands and wildlife flows through his veins like a lot of us who live out West. I have confidence that he will be a dedicated servant to our western way of life, where we love to hunt, to fish, to hike on our public lands. I have confidence in this because I know he loves this way of life as well.

I am not the only one who has this confidence. Listen to this list of support from groups across our country that support his appointment: the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; Ducks Unlimited; the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Boone and Crockett Club, and others that many Montanans are members of, including the Mule Deer Foundation, the NRA, and the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

While the U.S. Senate confirmed Ryan Zinke as Secretary of the Interior, he became the first Montanan, my friend Ryan Zinke, to serve on the President's Cabinet since our statehood in 1889. It sent a message that the Department of the Interior would have our Montana values and our western values, and the confirmation of David Bernhardt as Deputy Secretary would make good on that promise.

While Montanans and westerners highly value access to our public lands and wildlife, Montanans are also pleading—pleading—for our land management agencies to be better partners, to work alongside our States, and to work alongside our landowners.

Secretary Zinke needs a right-hand man to make sure we uphold our commitment to Indian Nations. Secretary Zinke promised to rebuild trust in our Federal land and wildlife management agencies and strengthen the government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes. He needs a deputy in place who can help implement this vision to restore trust and balance to the Department of the Interior for Montanans.

My colleagues, it is time Secretary Zinke has a Deputy we can all count on, and I look forward to casting my vote for David Bernhardt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bernhardt nomination?

Mr. SASSE. 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 clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

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

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 166 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Barrasso	Flake	Murkowski
Bennet	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cochran	Heller	Rounds
Collins	Hoeven	Rubio
Corker	Inhofe	Sasse
Cornyn	Isakson	Scott
Cotton	Johnson	Shelby
Crapo	Kennedy	Strange
Cruz	King	Sullivan
Daines	Lankford	Thune
Donnelly	Lee	Tillis
Enzi	Manchin	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—4

Alexander	McCain
Capito	Toomey

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Bernhardt nomination the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 175, H.R. 2810.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 175, H.R. 2810, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MONTANA WILDFIRES

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as I speak, wildfires are blazing across Montana. In fact, as of this moment, we have 21 active fires, with just about 300,000 acres burned, which has turned our big sky into gray smoke. In fact, the Lodgepole fire in Eastern Montana alone has burned over 250,000 acres, and there are 300-plus heroes bravely working to tame those growing flames.

I was on the phone a couple of times with our county commissioner from Garfield County, and we talked about how to get more resources for these devastating fires. I just got word an hour ago that the Sunrise fire on the western side of our State, near Superior, MT, was just elevated in the last couple of hours as the No. 2 national priority fire in the Nation.

Montana is hot, Montana is dry, and there is a long way to go yet in this fire season. The status quo is simply unacceptable. With these fires blazing and the ground cracking beneath us, we are reminded of how fragile the way of life in Montana is.

Our No. 1 economic driver in Montana is agriculture. Montana ag supports our economy in seasons of plenty, as well as in seasons of drought, including physical drought and unseasonable rains. We have seen both in Montana, and farmers and ranchers have risen to the occasion each time. As they have supported us, we must support them.

The historic drought conditions in Eastern Montana warrant relief from regulations that limit the producers' abilities to use our land in the best ways possible. I was pleased by the decision of Secretary Perdue and the USDA to allow impacted producers to best use the Conservation Reserve Program acreage for grazing, but I believe Montana producers are not able to sleep at night for fear of losing their family farms. They deserve more support from those who benefit from their legacy of hard work.

I have held and will continue to hold USDA's feet to the fire, urging additional emergency relief for farmers and

ranchers. I have been engaging with Montana farmers and ranchers. Most recently, I spoke with officials; I was literally on the phone last night with officials from Garfield County, talking with folks on the ground as to what the lack of rain has meant for them.

I understand the severity of drought and the risk of wildfires. Let me tell you, wildfires are all too common for those of us who live in Montana. Hundreds of fires burn through Montana's forests every year, with countless firefighters fighting to protect lives and property. Year after year, I will come down here, and you will hear me speak on the floor; you will hear me in committees; you will hear me back home, talking about the fact that these fires are ready to ignite at any moment. You can see the unmanaged forests we have in Montana are literally just waiting for a massive wildfire. With nearly 300,000 acres burned—and we aren't even in August yet; it is still July—it is a big deal for a State known for its wide open landscapes.

We need forest management reform urgently. It is a topic always on the forefront of my mind and on the forefront of Montanans and those of us out West, but it is on the back burner of the swamp here in Washington, DC, until, of course, we get to fire season; then we will talk about it.

We must reform the way we manage our national forests. We can use proven tactics to reduce the threat of wildfires, as well as to reduce the rate of spread and intensity of those fires when they occur. We need a wildfire funding fix because we can't just keep hoping the Congress will pay back the Forest Service at the end of every season. It is not the way a family budgets, and the Forest Service shouldn't have to either.

We have nearly 5 million acres of national forest in Montana that have been identified as critically in need of restoration. We are talking about dying and dead timber, primarily because of beetle kill, and we can't even get in and manage the timber because we have these far-left groups that would challenge many of our timber sales in court. I have joined Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota in sponsoring legislation to encourage partnerships between the Forest Service and the State foresters to carry out these cross-boundary restoration projects.

A fire does not respect boundaries; it doesn't know where the State land ends or Federal land begins or where private land is or reservation lands are. We need to work better as neighbors along the fence line to reduce fuels and wildfire hazards across the country. These partnerships and projects will make fighting these wildfires safer for firefighters and allow them to return home safely to their families.

At this time of year, we recognize our firefighters, in particular, as some of the bravest men and women out there. The courage with which they run

toward danger—I tell you, if you have never seen a wildfire burning out west, it is an incredibly terrifying sight to see huge plumes of flames that reach up to 30,000 feet in the atmosphere. They are ominous. These brave men and women run toward danger to protect our lives and our homes.

HONORING TRENTON JOHNSON

Mr. President, let me close by recognizing a young man who lost his life in Montana just this past week. His name was Trenton Johnson. Trenton Johnson was such a man—one of those brave heroes. It is with a heavy heart that I offer prayers of strength and peace to the family and friends of Trenton Johnson, who died fighting a fire just last Wednesday near Seeley Lake in the northwest corner of Montana.

Trenton will be remembered for his bravery, and I pray that his family and friends find solace and encouragement in the memories of his vibrant but way too short life. He was just 19 years old.

As we pray for rain in Montana, we also pray for the safety and protection of all of our firefighters who, as we speak at this very moment, are still battling blazes all across our State and across the Western United States.

Mr. President, as I said, it is with a heavy heart that I offer prayers of strength and peace to the family and friends of Trenton Johnson. This brave Montanan died fighting a fire last Wednesday near Seeley Lake in the northwest corner of our State. Over this past weekend, in his hometown of Missoula, Trenton's loss was mourned by his family and friends, his fire crew, and many of his fellow Montanans. This 19-year-old was celebrated by many as a successful high school leader and athlete, a student at Montana State University, and a fire crew member in his first season battling forest fires. The tragedy of his passing was felt across the State.

The inherent danger firefighters face with bravery when they defend the lives and livelihoods of a community from the path of an unpredictable fire is awe inspiring. In Montana, the annual efforts of firefighters at every turn is essential to our collective safety. The men and women who make up these fire crews are a combination of expertise, courage, and grit.

I pray that Trenton's family and friends find solace and encouragement in the memories of his vibrant life, and I pray for the safety of all firefighters still battling blazes across Big Sky Country.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

HEALTHCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am here this evening to stand with the patients and families and communities nationwide to make sure they have a voice to continue speaking out against TrumpCare and to urge our Republican colleagues to stand with their constituents and join Democrats in rejecting this mean bill.

Before I go any further, I want to talk about an incredible group of families I met with recently who are making their voices heard against TrumpCare. These are parents with kids who are battling serious and complex medical conditions. These families have spent the majority of their summer here in Washington, DC, sharing their stories about what having healthcare means to them.

The little lobbyists, young kids 3 years old, 5 years old, should be at home in their neighborhoods like other kids, but, instead, they are here fighting for their own healthcare and their lives.

I held a press conference with these families here in the Capitol, where their parents shared stories about what TrumpCare would mean for them and their families. They spoke about their worries and their fears for the future.

One story was that of Elena Hung and her daughter Xiomara. Xiomara is 3 years old. She will be starting school this fall. You can tell she is one of those kids with incredible energy, who just lights up a room. But Xiomara was born with complications in her lungs, heart, and kidneys. She needs a tracheostomy, a feeding tube, and a ventilator just to stay alive.

Elena has told me what it has meant for her and her family to have healthcare these last couple of years. Elena and her husband both have professional degrees, good-paying jobs, and savings in the bank. They have done everything right, as Elena put it, and played by the rules, but nothing prepared them for dealing with the expensive care Xiomara would need. The hospitalizations, multiple surgeries, and medical equipment have all added up to cost more than \$3 million.

Elena talked about the uncertainty that TrumpCare has caused her family. Because of TrumpCare, she said that they are terrified about lifetime caps coming back and about losing their home or going bankrupt. If they lose their healthcare, Xiomara's 10 pre-existing conditions may make her uninsurable. This is so wrong. The Hung family should be able to focus on Xiomara, the care she needs, and getting the right specialists and therapies to advance her treatment.

The Morrison family, whom I also met with, shouldn't have to worry about their son Timmy getting the care he needs.

Xiomara and Timmy and all the other little lobbyists deserve to be kids, live at home, to go to school, grow up, and just live. That was Elena's message to our Republican colleagues, and I couldn't agree with her more.

I have seen my share of contentious legislation during my time in the Senate. I have seen quite a few Democratic bills that Republicans couldn't stand. I saw Republican bills that Democrats would never vote for. I understand that some of my colleagues may disagree with certain parts of the Affordable

Care Act. But what I can't understand is why anyone would ignore real life stories of their own constituents whose lives have changed and even been saved by this law. For one, that is not how you have a serious policy debate—ignoring your constituents and facts and fudging the numbers. More importantly, that is not what we were sent here to do by the people we represent. They rightly expect and deserve better.

What we have seen for the last 7 years—and since the Republican leadership began their efforts to repeal the ACA—has been truly unprecedented. In January of this year, the Republican leadership kicked Democrats out of the process entirely under reconciliation. Since then they have done everything possible to prevent not just Democrats but anyone other than their own party to be involved in that process—no hearings, no scrutiny, no public input, no expert testimony. When they finally released the TrumpCare bill after months of negotiating in secret in a room of 13 men, it was no surprise that it was immediately rejected by people across the country because it was clear that their bill isn't actually about healthcare—far from it. Their bill is about giving a massive gift to the wealthy and already well-connected on the backs of children and working families and people with disabilities and the sick and elderly.

So Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and millions of people have stood up and said no to this awful bill, no to increasing costs to families and seniors, no to putting insurance companies back in charge, no to kicking tens of millions of people off their health insurance, no to attacking women's health and rights. In fact, one study came out showing it was the least popular bill in three decades.

I guess it is no surprise that my Republican colleagues didn't want to defend this bill, but here is what is frankly appalling: What did Republican leaders do in the face of large-scale, popular rejection of the bill? What did Republican leaders do after Members of their own party said that they couldn't vote for it without massive changes to help more people? They made the bill worse. They did nothing to address the concerns that even many Republicans—Governors, Senators, and so many others—had about the massive cuts to Medicaid that would be devastating to patients and to our States. They did nothing to truly address the defunding of Planned Parenthood and cutting off access to care for millions of women. They included an opioid fund so insignificant that a Republican Governor said it would be like “spitting in the ocean.”

When it comes to affordability and putting insurance companies back in charge, Republican leaders not only didn't fix that problem, they made it a whole lot worse. They caved to the most extreme Members of their caucus by including the Cruz-Lee provision. Now with every sweetener, every

tweak, they have not only made the bill worse, they have made it unworkable, and even in violation of the Senate reconciliation process.

Now, as soon as tomorrow, the Republican leadership is saying that they are going to move forward with either a vote on their failed TrumpCare bill, a vote to repeal the ACA entirely—with no plan to help families who would be devastated—or maybe a vote on the disastrous House version of the TrumpCare bill. Nobody knows, especially our Republican colleagues.

It is like Leader MCCONNELL is setting up Senate Republicans to play “choose your own adventure” with our families' healthcare. Even he does not know for sure where this will end, but he is clearly willing to do whatever it takes to get to yes, and so is President Trump. He is doing what he does—tweeting threats, stirring up his extreme base, sending Vice President PENCE to twist arms to try to convince a few more Republicans to stay quiet about their very legitimate concerns. Yet, as we head toward a possible vote tomorrow, I hope my Republican colleagues—especially those who have already indicated that they oppose this bill and process—will demand better for their own constituents.

I am going to keep saying this until it sinks in, which is that Democrats are ready, as we always have been, to work with Republicans to improve our healthcare system and make healthcare more affordable, more accessible, of higher quality, and to clean up the mess that has now been made with their efforts to sabotage the ACA in order to jam this TrumpCare bill through.

Let's be clear. As President Trump and Republicans have tried to pass TrumpCare legislatively, they have also implemented it by undermining our current healthcare system. Unless they get serious and get to work with Democrats, families are going to face higher premiums in 2018, and they will have fewer choices—all because of partisan political tactics.

This fight is on the razor's edge, and Democrats are going to keep doing everything we can to stop it. We just need a few Republicans to join us, to stand on the side of patients and families and say no to TrumpCare. Democrats will do everything we can to persuade more Republicans to join us, but what has made the difference thus far, what has truly mattered, is when Republicans have heard from their own constituents.

I am here tonight to strongly urge people across the country to ramp up the pressure in these last few hours. Keep calling and tweeting. Double down on your advocacy, and make your voices heard. Again, we have less than 24 hours until the Republican leadership plans to hold a vote.

Republican Senators, we also need to hear from you. Now is the time to stand up, do the right thing, and oppose TrumpCare once and for all.

I know a number of our colleagues are going to be coming to the floor tonight to talk about this, and they will be raising their voices and their concerns. I urge all Senators to stand with us tomorrow and vote no.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

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. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am truly dismayed by what we have seen in this Chamber over the last couple of months with respect to the Senate TrumpCare bill.

We are expecting to take a vote tomorrow on the motion to proceed, but at this point, our Republican colleagues have not shared with us exactly what we are proceeding to. We do not know if our Republican colleagues will attempt to replace the ACA with their flawed TrumpCare bill or if they will just vote to repeal the ACA and immediately upend health insurance markets across the country. Not one of these options is acceptable, and I am skeptical that my colleagues will be able to come up with a better solution in the next 24 hours.

For an issue of this magnitude, we should be holding hearings, meetings, and discussions in the committees of jurisdiction, with experts from around the country, much like we did when we worked to pass the Affordable Care Act. In that way, we could have worked together across the aisle to develop ideas that would improve the system in place, not gut it.

There have long been misconceptions about how the Affordable Care Act came to be. For over a year, we held hearings, meetings, and roundtable discussions with Members from both parties and had a robust amendment process in our committees, both in the Senate Finance Committee and in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. I served on the HELP Committee at that time and went through numerous hearings, open discussions, and numerous amendments, and I listened to my colleagues. In fact, the HELP Committee's draft of the ACA included over 160 amendments that were offered by my Republican colleagues. It was truly a bipartisan effort at the committee level to try to at least discuss the critical issues that both sides had identified.

This stands in stark contrast to the bill our colleagues have written in secret this year. Even some Republican Senators were kept in the dark, excluded from the process. There were no opportunities for experts, doctors, patients, and others to weigh in and offer comments. As a result, they have written a bill that is bad for patients, bad

for healthcare providers, bad for States, and bad for the system as a whole.

My colleagues even rejected the chance to hear from States in public hearings about their healthcare systems in terms of what has worked well and what has not. There are examples of States that have done some very innovative things and some examples of States that have had difficulties. We always say that the States are the great incubators for new ideas. Yet the process that was adopted did not incorporate the views in both of the cases—those in which States have done remarkably well and, frankly, when they could have done much better.

We should look to the States to see how we can improve our healthcare system and let them be partners with us in this process. That is what we did in the consideration of the Affordable Care Act. In fact, some States had already worked to expand access to care before the ACA, most notably Massachusetts, with RomneyCare, and we looked carefully at those examples and tried to incorporate those successful ideas in a national model.

By contrast, across the country, Governors and Senators and State legislators—both Democrats and Republicans—are largely opposed to the Senate Republicans' TrumpCare bill because they know it would be a bad idea for their States. State and local officials have crossed party lines and joined together to get the word out about how bad this bill would be for Americans in all States and from all walks of life. My Republican colleagues must heed their advice and abandon this harmful approach.

It is no secret as to why my Republican colleagues have struggled to come up with the votes within their caucus for their repeal efforts. Their proposals are bad for my State of Rhode Island and bad for the country as a whole. In fact, many States with Republican legislatures and Republican Governors have done very well in incorporating the ACA and understand the impact this will have almost immediately on their healthcare systems.

While we do not know exactly what we will be voting on tomorrow, we have some guesses based on some of what Republicans have publicly shared over the last couple of weeks, and each proposal seems to be worse than the next.

First, my colleagues tried to vote on their TrumpCare bill, which would have provided massive tax giveaways to the very wealthiest Americans at the expense of hard-working Americans across the country. This bill would have decimated Medicaid, cutting State budgets and eliminating access to care for seniors, children, and people with disabilities. Fifty percent of the funds in my State go to seniors, and it is roughly equivalent across the country. Typically, it is through Medicaid for seniors who are in nursing homes. If they were to lose that funding, the States could not make it up.

I think every State in this country is struggling with its own fiscal issues—education, transportation and infrastructure—a host of issues. When this money is pulled out, they will not be able to replace it. They will make difficult decisions about cutting back eligibility so that, ironically, middle-class seniors will be the first to feel the brunt of these cuts. That is exactly one of the areas in which we are trying to improve our system, not only of healthcare but of government. Even after doing that, I think they will still come up short, and that is when they will go into the education funding formulas. There are many States across the country now that are already in crisis, and this will just add to the crisis.

None of these fixes, I don't think, will overcome the damage that would be inflicted by the bill. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office confirmed that last week when it released an updated score of the bill to reflect some of the changes that had been made. The CBO said that under this revised bill—the latest one that has been evaluated—22 million Americans would lose coverage, just like in the previous version of the bill. It said that 22 million Americans—a significant number of our neighbors—would lose their coverage. Many of them are working families, and many of them have children with special needs, and they need this coverage. They would be thrown out.

I was at a Lowe's store in Rhode Island when a young man came up to me—probably in his mid-thirties—and said: Please, Senator, you have to stop this bill. I have a son who has a serious problem.

I believe he told me it was MS.

He said: If, eventually, they remove the lifetime limits on healthcare insurance, as they are talking about, I will be done. I have employer healthcare insurance. I have a good job, and I have benefits, but if they put those lifetime limits back again, I will be bankrupt. My son will not have the care, or he will only get the care through some type of—something—some extraordinary method.

That is the reality. These are our neighbors.

Similarly, the CBO said that out-of-pocket costs would increase across the board and that care would be prohibitively expensive for the sickest and poorest amongst us. That is one of the great ironies here—that the sickest would be paying more and more and more.

The CBO was not misled by these so-called fixes that have come into the bill. In fact, we know that the reality would be even worse, I believe, than the CBO has predicted because it has not taken into account a provision that was added too late to be scored—a provision that would bifurcate insurance markets and separate the sick from the healthy, which would lead to a death spiral in the market that

would all but certainly collapse the market. They are plans that are not really insurance. They are kind of—I don't know what they are. In fact, the CBO could not even call them insurance. But that would qualify as a plan. The healthiest, youngest people would buy it because it would be cheap, and they would have some kind of sense of protection, driving the sickest and older people into other plans, which would increase their costs and, in fact, create this bifurcated system in which either young, healthy people would not have insurance or they would have this insurance, which would not be insurance when they need it. Then you would have more and more people with chronic conditions and illnesses and just the accumulated health issues of age flocking to what is left and bringing down that system. It would be a death spiral.

If that were not bad enough, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided that the backup plan would be to vote on a bill to repeal the ACA in its entirety on a 2-year delay. They claim that it will give them an opportunity to work out a replacement plan. This is not sound policy. First, they have had more than 7 years to come up with a replacement but have not had any success. At this moment, there is this ad hoc "What do we put in? What do we take out?" The 7 years of supposed study and analysis has produced, apparently, nothing, and they have spent all of this year behind closed doors, coming up with something they think will work, but they have come up with the same results—the same CBO scores, basically. The real end game is not to repeal and replace; it just seems to be to repeal.

My other concern is that even if this repeal is delayed by 2 years, markets will not wait 2 years to react and insurance companies will not wait 2 years to react. They have to provide for decades in terms of actuarial values, in terms of their shareholders. Hospitals will not wait 2 years. They will see this coming to an end. They will start scaling back their programs, their outreach, all of the things they do, and the effects will be imminent.

This effort would leave 17 million more Americans uninsured next year and 32 million more Americans uninsured over the next decade. That is the repeal-and-wait approach. And once again the CBO said this bill will lead to skyrocketing healthcare costs, for the reasons that I suggest: markets will not wait. Markets will move very quickly once they know this is gone. And since in the last 7 years we couldn't get a replacement, the idea that we are getting it in 2 more years is something they won't believe, and it will be immediate and devastating—again, another death spiral for the marketplace. But here we are on the precipice of voting on whether to upend our entire healthcare system so that, in some respects, this President can claim a victory over former President

Obama—not because it is sound healthcare policy but just because of that very complicated relationship. And it is not the right thing to do.

It is long past time for us to leave the campaign rhetoric behind, to get together in a bipartisan fashion, and to work out ways to improve our healthcare system. That is what we attempted to do with the ACA. We sat in meeting after meeting, hearing after hearing—the longest markup, I believe, in the HELP Committee—accepting and voting on Republican amendments and Democratic amendments. That is how we get things done—I hope that is how we get things done.

Healthcare makes up one-sixth of our economy. And when you walk into an ER or a doctor's office, they don't ask you whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, but whether you have insurance. That is the only question they ask: How are you paying for this? If you don't have insurance, then you are in an awfully difficult position, and we know that.

Everybody is going to use the healthcare system in their life. This is not an optional thing. This is not something that is designed for a special group of people. We all will use the healthcare system. And if you can't access it because you have no money or no insurance, maybe you will find a way through the emergency room or some other way, but it won't be the best healthcare and it won't be the most efficient and economical for our country.

In fact, one of the ironies of our healthcare system before the ACA is that we could have large portions of our population with no health insurance, not getting treatment for illnesses that could have been readily fixed while they were in their forties and fifties, and then suddenly at 65, with Medicare, which we all support, they can get treatment they need.

I had an ophthalmologist in my office one day, and they kind of looked around and commented: Well, you are right, because I see people right now coming into Medicare—65, 66 years old—because they had early onset diabetes, which could have been treated by a modest drug regime in their forties and fifties. They are now so sick that they have to have expensive surgery.

That is not effective for the country. With the Affordable Care Act, we were putting our whole Nation, we hoped—from young people, children, all the way through—on a path to good healthcare, so that by the time they get to Medicare, those issues would not be so important.

So I would urge my colleagues to abandon this effort, to begin tomorrow not with a vote on their proposal, but sitting down with both sides, doing the same process that we did. Again, one of the tests of life is, do you allow your colleagues and friends to do what you did, or do you insist they do something else? We are just asking them to do the

same thing we did with the Affordable Care Act over many months of hearings and debate, and then at the end there was a vote.

We are going to see this for the first time tomorrow—the details. We still don't know what is going to be in it. There will be a vote, but it won't be an informed vote. It won't be a result of careful deliberation. It won't be a result of a bipartisan effort. It won't be a result of all the equity holders, including doctors, patients, public health officials, and governors, coming together and saying: We can do this better. That, to me, is a shame.

With that, I yield the floor.

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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO KIMBERLY BRANDT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I speak today to bid farewell to Kimberly Brandt. Kim has worked for the Senate Finance Committee as the chief oversight counsel for more than 6 years. Kim came to the Finance Committee after years of public service, and she leaves it to again answer the call to public service. While we are sorry to see her leave, I want to take a minute to note the important contributions she has made while on the Finance Committee.

She has coordinated oversight on virtually every conceivable topic within the ambit of the committee's jurisdiction. That work has included IRS, Medicaid and Medicare, Social Security, and trade compliance oversight.

While her work has been both bipartisan and exceptional, Kim is probably equally known to everyone here as the thoughtful baker.

Always cognizant of the little things, Kim made it her life's mission in the Senate to ensure every staffer and Senator had a cookie in their hand when they needed it most. Her mantra that there are only a few things in life a good cookie can't improve has spread like fresh flowers in a spring garden.

It is no wonder the first comment most of my staffers have made is "who will make us cookies?" after hearing that Kim is leaving. The most unfortunate thing, however, is that I am not sure there is anyone who can fill those shoes. Kim's cookies are perhaps the best I have ever had during my tenure in the Senate. Only my wife's lemon bars can compare, and I feel compelled to say that just to ensure I don't end up on the couch tonight.

I mean, my goodness, just talking about Kim's cookies is making me hun-

gry. You just can't beat her peanut butter and chocolate chip cookies.

While Kim's attention to these little things have brought her considerable fame while she has worked here, there is little doubt in my mind that Kim's legacy extends far beyond her cuisine.

As just one example, Kim worked tirelessly through one of the largest investigations of the IRS that we have seen in recent memory. Kim's leadership ensured that our committee's analysis was both grounded in fact and integrity, and though it took several dozen months to complete, I don't believe there is anyone in this body that would dispute that report's precision, thoughtfulness, and earnestness.

She also has become known as the person who tackles complicated issues involving the Medicare and Medicaid Programs and develops creative, thoughtful policy solutions. That has been evident in her recent work on Medicaid over the past year and in her efforts to come up with solutions to the Medicare audit and appeals backlog, as well as the complicated and burdensome Stark rule. In each of these instances, Kim has engaged the impacted stakeholders and the relevant policy folks and come up with legislative ideas that are bipartisan. This is no small task.

It is this type of work ethic and reputable end product that makes Kim the type of person you hate to see leave, but you quietly rejoice that they are going to be the one helping steer the ship in the administration.

Truly, Kim's appointment as Principal Deputy Administrator for Operations at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, reflects this administration's desire to have quality individuals helping lead an agency facing daunting challenges. I don't think anyone would contend with the need for strong and informed leadership there. I can think of no one better suited for the position. I would like to take a few minutes to briefly reflect on Kim's experience to explain why I believe that to be true.

Before Kim came to the Finance Committee, she worked as senior counsel at Alston & Bird here in Washington, DC, advising clients on healthcare compliance and fraud and abuse issues. Prior to her work at Alston & Bird, Kim served 7 years as the director of the Medicare Program Integrity Group at CMS. For 5 years before that, Kim worked at the HHS Office of Inspector General as special counsel and director of external affairs and as a senior counsel negotiating False Claims Act settlements and drafting and monitoring corporate integrity agreements.

Just that work experience, in two administrations and a respected law firm, should be enough to qualify Kim for this important role, but I am not done. Kim also worked on authoring OIG's compliance guidance for individual and small group physician practices.

She received her J.D. with a concentration in health law from the

DePaul School of Law, an M.A. in legislative affairs and health policy from George Washington University, and her B.A. from Valparaiso University.

Kim has long been recognized nationally as an expert in healthcare compliance and fraud and abuse issues, but in 2016, that recognition culminated in her receiving the Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Professional of the Year award from the Society for Corporate Compliance and Ethics and the Health Care Compliance Association.

While I am sure to speak for all of my staff and fellow Senators when I say that we will miss Kim, I think I can also say, with confidence, that we have the greatest faith in Kim. Yes, we will probably have strikes due to the absence of Kim's baked goods, and yes, our oversight and Medicaid efforts will not be the same without Kim, but this is important work we are all engaged in, and it would be wrong to bar our great country from the service of this wonderful and highly talented friend of mine.

Before I conclude, though, I would like to harken back to one of my favorite stories about Kim.

It was in the wake of the Lois Lerner debacle. Kim and her team spent more than a dozen months hashing out a highly detailed and important investigation that revealed quite a bit more than what we were initially expecting. In the end, Kim and her team interviewed more than 32 current and former IRS and Treasury employees and reviewed nearly 1.5 million pages of documents. The fruit of their labor was a staggering and included a four-part treatise on the IRS's processing of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) applications for tax-exempt status. There were thousands of pages of appendices and hundreds of pages of report text.

Before the report was finalized, however, I wanted to be sure I had read every word. Aside from the hefty amount of reading, it also created problems because the text included confidential taxpayer information and only those with clearance could enter my office while I reviewed the text. Kim's humor, wit, and zealous optimism kept me alert and motivated throughout the investigation of those hundreds of pages, and while I have always cherished Kim's famous cookies, they never tasted better than they did then.

Now, I had always appreciated Kim, but in this instance, her commitment to detail and integrity really struck me. To ensure that the product coming out of the committee was a complete and accurate one, she went back to the IRS to confirm that the committee had all relevant documents. Only then did we discover the thousands of pages of missing emails which would become a critical part of the investigation. If it weren't for Kim's hard work and intellectual rigor, we would have never discovered this fact, and throughout the investigation, which was often heated and impassioned on both sides of the

aisle, Kim was fair, honest, and worked hard to keep the inquiry bipartisan, something no other committee in Congress could do.

This and many other incredible memories of Kim will be with me forever, and words can't quite say how truly grateful I am to have Kim help me make all those memories these past several years.

Our work in the Nation's Capital can get ugly sometimes. It can be partisan. We often wonder whether we can still get good people to go into public service, but then we are reminded that there are good people in this town who repeatedly answer the call to public service. Kim Brandt is one of these—and she is one of the best. The Finance Committee, the Senate, CMS, and, in honesty, the United States of America is lucky to have her in these roles, and we thank her for her hard work.

I am going to miss you, Kim.

I want to wish Kim, her beloved pup Sherlock, and her family all of the best. I feel no need to hesitate when I say that we are all proud of you and will miss you dearly.

Thank you.

CYSTINURIA AWARENESS DAY

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize June 24 as Cystinuria Awareness Day and to offer my support to the International Cystinuria Foundation as the organization continues its excellent work promoting knowledge of this disease within the research and medical communities, as well as providing resources for those affected by cystinuria.

Cystinuria is an inherited disease characterized by high concentrations of the amino acid cysteine in the urine, leading to the formation of cysteine stones in the kidneys and urinary tract. It is a rare disease that affects roughly 1 in every 7,000 people, including an estimated 130 Granite Staters. Cystinuria is a painful and often debilitating condition. Those who suffer from it can experience kidney stones as frequently as daily, causing many to lose weeks of work each year. Many sufferers use prescription painkillers to cope with the disease, and tragically, some develop substance use disorders.

Cystinuria does not discriminate, affecting people of all genders, races, ethnicities, and ages. There is not yet a cure, and the disease is frequently misdiagnosed. I sincerely hope that this day of awareness will help in advancing research into the causes of the disease as well as possible therapies and cures. Because cystinuria is a rare disease, there is an acute need for more aggressive research, including at the National Institutes of Health. In addition to supporting important funding for research, we can also do our part by also advocating for awareness for the disease. Fortunately, the Affordable Care Act protects those with cystinuria and other preexisting conditions from discrimination by health insurance companies.

Cystinuria Awareness Day is a valuable opportunity for Americans to learn about this condition and offer support to those living with it. I am grateful to the International Cystinuria Foundation for its commitment to raising awareness of the disease, advocating for research, and providing support for those suffering from cystinuria.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 7:26 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3298. An act to authorize the Capitol Police Board to make payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund to employees of the United States Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3298. An act to authorize the Capitol Police Board to make payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund to employees of the United States Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 595. A bill to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection with additional flexibility to expedite the hiring process for applicants for law enforcement positions, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-133).

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments:

S. 760. A bill to expand the Government's use and administration of data to facilitate transparency, effective governance, and innovation, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-134).

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 756. A bill to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-135).

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1096. A bill to amend and enhance certain maritime programs of the Department of Transportation, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-136).

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. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SHELBY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mrs. ERNST):

S. 1616. A bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole, in recognition for his service to the nation as a soldier, legislator, and statesman; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 1617. A bill to designate the checkpoint of the United States Border Patrol located on United States Highway 77 North in Sarita, Texas, as the "Javier Vega, Jr. Border Patrol Checkpoint"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 1618. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for purposes of the tax on private foundation excess business holdings to treat as outstanding any employee-owned stock purchased by a business enterprise pursuant to certain employee stock ownership retirement plans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 1619. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to extend the interest rate limitation on debt entered into during military service to debt incurred during military service to consolidate or refinance student loans incurred before military service; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 1620. A bill to enhance the security of Taiwan and bolster its participation in the international community, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1621. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a methodology for the collection by the Commission of information about commercial mobile service and commercial mobile data service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 1622. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to beach monitoring, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 1623. A bill to increase the maximum penalty for unfair and deceptive practices relating to advertising of the costs of air transportation; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 229. A resolution recognizing the contributions of the Montagnard indigenous

tribespeople of the Central Highlands of Vietnam to the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War, and condemning the ongoing violation of human rights by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. WARNER, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. Res. 230. A resolution designating the week of September 16 through September 23, 2017, as "National Estuaries Week"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 59

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 59, a bill to provide that silencers be treated the same as long guns.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to provide for non-preemption of measures by State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 298, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 372

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 372, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to ensure that merchandise arriving through the mail shall be subject to review by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and to require the provision of advance electronic information on shipments of mail to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and for other purposes.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 474

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cospon-

sors of S. 474, a bill to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 642

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 642, a bill to restore the integrity of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 693

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 693, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs, including physician assistant education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

S. 860

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 860, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 860, *supra*.

S. 980

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 980, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for payments for certain rural health clinic and Federally qualified health center services furnished to hospice patients under the Medicare program.

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1002, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1014

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Louisiana

(Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1014, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to eligible organizations to provide service dogs to veterans with severe post-traumatic stress disorder, and for other purposes.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1024, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1182

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 1182, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

S. 1311

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1311, a bill to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States.

S. 1343

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1343, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 1353

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1353, a bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters to vote in elections for Federal offices, and for other purposes.

S. 1453

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1453, a bill to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to designate certain substance use disorder treatment facilities as eligible for National Health Service Corps service.

S. 1520

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1520, a bill to expand recreational fishing opportunities through enhanced marine fishery conservation and management, and for other purposes.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr.

CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, and for other purposes.

S. 1564

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1564, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit legally married same-sex couples to amend their filing status for returns outside the 3-year limitation.

S. 1595

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1595, a bill to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes.

S. 1598

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1598, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1615

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1615, a bill to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain individuals who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 17

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 17, a joint resolution approving the discontinuation of the process for consideration and automatic implementation of the annual proposal of the Independent Medicare Advisory Board under section 1899A of the Social Security Act.

S.J. RES. 47

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 47, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Arbitration Agreements".

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 75

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas

(Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 75, a resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals in the world.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 1617. A bill to designate the checkpoint of the United States Border Patrol located on United States Highway 77 North in Sarita, Texas, as the "Javier Vega, Jr. Border Patrol Checkpoint"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1617

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 "Javier Vega, Jr. Memorial Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) A native of La Feria, Texas, Border Patrol Agent Javier Vega, Jr. served his country first a member of the United States Marines Corps and then proudly as a border patrol agent in the canine division with his dog, Goldie.

(2) Agent Vega was assigned to the Kingsville, Texas Border Patrol Station as a canine handler and worked primarily at the Sarita Border Patrol Checkpoint.

(3) On August 3, 2014, Agent Vega was on a fishing trip with his family near Raymondville, Texas, when 2 criminal aliens attempted to rob and attack them.

(4) Agent Vega was shot and killed while attempting to subdue the assailants and protecting his family.

(5) Agent Vega is survived by his wife, parents, 3 sons, brother, sister-in-law, niece, and dog, Goldie.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.

The checkpoint of the United States Border Patrol located on United States Highway 77 North in Sarita, Texas, shall be known and designated as the "Javier Vega, Jr. Border Patrol Checkpoint".

SEC. 4. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the checkpoint described in section 3 shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Javier Vega, Jr. Border Patrol Checkpoint".

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 1619. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to extend the interest rate limitation on debt entered into during military service to debt incurred during military service to consolidate or refinance student loans incurred before military

service; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1619

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

SECTION 1. INTEREST RATE LIMITATION ON DEBT ENTERED INTO DURING MILITARY SERVICE TO CONSOLIDATE OR REFINANCE STUDENT LOANS INCURRED BEFORE MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 207 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 527) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “ON DEBT INCURRED BEFORE SERVICE” after “LIMITATION TO 6 PERCENT”;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) LIMITATION TO 6 PERCENT ON DEBT INCURRED DURING SERVICE TO CONSOLIDATE OR REFINANCE STUDENT LOANS INCURRED BEFORE SERVICE.—An obligation or liability bearing interest at a rate in excess of 6 percent per year that is incurred by a servicemember, or the servicemember and the servicemember's spouse jointly, during military service to consolidate or refinance one or more student loans incurred by the servicemember before such military service shall not bear an interest at a rate in excess of 6 percent during the period of military service.”;

(4) in paragraph (3), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this subsection, by inserting “or (2)” after “paragraph (1)”;

(5) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated, by striking “paragraph (2)” and inserting “paragraph (3)”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF LIMITATION.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “the interest rate limitation in subsection (a)” and inserting “an interest rate limitation in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking “EFFECTIVE AS OF DATE OF ORDER TO ACTIVE DUTY” and inserting “EFFECTIVE DATE”;

(B) by inserting before the period at the end the following: “in the case of an obligation or liability covered by subsection (a)(1), or as of the date the servicemember (or servicemember and spouse jointly) incurs the obligation or liability concerned under subsection (a)(2)”.

(c) STUDENT LOAN DEFINED.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) STUDENT LOAN.—The term ‘student loan’ means the following:

“(A) A Federal student loan made, insured, or guaranteed under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).

“(B) A private student loan as that term is defined section 140(a) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650(a)).”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 229—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MONTAGNARD INDIGENOUS TRIBESPEOPLE OF THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM TO THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, AND CONDEMNING THE ONGOING VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

S. RES. 229

Whereas the Montagnards are an indigenous tribespeople living in Vietnam's Central Highlands region;

Whereas the Montagnards were driven into the mountains by invading Vietnamese and Cambodians in the 9th century;

Whereas French Roman Catholic missionaries converted many of the Montagnards in the 19th century and American Protestant missionaries subsequently converted many to various Protestant sects;

Whereas, during the 1960s, the United States Mission in Saigon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and United States Army Special Forces, also known as the Green Berets, trained the Montagnards in unconventional warfare;

Whereas an estimated 61,000 Montagnards, out of an estimated population of 1,000,000, fought alongside the United States and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces against the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong;

Whereas the CIA, United States Special Forces, and the Montagnards cooperated on the Village Defense Program, a forerunner to the War's Strategic Hamlet Program, and an estimated 43,000 Montagnards were organized into Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDGs) to provide protection for the areas around the CIDGs' operational bases;

Whereas, at its peak, the CIDGs had approximately 50 operational bases, with each base containing a contingent of two United States Army officers and ten enlisted men, and an ARVN unit of the same size, and each base trained 200 to 700 Montagnards or “strikers”;

Whereas another 18,000 Montagnards were reportedly enlisted into mobile strike forces and various historical accounts describe a strong bond between the United States Special Forces and the Montagnards, in contrast to Vietnamese Special Forces and ARVN troops;

Whereas the lives of thousands of members of the United States Armed Forces were saved as a result of the heroic actions of the Montagnards, who fought loyally and bravely alongside United States Special Forces in the Vietnam War;

Whereas, after the fall of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, thousands of Montagnards fled across the border into Cambodia to escape persecution;

Whereas the Government of the reunified Vietnamese nation, renamed the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, deeply distrusted the Montagnards who had sided with the United States and ARVN forces, and subjected them to imprisonment and various forms of discrimination and oppression after the Vietnam War ended;

Whereas, after the Vietnam War, the United States Government resettled large

numbers of Montagnards in several States and an estimated several thousand Montagnards currently reside in North Carolina, which is the largest population of Montagnards residing outside of Vietnam;

Whereas the Socialist Republic of Vietnam currently remains a one-party state, ruled and controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which continues to restrict freedom of religion, movement, land and property rights, and political expression;

Whereas some Montagnard-Americans have shared their personal stories about Vietnamese authorities either preventing them from visiting Vietnam or subjecting them to interrogation upon re-entering the country on visits;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices documents the Government of Vietnam's claim that Montagnards fleeing to Cambodia and Thailand are illegal migrants in pursuit of economic opportunities, and human rights groups assess that the Government has pressured Cambodian and Thai authorities to refuse Montagnards refugee or temporary asylum-seeker status and repatriate them to Vietnam;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices states that, although Vietnamese law prohibits discrimination against ethnic minorities and despite Vietnam's significant economic growth, the economic gap between many ethnic minority communities and ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh) communities persisted as a result of longstanding and persistent discrimination;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices further states that ethnic minority populations in Vietnam also experienced significant health challenges as maternal and child mortality rates were significantly higher in ethnic minority areas, in comparison with urban and coastal areas;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in its 2016 Annual Report states that “Montagnards, many of whom are Protestant, face numerous restrictions” such as being prevented from holding religious ceremonies, harassed or punished, and “many are summoned to meet with local authorities and pressured to cease practicing their ‘poisonous’ faith”;

Whereas Montagnards have stated that this kind of ongoing social and religious persecution drove them to flee to Cambodia;

Whereas USCIRF reports that, since October 2014, “up to 300 Montagnards have fled Vietnam to Cambodia, many because of religious persecution” but “only 13 have been granted refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as countless others are waiting for Cambodia to process their asylum claims, and dozens have been returned to Vietnam, often at great risk of reprisals”;

Whereas USCIRF recommends that Vietnam be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) as a means to facilitating reforms: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions of the Montagnards who fought loyally and bravely with United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and who continue to suffer persecution in Vietnam as a result of this relationship;

(2) condemns ongoing actions by the Government of Vietnam to suppress basic human rights and civil liberties of its citizens;

(3) calls on the Government of Vietnam to allow human rights groups access to all regions of the country and to end restrictions of basic human rights, including the right for Montagnards to practice their Christian

faith freely, the right to land and property, freedom of movement, the right to retain ethnic identity and culture, and access to an adequate standard of living;

(4) recognizes the importance of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and that, where determined to be eligible, Montagnards should be provided access to USRAP for resettlement in the United States and in other countries; and

(5) urges the President and Congress to develop policies at every level, including trade, military, and economic policy, that support Montagnards and other marginalized ethnic minority and indigenous populations in Vietnam that reflect United States interests and commitment to upholding human rights and democracy abroad.

SENATE RESOLUTION 230—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 16 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 23, 2017, AS “NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK”

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. WARNER, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 230

Whereas the estuary regions of the United States constitute a significant share of the economy of the United States, with as much as 43 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States generated in shore adjacent counties;

Whereas the population of shore adjacent counties in the United States increased by 39 percent from 1970 to 2010 and is projected to continue to increase;

Whereas not fewer than 2,100,000 jobs in the United States were supported by marine tourism and recreation in 2013;

Whereas the commercial and recreational fishing industries support over 1,600,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas, in 2015—

(1) commercial fish landings in the United States were valued at nearly \$5,300,000,000; and

(2) recreational anglers took nearly 61,000,000 saltwater fishing trips and spent \$28,700,000,000 on fishing trips and durable equipment;

Whereas estuaries provide vital habitats for countless species of fish and wildlife, including more than 68 percent of the commercial fish catch in the United States by value and 80 percent of the recreational fish catch in the United States by weight, as well as many species that are listed as threatened or endangered species;

Whereas estuaries provide critical ecosystem services that protect human health and public safety, including water filtration, flood control, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and the protection of coastal communities during hurricanes and storms;

Whereas the United States had already lost more than 50 percent of the wetlands that existed in the 13 Colonies by the 1980s;

Whereas some bays in the United States that were once filled with fish and oysters

have become dead zones filled with excess nutrients, chemical wastes, harmful algae, and marine debris;

Whereas changes in sea level can affect estuarine water quality and estuarine habitats;

Whereas the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.) provides that the policy of the United States is to preserve, protect, develop, and, if possible, restore or enhance the resources of the coastal zone of the United States, including estuaries, for current and future generations;

Whereas 27 coastal and Great Lakes States and territories of the United States operate or contain a National Estuary Program or a National Estuarine Research Reserve;

Whereas scientific study leads to a better understanding of the benefits of estuaries to human and ecological communities;

Whereas the Federal Government, State, local, and tribal governments, national and community organizations, and individuals work together to effectively manage the estuaries of the United States;

Whereas estuary restoration efforts restore natural infrastructure in local communities in a cost-effective manner, helping to create jobs and reestablish the natural functions of estuaries that yield countless benefits; and

Whereas the week of September 16 through September 23, 2017, is recognized as “National Estuaries Week” to increase awareness among all people of the United States, including Federal Government and State, local, and tribal government officials, about the importance of healthy estuaries and the need to protect and restore estuaries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 16 through September 23, 2017, as “National Estuaries Week”;:

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Estuaries Week;

(3) acknowledges the importance of estuaries to sustaining employment in the United States and the economic well-being and prosperity of the United States;

(4) recognizes that persistent threats undermine the health of the estuaries of the United States;

(5) applauds the work of national and community organizations and public partners that promote public awareness, understanding, protection, and restoration of estuaries;

(6) reaffirms the support of the Senate for estuaries, including the scientific study, preservation, protection, and restoration of estuaries; and

(7) expresses the intent of the Senate to continue working to understand, protect, and restore the estuaries of the United States.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dee Williams, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of today's session.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to my second-session summer interns Kasey Casort, Hannah McCue, Jesse Oney, Ronald Meehan, Dawson Verley, Evan Ipock, Samantha Warner, Kobe Rizk, Brian Dusek, Madeline Ko, Aimee Bushnell, and Fatos Redzepi for the remainder of their session in August.

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

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Tuesday, July 25; 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.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week—perhaps as early as tomorrow—Majority Leader McCONNELL, who just left the floor, will ask the Senate to vote on a bill we have not seen. That is right. We will be voting this week on a bill we haven't seen. I think it is a first. I am going to do a little research to see if this has ever happened before in the Senate, where Members of the Senate were brought together to vote on a bill that has not been made public or printed for us to review.

This isn't an inconsequential bill. This is a bill about the healthcare system of the United States of America. There is not a single American living in our Nation today who will not be affected by our vote this week because we are in the process of deciding whether we will change healthcare in America, health insurance in America, and there is not a single one of us who doesn't have a health insurance plan, either private or public, or not affected by the health insurance industry in healthcare across the United States. In fact, healthcare itself represents one-sixth of the American economy.

So we are being asked to vote on a bill this week which has not been printed and given to us and which will change healthcare for every single American and affect one-sixth of the American economy.

We do know that some of the previous provisions that have been brought before us on the Republican side have an impact—a negative impact—and in my State of Illinois, a very personal negative impact.

We know that their effort to repeal ObamaCare, which has been a political slogan that has been used for 6 or 7 years, ran into a wall when the American people said: Well, if you repeal it, what is left? What will be there? What will replace it?

At that point, the Republican effort disassembled. They didn't have an alternative. They spent the last 6 years

under ObamaCare—the Affordable Care Act—saying “No, repeal it” without spending the time to think about what would follow, what is next.

The Congressional Budget Office—this is an interesting thing—the Congressional Budget Office is a non-partisan agency that we turn to that evaluates our work. They take a look at the bills we write, and they take a look at the laws that will pass, and they say: Well, this is the impact it will have on the deficit, on future generations, on entitlement programs.

Sometimes the Congressional Budget Office is maddening. They take forever. I don't know what is going on over there, but what you think is a simple question can take weeks and sometimes longer to result in an analysis, and there are times when I just flat out disagree with their analysis.

Let me give an example. When we debated the Affordable Care Act, we said that one of the things we need to do is make sure there is plenty of preventive medicine. For example, we make sure under the Affordable Care Act that every senior gets a free annual physical. Our belief is, if you detect a problem a person has early enough, you might be able to lessen its impact or actually cure it. We said that to the Congressional Budget Office, and they replied to us: You cannot put a dollar value on preventive medicine.

Well, it is common sense; isn't it? If you find something early, it is more likely to be cured. It is cheaper. No, you can't put a dollar on it.

So the Congressional Budget Office sometimes can frustrate us, but we rely on them, and I would say, for the most part, they do give us good advice. I don't agree completely with them, but they give us good advice.

Do you know what they say about the Republican repeal plans that have been passed in the House of Representatives and the various versions that have been suggested? They believe those repeal efforts will take health insurance away from 22 million to 32 million Americans.

Think about that. We passed the Affordable Care Act because so many people in America had no health insurance, and we wanted to make sure they had it—for their own peace of mind, for their own good health, to make sure there was fairness in our system so sick people without health insurance who are cared for don't have their bills passed on to everybody else. Well, the Congressional Budget Office took a look at the Republican plan, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives by four votes—all Republican votes—four votes, and they looked at the plans proposed by Senator McCONNELL and the Republicans, and they said: At the end of the day, 22 to 32 million Americans will lose their health insurance. They said, in my State of Illinois, 1 million out of 12½ million will lose their health insurance.

I cannot understand how any Senator of either political party could, in good

conscience, come here and say: Boy, we had a great week. We just passed a healthcare reform bill, and 1 million people in Illinois will lose their health insurance. Really? That is why you ran for the U.S. Senate, to take health insurance coverage away from people? I would have thought common decency, common sense would suggest we want to do just the opposite. We want more and more people to fall under the protection of health insurance.

We also know some of the reforms we built into the Affordable Care Act are going to be changed by at least the early versions of the Republican repeal bill. Like what? One out of three Americans has a preexisting medical condition. A few weeks ago, I went through a heart procedure that worked out just fine—thank you—but now I have a pre-existing condition. I am in pretty big company: one out of three people across the United States.

Remember the day before we passed the Affordable Care Act? Before we passed the Affordable Care Act, if you had a preexisting condition, if you could get health insurance, it was darned expensive.

A good friend of mine had a trucking company. He had some problems with his ankle. He went to the doctor. The next year, when they wrote the health insurance plan for his trucking company, they excluded anything on the health insurance policy affecting his legs and his feet. Each year, he said, I was afraid to turn in any claim because the next year they wouldn't cover him. It is a preexisting condition.

We changed that. We changed the law. We said, in America, when you sell health insurance, you cannot discriminate because of preexisting conditions. You can't discriminate with higher premiums because you have a child with diabetes. You can't discriminate with higher premiums if your wife has survived breast cancer. Now, to me, that is common sense, and it is humane.

The Republican approach allows the States to waive that—back to the bad old days, when preexisting conditions could run your premiums through the roof, where you have haves and have-nots when it comes to health insurance, and Republicans said the other protections we put in the Affordable Care Act are also on the chopping block.

For example, my wife and I raised three kids, put them through college. They had their health insurance when they were students. They came out of college looking for jobs—thank you—and it took a little while to find the right job, and we worried: Now that they are not in school, whose health insurance is going to protect them while they are looking for a job with benefits?

We put in the Affordable Care Act that your kids—young adults—can stay under your family health insurance plan until they reach the age of 26. It is just common sense. Keep them under

the family plan until they have a chance to get that job with benefits.

We put other provisions in there—lifetime limits. It used to be, you would buy health insurance in this country and to keep the costs down, they would say: We have you covered. Up to \$150,000, you are covered. Now, \$150,000 sounds like a huge amount of money to people of modest means and working families, but we all know you are one accident or one diagnosis away from having medical bills that go through the roof. So \$150,000? Get real. That could be 2 days in a hospital with a doctor and a surgery or radiation. That is the reality.

So we took lifetime limits off the policies. They can't do that to you in America anymore. When you buy health insurance, you have health insurance, and if, God forbid, your condition takes your bills to sky heaven, they are going to be covered. Now the Republicans say: Well, that is another thing we will take out. We will make that optional.

Can I tell you one other one that really gets me because it was a big debate here for years. Back where my friend Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE is standing used to be the desk of Paul Wellstone, a liberal Senator from the State of Minnesota. What a good guy—terrific guy—short, feisty. Boy, when he got into a fight, you wanted to be on his side.

Paul Wellstone teamed up with a man who sat right there named Pete Domenici. Pete Domenici was exactly the opposite politically: from New Mexico, conservative, Republican, disagreed with Wellstone on virtually everything, except for one thing. Each of them had in their families someone suffering from mental illness. They decided they were going to do something about the fact that most health insurance plans did not cover mental illness. It was a battle that went on for years to require health insurance to include mental illness and they won the battle and we put it in the Affordable Care Act. Now, the Republicans say: Let's make that optional. This is something you can buy if you want to buy it.

At the end of the day, I think we all know we need a health insurance plan which is there when we need it, that covers things we can't even imagine when we buy the health insurance, and it makes sure people don't end up broke and bankrupt because of healthcare bills.

That was the driving cause, the driving reason for people filing bankruptcy in America—medical bills. They couldn't pay them. Since we passed the Affordable Care Act, the number of bankruptcies filed because of medical bills has been cut in half. So good health insurance that covers you when you need it and covers a member of your family when you need it is essential. That is why this debate and this vote tomorrow are so essential.

One thing I forgot to mention. Wellstone and Domenici didn't just

cover mental illness. They put another provision in there, and most of us paid no attention to it: substance abuse treatment. That has to be covered in health insurance too. Is that important? Have you heard of the opioid epidemic, the heroin epidemic?

I recently asked one of the best providers in Chicago about this, and they said: Luckily, people who have a child who ends up being addicted and needs treatment, if they have private health insurance, there is some coverage. Now, there is a battle about how many bills will be paid and how much is paid, but it is covered under the health insurance plan. Republicans want to make that optional. They call it freedom of choice.

The junior Senator from Texas, TED CRUZ, talks about policies you could buy that are really cheap policies. We call it junk insurance. You are insured in name only. If you need it, it isn't going to be there. That has been in the Republican plans that have come before us. We don't know whether that will be in the plan we have to vote on tomorrow. We don't know. It is a mystery.

How many hearings have been held on the bill we will vote for tomorrow on proceeding to change healthcare in America? None. Not one. How many amendments have been offered? Of course, none. We haven't seen it. We don't know.

We also know something else. The Republican plan on healthcare will slash the Medicaid Program. Most people—myself included—a few years ago, would have been stumped to describe the Medicaid Program and what it covered. Now, I will tell you what it covers, and think about cutting what I am about to describe by 25 to 35 percent.

No. 1, half of the children born in the State of Illinois are paid for by Medicaid. Their mother's prenatal care, the birth of the child, and postnatal care of mom and the kid is covered by Medicaid—one-half.

In addition to that, every school district in my State—probably in Rhode Island, probably in Oklahoma—receives Medicaid payments—school districts. Why? For the kids with special education needs. Medicaid helps pay for counselors so these kids can be mainstreamed in education. Medicaid in my State even pays for feeding tubes for those severely disabled children who are in school—but a 25- to 35-percent cut in the Republicans' proposals for Medicaid.

The most expensive thing in Medicaid, the thing that costs the most money, I haven't mentioned. Is your mother in a nursing home? Is your father? Your grandfather? Sixty percent of the people in nursing homes rely on Medicaid to stay in that nursing home and get the basic care they need. So when you cut that by 25 to 35 percent, what happens to Mom? What happens to your grandfather? Does that mean the family now has a bill to pick up? Does that mean they have to leave the

nursing home and go somewhere else? Where will that be? Yet that is one of the proposals.

The disabled community, they stepped up as well. Medicaid is health insurance for disabled people in America. A woman in Champagne came to me and said: I have a 23-year-old son with autism. He is pretty good. He is kind of on his own. He is doing some things. Senator, if he didn't have Medicaid health insurance, I would have to put him in an institution. I don't want to do that.

How important is Medicaid? How important is it that the Republicans will slash this Medicaid? It gets to the heart of healthcare for tens of millions of people in the United States of America.

Why do Republicans want to cut Medicaid? It is simple. It is linear. It is direct. They have to cut \$700 billion out of Medicaid to provide a tax cut for the wealthiest people in America.

Oh, DURBIN, you are making that up. This must be a press release from the Democratic National Committee. No, that is exactly what it is all about. In order to pay for the tax cuts to the highest income individuals, to pharmaceutical companies, and to health insurance companies, they cut Medicaid payments to the States. They think that is simple justice, a tax cut. They are always for tax cuts, but look who pays for that tax cut.

So who lines up for and against the Republican approach we are going to get to vote on tomorrow? That is easy. There is not a single medical advocacy group in America today supporting the Republican position. That is a pretty broad statement. You had better be ready to back it up, Senator. I am ready. Hospitals, doctors, nurses, pediatricians, every medical advocacy group, and community clinics all oppose what the Republicans are setting out to do—and they are not alone. Remember the preexisting conditions? I mentioned diabetes and cancer. The American Diabetes Association, the American Cancer Association, the American Heart, Lung, you name it, all of those groups oppose what the Republicans are setting out to do. They realize it is a dramatic step backward in terms of healthcare in America.

Every healthcare repeal bill Congressional Republicans have devised to date has represented a massive step backward for healthcare. None of the bills proposed by Senate or House Republicans would increase the number of Americans with health insurance coverage. It does just the opposite. None of them reduce costs or improve care.

You say: Well, if you tell me you don't know what the bill is going to be, how are you describing it? I am giving the composite of all the bills that have been offered by the Republicans in the House and Senate. So far, we think—one in the House for sure—four different bills in the Senate, which I have just described, you will find this in all the bills. They don't get better, they

get worse. None of them will strengthen our healthcare system or improve people's lives.

One of my Republican colleagues really put it in a few words very directly and said recently: I didn't come to Washington to hurt people.

I trust that none of us—not a single Republican or Democrat—came for that purpose. We want to help people, don't we? Isn't that why we are here? That is why we need to reject this approach. It is why we need to sit down together and make our healthcare system better.

I voted for the Affordable Care Act. I believe in it. It cut the number of uninsured people in my State in half, and I think that is a worthy goal. It made many other changes which I have described here this evening.

Is it perfect? By no means. I used this example before: The only perfect law that I know of was carried down the side of a mountain on clay tablets by Senator Moses. Everybody else does their best, and sometimes we need a little help. Our current healthcare system needs some help.

Let me tell you where I think we ought to change it. No. 1, we know that the one market where the premiums are going through the roof is the individual marketplace, where small business people and others are facing skyrocketing premiums. What percentage of America fits into that group? Six percent. They are not being treated fairly under the current system. We have to change it. We have to make healthcare premiums affordable. Every Republican plan brought before us raises those premium costs.

No. 2, we don't address the costs of prescription drugs in the Affordable Care Act. Health insurance companies tell us that is driving premium costs more than any single item. Blue Cross Blue Shield in Illinois pays more for pharmaceuticals—prescription drugs—each year than they pay for inpatient hospital care. There is nothing that is controlling these costs. We should; shouldn't we?

Shouldn't we agree that, if you happen to live in some part of the country where you don't have health insurance available in the marketplace, at a very minimum you will have a public option? What do I mean by that? A plan that looks like Medicare, a plan that isn't driven by profit, but a plan that provides the basic services. We can do that. We have Medicare Advantage programs. We have other options. We want to make sure that is available to every American. You choose it, if you wish.

Those three things right off the top I would include as part of what we can do on a bipartisan basis—Democrats and Republicans. Take the tax cut off the table. Take slashing Medicaid off the table. Take rewards to health insurance companies off the table. Focus on helping the families, businesses, and individuals in America who need this basic protection.

We are going to go into this mystery vote tomorrow. We have been elected

to the U.S. Senate. There aren't many people in history who have had this honor. What we are doing tomorrow does not bring honor to the Senate.

Considering a bill that has not been written, published, and disclosed to the American people is just wrong. Considering a bill that has never had a committee hearing is unfair. Considering a bill that I am sure will have many flaws and weaknesses is reckless.

That is what we face this week. How important is it? It may be the most important vote we cast this year as far as I am concerned. There is nothing more important in life than the peace of mind in knowing you have health insurance at that critical moment when you or somebody in your family desperately needs help.

There is not going to be a minor amendment offered on the floor that will straighten out the situation.

I know my colleagues are here to speak. I will close by saying this. If you come to watch this bill, whatever it is, brought before the Senate in the next few days, it will not be a moment when you think better of this place. It is a process called vote-arama. Here is what it means. You put an amendment on the floor and file it with the clerk. They read the amendment. Then you have 2 minutes—1 minute for and 1 minute against—and you vote.

Really? We are going to take the healthcare system of America and put it through that kind of a process, where we don't even have time to sit and measure the impact of one amendment over the other? The Congressional Budget Office will not have its analysis. So it is really going to be a free skate. We will be up here trying our best to vote yes or no on these amendments if we proceed to the bill.

Here is the good news. If 3 Republicans—3 out of 52—will step up and say: Stop, we can do better as a Senate, that will be the end of this terrible endeavor. We will send the measure back to committee. We will have Democrats and Republicans sit down. They will go through the regular process. They will produce a bill. The public will get to read it. They will go through expert testimony. Then we will have an amendment process. Then they will bring it to the floor, and we will do the same. We will consider it carefully. We will use our best judgment and try to come up with something on a bipartisan basis that is a credit to America.

Instead, what we are going to face, if the majority leader has his way tomorrow, is a process that does not serve this country well and does not bring honor to the Senate.

I urge my Republican colleagues, three of them at least, to step up. They aren't just saving a lot of people across America from the worry of whether they have good health insurance when they desperately need it. They are saving the reputation of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about the healthcare legislation. I am grateful for the remarks of our colleague from Illinois, the great leader that he is, talking not only about the impact on his home State but on our country.

I think a lot of us, especially in the last couple of weeks, have had an opportunity both to debate healthcare and, probably more importantly, when we go home to be on the road, to go to places where folks are thinking about it very intensively.

Many people I had a chance to interact with and, really, to listen to on the road were folks in small towns and rural areas, especially, who probably didn't ever imagine they would have to engage in this kind of a discussion or debate. Coming into a conference room to have a discussion or a roundtable about healthcare is not what they do every day. They don't necessarily sit around to talk about a public policy issue. They usually have so much in their lives that keeps them busy and so many concerns and so many challenges that are weighing them down that they don't have any opportunity to have these kinds of conversations.

Many of them felt obligated to have these conversations. Many of them were motivated to speak out because of what would happen in their lives and usually in the life of someone in their family.

When I was in a number of counties the last couple of weeks, especially in rural areas, you would hear from a lot of moms and dads about their children, usually in this context: What will the Medicaid cuts mean for my child? In many cases, the child has a disability or more than one. Sometimes there is a series of complex disabilities—plural—and the mom or the dad is there to talk about it.

In these discussions, you hear a combination of sentiments and a combination of information. You hear sometimes a cataloging of what their daily life is like, what they do when they wake up in the morning and have to get that child or that young person ready for school if they have a disability or more than one disability. These parents become experts in all kinds of medical terminology and prescription drugs, and they become experts in assistive technology or equipment that allows their son or daughter to lead as full a life as possible.

For these families, this is real life. This isn't some debate in Washington that we engage in here. This is about real life. That is why the issue of Medicaid, I think, has been so prominent.

If we learned one thing over the last couple of months, it is that some people in Washington might have thought that Medicaid could be described as a "them" program. That is for someone else who is far away, and I don't have to worry about that. We found out that Medicaid is an "us" program. Medicaid is an American program.

It is one of the ways we come together as a nation and say: You are up

against something that I might not be up against. You have a challenge that I might not have, but I am going to do my part to support that program to give you a chance.

If you are a child with a disability, we come together as a community, as a nation, and say we are going to help that child. We are going to do everything possible to make sure that child can lead a full life.

For many folks who are low income—they are working, but they don't have a very high income and don't have employer coverage—we say in that instance: You are someone we should try to help with a program that provides healthcare—Medicaid.

We say to seniors, if we believe, as we do, that you have given us so much—whether you fought our wars or worked in our factories or both, or taught our children, built the Nation, or built the middle class, and did all kinds of things for us—the least we can do is to make sure, if you need extra help getting into a nursing home or getting the benefit of long-term care, Medicaid will be there for you, without a doubt.

It is only until recently that a lot of those same families have had to ask the question: Will that program called Medicaid—that "us" program, not a "them" program—be there for my child who has a disability? Will that program be there for me and my family, because our income is such that we qualify for Medicaid and we need that help? Will that Medicaid be there for that older citizen who has given us so much, given so much to their family, given so much to the Nation? Will that program continue to be there to give them that little bit of extra help they might need to get into a nursing home?

Unfortunately for a lot of them, it is not a little bit. It is a lot, because they need that much help to have the benefit of long-term care.

I have read a number of letters on the floor over the weeks and months, and I will continue to do that. It is remarkable, though, how people have put their own stories on paper or they have been interviewed by a local newspaper or they have been on local television, or even national television, talking about their lives, talking about their children, talking about their worries, and also giving us the benefit of their hopes and their dreams for their children. They are hopes and dreams that would be thwarted in some instances by a vote we could take here. They are hopes and dreams that in some cases would be absolutely shattered if we took the wrong step on Medicaid and the wrong step on healthcare.

Obviously, I am not a supporter of the legislation before us. It seems like every time there is a change made, the legislation is either no better or a lot worse. The number of uninsured doesn't seem to budge.

The latest Congressional Budget Office determination—this is dated July 20, last Thursday. It is a letter from the Congressional Budget Office, from

Director Keith Hall to Senator MIKE ENZI, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. I am quoting from page 4. The Congressional Budget Office says in this letter:

According to CBO and JCT's estimates, in 2018, 15 million more people would be uninsured under this legislation than under current law. The increase in the number of uninsured people relative to the number under current law would reach 19 million in 2020 and 22 million in 2026.

That is what the CBO tells us. Once again, we have that same number—that stubborn number—22 million people uninsured, and 15 of the 22 becoming uninsured in 2018, next year. It is an immediate impact, the likes of which and the gravity of which we can't even begin to imagine. Imagine that, in the course of 1 year or maybe 1½ years, 18 million people in the country are losing their healthcare, just when we made the advancement of having 20 million people covered between the time the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was passed and just in the last year or so.

We have made all that progress forward on coverage. One of the consequences—one of many but one of the consequences of this legislation—would be to wipe all that out. It is two or three steps forward and several steps backward. That alone makes no sense.

As I said, when people come to meetings across the State about this bill, it is remarkable what they will tell you about their own challenges. It has to be very difficult to stand in front of a group of relative strangers—and sometimes with media there—and express to you or express to the people in the room or to the people listening in an interview or otherwise their innermost fears. That has to be disturbing. It must be difficult to do, but they feel compelled to do it because they have never had to worry like this—never had to worry in the course of their lifetimes about a direct threat to the healthcare of their children, a direct threat to the healthcare that their family has.

I have notes here from a meeting just a couple of weeks ago. I will not say who the parents are; I don't have their permission. But I will say this: It was a parent in a county that is considered rural, a family that seems to be relatively secure in terms of their employment and everything else in their lives. After describing what Medicaid means to their family because they have a child with a disability, the mom talked about her own insurance. This is a common theme. The parent or parents have a good job or sometimes two good jobs, and they have insurance in most cases. Yet, because of the severity of the disability of their child, they have to have Medicaid. There is no choice. There is no way with 20 jobs that they could pay for the services that child needs—services, therapies, treatments. The good news is, we live in a country that has those available, but a lot of that will be ripped away if we pass this legislation.

Here is what this mom said when talking about what she is determined to do for her child. She said: It is not negotiable. That is what she said about what is provided to her child. She said that these are necessities. These aren't extra things. These aren't just add-ons to some other healthcare. These are absolute necessities. Then she went through and itemized and cataloged all the ways and all of the tools and benefits that her family receives from Medicaid so that her child, who has a severe disability, might have a shot to lead as full a life as possible.

The idea that this mother or anyone like her should have to come to a meeting in the United States of America and have to make an argument as to why those services should be preserved for her son or her daughter or any other member of her family—the idea that she should even have to make that argument is insulting to us as a country. We would be a different country if Medicaid were changed in the way some folks around here want to change it.

I have used the word “decimation.” That is exactly what it is. It would be decimation, and a lot of families' lives would be destroyed. This is real life for these families.

Even if someone could prove that a year from now or 5 years from now or 10 years from now, that mother and her family would be somehow walled off or protected—even if you could guarantee that, it is still wrong because she shouldn't have to worry for a minute. She should have no uncertainty about whether her child is going to have Medicaid going forward—her child with a profound disability. There should be no question. That child should get Medicaid today, tomorrow, and as long as they need it for the rest of their life because we are a great country. We do that in America. We can do it over and over again.

We can have the strongest economy. We can have the strongest military, and we can take care of those families, no matter what, no questions asked, whatever it takes because that is who we are as Americans. But there are some people around here who just don't believe that. To use that mom's word, they think it is all negotiable—that if it is the right year and the numbers line up, maybe we can help you.

We need a tax cut, apparently. That is what they argue. They need a tax cut for wealthy folks, so Medicaid is going to pay for that. To say that is insulting is a gross understatement. That is obscene. That is as close to uttering an obscenity as anything I can think of. So you bet we are going to fight when it comes to those kinds of decisions—fight against those kinds of cuts.

I mentioned that I had been on the road a good bit and have spent a lot of time in counties that are rural counties in Pennsylvania. Just to give you an example of the numbers, I live in a State that has 67 counties, and 48 of the 67 are rural. Those are our Pennsyl-

vania counties. If you add up all of the individuals in those 48 rural counties in Pennsylvania who got insurance by way of the Medicaid expansion—or received insurance in the marketplaces in the intervening years between passage of the ACA and currently—just in those 48 counties, over 278,000 people have healthcare—278,266. I use a precise number because right down to the 66, it matters. Every single one of those individuals in those 48 rural counties should have an ironclad guarantee that no bill will pass the U.S. Senate that will rip away their healthcare, not for one person. That should be our promise to them.

That is the number of people covered, right? With the Medicaid expansion plus the marketplace, 278,266 residents of rural Pennsylvania are covered. If the Senate bill passed, here is at least one estimate of what would happen to those rural counties: 151,000-plus people. I will not use the exact number because it is an estimate. The estimate is that around 150,000 people would lose their health insurance. You move forward in rural Pennsylvania by over 278,000 people; then you take two steps backward and rip healthcare away from 150,000 in rural Pennsylvania. I haven't gotten to the big population centers. That is the reality in Pennsylvania.

Then if you break it down even further—these are just 11 rural counties that I visited in the month of July in addition to other counties. In 11 rural Pennsylvania counties—these are counties with very small populations. One of them, Forest County, which I was in this weekend, has a little more than 7,000 people in its total population. In these 11 rural Pennsylvania counties, 54,180 people have healthcare today because of Medicaid expansion, plus those who got it through the marketplace, so 54,180 get healthcare. What is the estimate of who would lose if the bill passed? It is 32,410. Let's call it 30,000, roughly, because it is an estimate. So 54,000 gain; then you rip it away from 30,000. Does that make any sense at all? Does that help the country? How are we stronger after that? How are we better off as a country or, in my case, as a State? How are the people of our Commonwealth better off when 30,000 in 11 rural counties lose their coverage—or 150,000 in 48 rural counties?

I know I am over my time, and I will wrap up because we have colleagues here. This is a pivotal moment. To say it is a pivotal moment for the Senate is a big understatement, but it is also, I think, a pivotal moment for the country. We are going to be on a different path than we have been for a long time. Usually what happens over time is that you are expanding protections, enlarging the number of people who are the beneficiaries of protections of one kind or another. In this case, we would be going in the wrong direction.

I hope our colleagues will think long and hard before they vote yes either to move forward to debate on a bill that is

deeply flawed or to vote for the bill itself.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for being here. We have been out here many a night, talking about the importance of Medicaid. I so appreciate his leadership in the Senate on this very important issue. He has been a champion of the Children's Health Insurance Program and has been a voice amongst all Senators in making sure that people have access to healthcare. I so appreciate being out here with him tonight.

I don't really appreciate being here right at this moment. I am really flabbergasted. Why are we here at this moment? Why are we here? I am pretty sure that President Trump, when he was candidate Trump, put in a tweet that he would not cut Medicaid. Yet that is the proposal we are talking about.

No matter what the proposal is—repeal, the House bill, the proposal scored by CBO or some Senate alternative on junk insurance—they all are a cut to Medicaid, so I am not sure how we are here. I am not sure how we are here when the Vice President at the time campaigned, I am sure, against the Affordable Care Act and then became Governor of Indiana and implemented Medicaid expansion in his own State. After saying that he was against the Affordable Care Act, he implemented Medicaid expansion. I am sure people in his home State said: If you want to take care of people, if you want to raise our standard of living, if you want to keep down the costs of healthcare delivery and private insurance, put people on coverage so that they aren't driving up the cost of uncompensated care.

So how are we here? How are we here when our House colleagues came up with a proposal that basically cuts 23 million people off of healthcare—including 15 million people on Medicaid—after working with the President, who said that he didn't want to cut Medicaid, and the Vice President, who basically campaigned against it and then went ahead and expanded it?

I can't believe how many times I have been on the Senate floor, and I haven't seen one of my colleagues come down here and talk about solutions that they are proposing. I just hear them come and talk about the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and kicking millions of people off of the healthcare they currently have.

Tonight, I can imagine there are many people across the United States of America who are like me, thinking, how could this be happening? How could we be sitting here tonight, not knowing what the Senate is going to vote on, not knowing whether they are going to repeal their health insurance, not knowing where their Senators stand or even if the Senator knows

what proposal they are voting on? Yet I can tell you this: More than 70 percent of the American people think the ideas that have now been put forth by the House and the Senate Republicans and the President do not work. They are not the way to increase access to healthcare and drive down the cost of private insurance in the insurance market.

You don't have to take my word for it. I am looking at a statement by Ohio's Republican Governor, John Kasich. I worked with John Kasich in the House of Representatives. He was a budget hawk. He wanted to figure out how to make things work. So I trust that, as Governor, he is a fiscal steward about how to get things done when he says: "Until Congress can step back from political gamesmanship and come together with a workable, bipartisan plan, it is a mistake for the Senate to proceed with a vote on Tuesday and force a one-sided deal that the American people are clearly against."

So why are we here? Why are we here when a President promised that he wasn't going to cut Medicaid, a Vice President said that he was against the bill but then went and did Medicaid expansion? The people in the United States responded very clearly that they are not interested in cutting millions of people off of health insurance because they know that, even if it doesn't affect their family, it doesn't make common sense for keeping down the costs of healthcare.

So I ask my colleagues to stop and think about the people in the United States of America who are clearly scared to death about what is going to happen tomorrow. They are scared that someone in their family or that they, the provider for their family, are not going to be able to provide insurance.

If you are so brave, come down here and volunteer, as an amendment, to cut all of us—cut the Senate off of our access to health insurance until we come up with some idea that you think is so terrific. I doubt you will come and propose that. You wouldn't want your family cut off of healthcare.

I meet people like Emily Talbot, who came to visit me from Seattle Children's Hospital, who at age 6 was diagnosed with a condition that affected her brain tissues and spinal canal. She was from Idaho, and she was referred to Seattle Children's because it is the pediatric referral center for our region. Thanks to Medicaid, she saw 11 different pediatric subspecialists and had 13 brain surgeries and 7 back surgeries. Her mom told me that without Medicaid and without the prohibition on lifetime caps, she wouldn't have access to healthcare today.

Is that what my Republican colleagues want to say tomorrow, that "we don't really know for sure how we are going to do this, we don't really know what works, but even though we said we weren't going to cut Medicaid, we are going to cut people off of health insurance who currently have coverage?"

I think the reason why people like these Governors from Republican States have been willing to speak out against this proposal and raise their concerns is because they have to be a steward of Medicaid, and they have to be fiscally responsible. So they know there are better ways.

When I talk to the regional hospitals in my State, they tell me that covering more people under Medicaid has created downward pressure on price in the individual market. It has helped us.

So our solution cannot be decimating the Medicaid market. Our solution has to look at those in the individual market who don't have as much clout as a big employer or somebody who can buy in bulk and drive down their price. There are ways to address that issue.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on those solutions, but that is not what is being recommended tomorrow. Those solutions haven't been put forth, nor are they part of any of these proposals. So I ask my colleagues to not proceed.

The President promised he was not going to cut Medicaid, and now it is like you want somebody to jump off the cliff tomorrow, and you are saying: Oh, by the way, I will throw you a parachute on the way down. It doesn't work.

As my colleagues have said here tonight, it is time to give certainty to this population that we have a proposal that will help continue to give them access to care. I would say to my colleagues that taking a vote on politics when it is the lives and the healthcare access that so many millions of Americans seek—don't play politics with healthcare. Let's get a solution that works and works on both sides of the aisle.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, let me open my remarks by saying that from the very beginning of this ill-starred healthcare misadventure the Republicans have been on, Democrats have over and over again offered to help and to participate. Over and over again, we have spoken to, for instance, Chairman ALEXANDER on the HELP Committee, saying: Give us a shot. Try something. We can do this. You have talked all these years about regular order.

How many times have we heard the majority leader say that regular order is the way to go and talk about how important the Senate is because it follows regular order? It looks as though all of that was nothing but a lot of bunkum because when he had the chance to come here and actually trust the Senate to work through regular order, what did he do? The very first day, he jammed through reconciliation to open a purely partisan pathway to undoing ObamaCare.

Well, people have discovered that a lot of what they thought was their

good healthcare is ObamaCare. So people on Medicaid, people whose private policies now don't have preexisting condition limits, caps on how much can be spent in a year or in a lifetime, folks who will get their money through the exchange, suddenly they have all discovered "Oh my gosh, that was ObamaCare. Don't take that away from me." That is one of the reasons we see all of the groups who come here concerned about healthcare lined up against this bill.

This bill, other than the creepy cabal of billionaires who are behind it, doesn't have a friend. And it just shows how narrow the Republican Party has now become that they will follow the creepy billionaires off the cliff against the advice of so many respected American organizations.

How about the American Cancer Society? The American Cancer Society says that the Republican bill would leave patients and those with preexisting conditions paying more for less coverage. They have come out against the bill.

I have a constituent home in Rhode Island, and her name is Patricia. She and her daughters live in a beautiful place in Rhode Island, Wakefield, RI. Like a lot of people I have heard from, Patricia is afraid. She is afraid that what this Congress is going to do is to repeal the Affordable Care Act and let health insurers go back to discriminating against people with preexisting conditions.

What is hers? Well, Patricia and her daughters have a genetic mutation, and that genetic mutation increases their risk of cancer. They would ordinarily be counting on the American Cancer Society to argue for them, and sure enough, the American Cancer Society has come out against the Republican health legislation.

Well, it got real for Patricia last year when her 34-year-old daughter was battling breast cancer. Fortunately, her health insurance covered her treatment, and it worked. She is now cancer-free. But because of their genetic mutation, Patricia and her daughters will need to be screened frequently for the rest of their lives. Under the Affordable Care Act, these potentially lifesaving screenings are covered, and Patricia and her daughters are not penalized for having a preexisting condition. Why on Earth would you want to go back to a world in which those two things weren't true?

Patricia wrote:

A genetic mutation is not caused by an unhealthy or careless lifestyle, as some members of Congress seem to think. You can do everything "right" and still end up with cancer or another debilitating disease.

So she urged me to consider all the people who would be affected by the new healthcare bill, not just looking out for the rich and the healthy.

Another group who came out against this was the American Association of Retired Persons, the AARP. This bill may have changed, but the results are

the same. The results are higher costs and less coverage for older Americans. Why would you want to do that? And this isn't just language from the AARP; it comes home again.

Lisa from Pascoag, up in northern Rhode Island—a bucolic, rural part of Rhode Island—wrote to share her experience with the Affordable Care Act. This is her and her husband's third year on their ACA plan. Like many Rhode Islanders, they qualify for financial assistance to help them afford their health insurance. You would think that would be a good thing. Lisa thinks it is a good thing. She wrote to me that she thanks God every day that they have quality health insurance they can afford.

Her husband is a welder fabricator—a job that takes a toll. He has had several blood tests this year and recently began seeing a hematologist. Lisa knows that this type of specialty care would have been out of reach for their family without their current coverage, and so she is worried. She is frightened by the Republican health plan.

She and her husband are 56 and 62 years old. They are within AARP's interests. And she understands that because of their age, under the Republican plan, their premiums could go up five to eight times what they are paying today—five to eight times what they are paying today—and the tax credits that have been proposed, in Lisa's words, "won't cut it."

Doctors know a little bit about healthcare, and the American College of Physicians has come out in opposition. "The BCRA . . . will not preserve and improve essential coverage, benefits and consumer protections, and access to care" is their concern. Of course, why would you want to listen to the doctors about healthcare when you have a little pack of creepy billionaires who are telling you what to do? Never bother to listen to the doctors.

Well, Judith from Riverside, RI, is a doctor. She is a physician who works at a community mental health center in Providence. Judy told me that she sees the benefits of the Affordable Care Act every single day. She treats patients with serious mental illnesses, and they have what she called "tremendous" healthcare and social service needs. Prior to the Affordable Care Act, almost all of her patients were uninsured, and she spent her days scrambling to try to find different avenues to get them free care, to get them whatever they could scrounge. Since the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, she said, almost all of her patients have health insurance and they are able to get the medical care they need. As Judy put it, with all of their life challenges, at least they don't have to worry that they can't afford care.

Planned Parenthood is a favorite target of our Republican friends, and Planned Parenthood is strongly opposed to these measures. Women get a lot of their healthcare from Planned

Parenthood. Planned Parenthood said: "With this latest version of TrumpCare, women will pay the biggest price of all."

Olive is a young woman living in Providence who shared her experience with me about how Planned Parenthood has been a reliable source of healthcare for her throughout her life. As a college student, Olive went to Planned Parenthood for birth control and well-woman care. She had a routine exam, and a doctor at Planned Parenthood found a lump in her breast. Twenty years old and far from her family, Olive said she was worried but never felt alone. Planned Parenthood connected her with the followup care and testing that she needed. She was treated by their doctors. Fortunately, the mass turned out to be benign, but Olive says she is forever grateful to Planned Parenthood for their help to her during a scary situation for a young woman.

Olive is still a patient at Planned Parenthood, and she even volunteers at their health clinic in Providence. She knows firsthand how important Planned Parenthood is for healthcare for millions of men and women across the country—particularly women—and, like the other people who have written to me, she is afraid of what will happen if Republicans succeed in defunding Planned Parenthood.

Small business folks have spoken to me about this. There is a lot of talk about how you need more freedom not to have insurance and freedom to be told you can't have insurance if you are sick. That is not the kind of freedom I think we really want to support around here. The freedom we want to support is for somebody to be able to follow their dreams, and over and over again, I hear from people who are able to get free of being linked to their employer healthcare plan and go out on their own because of the Affordable Care Act.

Laura is a small business owner in our capital city, Providence. She and her husband own an architectural design and construction firm that builds homes around Rhode Island. Construction is not a line of work you want to be in without health insurance. Well, because of the Affordable Care Act, Laura and her husband have affordable health insurance and dental coverage, and they have it for the first time. They can see the doctors they want to see, and their out-of-pocket costs are reasonable.

The Affordable Care Act has allowed small business owners like Laura and her husband to pursue their professional dreams, boosting our local economy and creating jobs for others without having to risk their livelihoods and life savings if an illness or an injury befalls them.

Just last night, I was in Narragansett, RI, and a woman came up to me to say: When you get back down there, please fight for us on the Affordable Care Act.

She said: The Affordable Care Act has given me two things. One, it has given me my freedom. Because of the Affordable Care Act, I was able to leave my employer-supported program and have the confidence to go out on my own and become an illustrator.

Her business is so successful that she has actually started hiring people to support her business.

She said: That freedom to be an entrepreneur, to succeed, would never ever have happened if I had been chain-locked to my employer program and did not have an affordable option like the Affordable Care Act provides.

Second, she said: Once I did this, once I started my business, I then went for checkups. I was able to get tests that I could not have gotten before, and what they found was a tumor behind my eye. Luckily, it was not cancerous, but had they not caught it, she said, I would have lost my sight.

If you are an illustrator, being blind is a very tough proposition. She said: I have my freedom, and I have my sight because of this law. SHELDON, fight for me.

Janice from Cranston is the last person I will mention tonight. She wrote in to share how important the Affordable Care Act has been to her and her husband and how important our Rhode Island marketplace has been for her.

She said: There may be marketplaces that aren't working in different places around the country. Fine, go fix those. Don't mess with mine.

It is working in Rhode Island, and Janice is one of the beneficiaries of it. She is now retired. She lives with her husband Bob in Cranston. Before the Affordable Care Act, she tried to buy health insurance in the individual market, and it was quoted to her at \$800 per month—not affordable to her, not with limited income like that. So Janice and Bob have quality affordable insurance through Rhode Island's health insurance exchange, and they are happy about it. Don't disrupt their lives.

Janice actually told me that her health insurance premium actually went down this year, and so she splurged with the savings and bought dental insurance as well. That was a success. She wrote to me: "I wouldn't have been able to afford healthcare if it wasn't for ObamaCare."

Like so many of these other people who have written in, Janice says that she and Bob are scared to death that they will lose their insurance if the Affordable Care Act is repealed. She doesn't understand how some Members of Congress can claim to care about their constituents and still try to repeal their healthcare coverage. Janice said: "They have money and they have good insurance, and they must not know what it is like for people like us."

Well, we need to remember those real people out there who are getting the Medicaid benefit, who are getting affordable insurance through the ex-

changes and getting help with the premiums and the people who are on private insurance but no longer have to face lifetime caps or annual caps or preexisting conditions. Even people who are still on Blue Cross have gotten a benefit from this. Why would we want to take that all away?

The last thing I want to mention is this. Those are all personal stories, and it is really important to remember that behind this creepy billionaire effort to perform some kind of ideological experiment on people by taking away their healthcare, there are actually real people who are really going to suffer in their real lives, and it will have been deliberately done to them by people here who simply couldn't say no to the creepy billionaires.

There is another piece of this. It is a little more complicated, but I will close on this.

I love to use this graph. I use it all the time. This axis of the graph shows how long people live in different countries. The range is from 72 to 86. This part of the graph shows how much people pay in different countries for healthcare per year. Virtually everybody that we compete with is right in here—Japan, Greece, United Kingdom, Germany, and France. They are right in here. They do pretty well on life expectancy, and here they are in this cross of the \$2,000 to \$6,000 per year range. The most expensive other country in the world is Switzerland, at \$6,000 per year. Look at where the United States is. We spend \$8,500 per year—way more, double more than what the average is of the other countries we compete against. For that we get super killer life expectancy. I guess killer life expectancy isn't the right phrase to use. But do you get great life expectancy on that vast expenditure of healthcare? No. We compete with the Czech Republic. We compete with Croatia. Part of what the Affordable Care Act did was to try to focus on this.

Here is the punch line. One of the things we do in the Budget Committee is that we look at things in 10-year chunks. If you look at the 10-year chunk from 2018, which is this year right here, to 2027, here is a 10-year period. What this graph shows is that, back here in 2010, the Congressional Budget Office did a prediction of what the healthcare costs for the country was going to be in this 10-year period. They said this is how much we are going to have to spend on Federal healthcare.

What happened is that we passed the Affordable Care Act and costs started to go down. They came in below expectations. Around here, they rebooted the test, and they did a new projection based on the new information for this same 10-year period. As you will notice, the costs that we have projected for that 10-year period from 2018 to 2027, inclusive, have fallen. They have fallen by \$3.3 trillion.

If you want to talk about savings on our debt and deficit, if you want to

talk about savings in healthcare, this red line was projected before the Affordable Care Act, and the green line—the difference—was the projection after the Affordable Care Act was law and after the results began to come in.

I can't promise you that every single one of those \$3.3 trillion in savings was a direct result of a provision in the Affordable Care Act, but when we have delivered \$3.3 trillion in savings, why would we never want to talk about that? Why would we want to put any of that at risk? Why would we want to go back to the preexisting condition of this prediction and pile \$3.3 trillion back into that out-year period? It makes no sense.

So whether you are a person who has constituents who are real and who are going to suffer, who are going to suffer in real life as a result of the decision and the vote that you cast tomorrow, or whether you are a propeller-headed budget hawk who just wants to figure out how you can reduce America's costs, why would you vote for a bill and put any of this at risk? Why the fear of your constituents? Why the \$3.3 trillion in savings? It makes no sense.

I will end where I began. If people will come to their senses and want to do this in a bipartisan fashion, during regular order—boy, did we hear a lot about regular order until regular order wasn't wanted any longer—we are here. We want to work with you. There are tons of ideas out there. We can work to improve the healthcare system for the real people in the real world, and not just do what we are told by a cabal of creepy billionaires who are yanking the chain of the Republican Party.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, a few weeks ago the Senate Republicans had to cancel a vote on the healthcare bill because the number crunchers over at the Congressional Budget Office, or the CBO, pointed out that the Republican bill was going to take away health insurance from 22 million people and drive up the costs for millions more. So Senate Republicans started throwing new plans together, one after another, rolling the dice and hoping the CBO would come back with a better number.

Here is a quick guide to what the Republicans have tried since the last time they canceled their vote on this bill. First, there was a bill that was, basically, the same as the first version but that included a little bit more money. CBO said it still knocked 22 million people off their healthcare coverage.

Second, there was a bill to simply repeal the Affordable Care Act, with no replacement whatsoever. CBO said that one would knock 32 million people off their healthcare.

Third, there was a proposal by Senator CRUZ that would let insurance companies offer insurance at one price to people with no preexisting conditions and another price for anybody who had anything wrong. We don't

even have a CBO score for that one because CBO had trouble figuring out how many people with preexisting conditions who really needed insurance would never be able to pay for it under that bill.

Why is it that the Republicans have so much trouble coming up with something—with anything—that would improve healthcare in America? The problem is that the Republicans' real motivation behind all these healthcare bills is not to improve healthcare. It is to give giant tax cuts to the richest families and corporations in this country. When the goal is a big tax cut, it is hard to come up with something that actually also improves people's healthcare.

The Republican healthcare bills have gone from bad to worse to embarrassing. What makes this so painful, however, is that the health—even the survival—of real people hangs in the balance.

A couple of weeks ago, I met with families who said they hoped—they said they prayed—the Senate would not pass this terrible health bill. Each of these families had a small child who had been born with complex medical needs.

I met Baxter, who is only 3 years old and has cerebral palsy. I met Tom, who was born 4 months prematurely and needed multiple surgeries to help correct his medical conditions. I met Brody, who was born with his organs growing outside his body in a protective sac. He spent more than 7 months at Boston Children's Hospital, undergoing complicated surgeries to fit his organs back inside his body.

I met these children, and I have to state that all of these kids are fighters. Every one of them has endured great pain and shown courage and determination. Every one of them has needed help from Medicaid for hospital bills, breathing equipment, special feeding tubes, physical therapists, speech therapists, and nurses to help train the family on how to clean a blocked IV line or how to deal with seizures. Medicaid means these children get the medical care they need, and it means they can live at home instead of in an institution. It means their families don't have to go bankrupt. It is that simple.

Without this help, these families would be destroyed. These children and their families are the face of Medicaid, and we fight every day to protect them.

Just to be clear, Baxter's mother said to me that, without the help that Medicaid provided, Baxter would have died. They are good, hardworking parents with jobs and insurance, but they didn't have the millions of dollars it took to keep Baxter alive or the money to buy the equipment and support they needed to keep Baxter at home. Yes, this is about life and death, and if anyone doubts it, call Baxter's mom and ask her to explain it to you.

The Republican plan isn't just cruel. It is immoral, and it is not who we are as a people. We are better than that.

We shouldn't even be holding this vote tomorrow. The American people have begged Republicans to stop. Governors from red States and blue States alike have told them that this bill will be deeply harmful. Patient groups, the American Medical Association, pediatricians, nurses, hospital groups, nursing homes, and the AARP have all sounded the alarm, saying these bills would do irreparable damage to our health system and to families that are trying to take care of their loved ones.

I urge Republicans to stop the politics. People across this country—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—don't want you to repeal healthcare for millions of people. Listen to those people. Listen to Baxter and Tom and Brody. Listen to all the people who love them.

I know there is a lot we could do to make healthcare more affordable in this country. I know there is a lot we could do to make our delivery system work better. We could work together and build something better for all of America. But we can't even start down that path if we rip away healthcare from millions of Americans. We just cannot do this. It is wrong.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for her good words and her advocacy.

I rise to join her and my colleagues on the floor in sharing the concerns I continue to hear every single day in my State, whether it is just simply walking the parades, as I did in Stillwater, MN, where people would come up off the sides, or, on the Fourth of July, when a family with a child with Down syndrome just came off the side of the parade and grabbed me and said we need healthcare for our son, that we cannot cut him off, that we cannot make these drastic, draconian reductions to Medicaid—because he is the face for Medicaid.

Right now, as far as I know, we have many versions of this healthcare bill. I think I heard this version referred to as option C. I was thinking that is not really correct because we have had options A and B. Those were the two House healthcare bills. We had options C and D, which were the two Senate healthcare bills. Then we went to option E, which was back to the idea of repealing without having a replacement. Now, as far as I know, after doing A, B, C, D, and E, we are at plan F. My mom was a teacher her entire life, and I learned from her that you cannot get much lower than F, right? I think it is time to set a new course, and that is to work together for a better grade for the American people and for a better healthcare plan, which means working across the aisle to

make changes to the Affordable Care Act.

The Minnesotans whom I have heard from do not like A, B, C, D, E, or F. On Friday, in fact, I received a letter that was signed by 121 different Minnesota healthcare organizations, and it talked about these past proposals.

They wrote this:

Minor changes or amendments will not change the ultimate impact of these bills and their deep and devastating impact on Minnesota and its citizens.

What were these groups?

They were pretty mainstream groups, those being the AARP Minnesota, our children's hospitals, the Autism Society of Minnesota, our nursing homes, the Minnesota Hospital Association, the Minnesota Nurses Association, Mental Health Minnesota, our Catholic Health Association, our addiction treatment professionals, and many more.

As different as these groups may be in their missions and in the work they do and who belongs to them and where they live, what they have in common is that they are dedicated to taking care of the health and well-being of Minnesotans. They are scared about what would happen if any of these proposals—A, B, C, D, E, or F—were to pass.

They have seen that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that with a number of these bills, it would mean that over 20 million people, if not all of them, would lose their health insurance, that Medicaid would get cut by more than \$700 billion, and that out-of-pocket costs would skyrocket. Deductibles for a benchmark plan could reach \$13,000 by 2026. They have seen that the Congressional Budget Office has found that a repeal bill without a replacement would be even worse, as 32 million people would lose their coverage, and premiums would double.

I understand why these Minnesota healthcare organizations are scared about these bills, but the people who are even more scared are the citizens of my State who depend on the Affordable Care Act for their healthcare.

As I said, we all knew, on the day it passed, that the Affordable Care Act was a beginning and not an end. You cannot pass a major piece of legislation like that without making changes over time. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few minor things, we have been, basically, blocked from making changes because we are always having thrown at us this idea of simply repealing everything and causing chaos. After the sentiment of the American people has been made quite clear—and you do not have to look at a poll to know that; all you have to do is walk down the Main Street during any parade in our State—now is the time for us to work across the aisle and make some positive changes.

What are those changes? For one, we know we must bring some certainty to the exchanges and stabilize the market.

I see the Senator from New Hampshire here who is the former Governor of New Hampshire. She knows, along with her colleague Senator SHAHEEN, we need to have more certainty in the marketplace. That is why we support the bill that would do that. We should vote on that bill.

I also support Senators Kaine and Carper's legislation—the Individual Health Insurance Marketplace Improvement Act—to reestablish a Federal reinsurance program. This bill would lower premiums by providing support for high-cost patients.

Now, the Republican legislature in my State—both houses are Republican—joined with the Democratic Governor in our State and passed a similar State-based reinsurance program.

I know Alaska, which, by all accounts, is a red State, has passed a reinsurance program that recently got approval from this administration. Just last week, as Senator HASSAN knows, New Hampshire announced its plans to pursue one as well.

So we can and we should come together to pursue this as one change we can make positively for the Nation.

Another is, it is long past time to do something about the rising cost of prescription drugs. I have a bill—and I see my colleague from Minnesota here as well, Senator FRANKEN. We have worked on this issue together on both bills, which is similar to this issue of harnessing the negotiating power of 41 million seniors who are on Medicare in order to bring drug prices down. Right now, Medicare is literally banned from negotiating on behalf of 41 million seniors. The last time I checked, the senior citizens in my State had a lot of power, and 41 million people, especially seniors, is a lot of negotiating power. Let's harness that because it will not just help to bring drug prices down in the Medicare Program, but it will help down the line for all citizens.

There is the bringing in of more competition. One way you do that is by dangling the prospect of competition from other countries. You can do it with a trigger that is based on the number of competitors you have in a certain market. You can do it based on an increase in price or you can just do it.

I and Senator MCCAIN, who is certainly in our thoughts and prayers this week, have long had a bill to allow Americans to bring in safe, less expensive drugs from Canada. That is very similar to that of the U.S. market. As I have often noted when I talk about this bill, we can see Canada from our porch in Minnesota. We can see those lower prices right across the border.

When we have developed so many lifesaving drugs, when we have done the research, when we have put government money—taxpayer money—into the research, why in this country do we have the most expensive drugs in the world?

I can tell you why. It is that we have not done anything about it here be-

cause, for too long, the pharmaceutical companies have been able to have their way when it comes to legislation. This is the end of that. Finally, the American people are starting to see this as not just campaign rhetoric but as a real problem when 4 out of the top 10 best selling drugs have gone up over 100 percent in just the last 10 years.

Here are some more ideas.

Senator LEE and I have a bill—bipartisan, across the aisle—that would again allow the temporary importation of safe drugs that have been on the market in another country for at least 10 years when there is not healthy competition for that drug in this country.

Generics. I and Senator GRASSLEY, a Republican from Iowa, have a bill to stop something called pay for delay, which is when big pharmaceutical companies actually pay off generic companies to keep less expensive products off the market. That is an outrage. I would challenge any Senator to vote against that. I do not think one will. That is why we need a vote, and that is a perfect example of a bipartisan bill that could be included in a package of measures that could be improvements on the Affordable Care Act.

How about this one? It is the CREATES Act, which is another bipartisan bill with me, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator LEAHY, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator LEE, and many others that would put a stop to tactics in which pharmaceutical companies refuse to provide samples that the generic companies need to develop new drugs. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this legislation would save taxpayers \$3.5 billion, and the one I just mentioned on pay for delay would save taxpayers \$2.9 billion.

Why would we say to the taxpayers of this country that we will not do that, that we will not even allow it to come up for a vote?

These are votes the Senate should and must take. Bringing up a bill that devastates the Medicaid Program or that repeals big parts of the Affordable Care Act, without having a replacement, does the opposite. It does nothing. These bills—A, B, C, D, E, or F—do nothing in terms of bringing down pharmaceutical prices.

What is this really about? It is about the identical twins whom I met yesterday from Cambridge, MN, which is a small town—a town similar, I am sure, to the towns the Presiding Officer would find in his State or to the towns in New Hampshire or to the towns Senator WHITEHOUSE would see in Rhode Island.

This is about identical twins. One of the twins is a pitcher, and one of the twins is a catcher on their softball team. One of the twins found out, just in the last year, that she has juvenile diabetes. It is a very dangerous, dangerous thing to have at that young age. The other twin is perfectly healthy. Of course, the family had to go immediately to the doctor. They bought in-

sulin, and the insulin had gone up three times what it should have in just the last few years. It is very difficult for them to afford now. They got the strips. They had to do all of this, and the price kept escalating. To add to everything else, now this mom is worried that one of her daughters, not two, will have a preexisting condition and be kicked off of the insurance.

Think about that. They are identical twins. It could be either one. You do not know which one. Is it the catcher? Is it the pitcher? It is a lottery. If you do not have healthcare like the Affordable Care Act in place, it is like a lottery. You do not know which one of them is going to be kicked off the insurance, not have insurance, and get very sick and possibly die. That is what we are talking about here.

That is not what this country is about. It could happen to anyone—to anyone in this Chamber, to anyone up in the Gallery, to anyone at home. You do not know when it is going to happen to you or your sister or your brother or your neighbor or your dad or your mom or your grandma or your grandpa. That is why we have affordable healthcare insurance.

This debate is also about our seniors and our rural communities. As Senator FRANKEN knows, we have heard time and time again from our rural hospitals—from Aurora to Gilbert, to Tower. I was up there recently, and that is what I heard about—the rural hospitals and how difficult it is going to be for them if any of these bills pass.

I know it is something our Republican colleagues, all of whom are from rural States—Senators Collins, Capito, and Murkowski—have expressed real concerns about with regard to the impact of some of the proposed Medicaid cuts and what they would do in their States.

Opioids. Both the Senator from New Hampshire who is here with me today, Senator HASSAN, and certainly Senator WHITEHOUSE have been leaders in this area. That is why we passed the Cures Act. That is why we put a bunch of funding from the Cures Act into opioid addiction treatment. That is why we passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act on a bipartisan basis—one of the few bills that made it through last year.

You cannot just run TV ads on it, and you cannot just put it on campaign brochures and then go out 6 months later and cut Medicaid, which provides the treatment for 32 percent of opioid medication-assisted treatments we have in our State. You cannot do that. You cannot give beautiful speeches and go to press conferences and then make those kinds of cuts. I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle understand this.

This is a time when we can chart a different path forward, when we can end up where we should have begun but still standing, and that is by working together to find some positive changes to the Affordable Care Act for the

American people. Again, I said it on the day it passed—it is a beginning and not an end. Let's seize this moment, open the door, and work together for the American people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the effort by Republicans in the majority to rip apart our healthcare system and jeopardize the protections for people with preexisting conditions and to throw millions of people off their health insurance.

Now, it is deeply troubling at this point that with less than 24 hours until the expected vote, we don't even know which version of repeal the Republicans hope to pass. Do Republicans support the Better Care Reconciliation Act—the bill that according to the Congressional Budget Office, would cause 22 million more Americans to become uninsured, which would drive up healthcare costs and dismantle the Medicaid Program? Do they support the Cruz amendment, which would bring back junk insurance plans that offer virtually no protection and drive up out-of-pocket costs for vital services or will they rally behind their backup option, a plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with nothing—that is, nothing—an approach that would add 32 million more Americans to the ranks of the uninsured and cause average premiums in the nongroup market to double or will it be something else entirely? We don't know.

This is reckless. This is irresponsible. The American people deserve better.

Let's be clear. A vote for the motion to proceed is a vote to move forward with conceivably any one of these bills, and all of these bills are terrible. They jeopardize lifesaving care and treatment for millions of American families, especially those with preexisting conditions. They tear apart our safety net and give tax breaks to powerful corporations.

Let me remind my Republican colleagues that a vote in support of the motion to proceed will have real-world consequences for your constituents who may lose their health insurance. Perhaps these are people you have met; people, many of whom may be losing sleep out of justified fear that their children or their parents, their loved ones or they themselves are at risk of losing their healthcare.

I have talked to so many people in my State about these dangerous proposals. There is Kristi. Kristi is a young farmer in Greater Minnesota whose husband and two kids relied on Medicaid to access care when their farm was struggling.

There is Sandy, whose mom is in a nursing home and who doesn't know how she will pay for the round-the-clock care her mother needs if Medicaid, which covers more than 6 in 10 nursing home residents nationwide, scales back coverage.

Then, this is Sheri, who said that if it weren't for Medicaid, her son Brandon, who has cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus, probably wouldn't be here. I met Brandon. I think he is 18 or 19. He was born 15 weeks early, in Minneapolis, about a pound and a half. They took him to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. The Mayo Clinic said: We can't handle him, so they sent him back to Minneapolis to Gillette Children's Hospital, which could. They told Brandon's parents: He is going to require \$1 million in care the first day to save his life.

Brandon has had, I think, 37, 38 surgeries. He spoke at a meeting we had on Medicaid a couple of weeks ago in Minnesota, and he stood—he had a walker. He had just gotten an A-minus in his first college course. He was actually, in a way, the last person in the room I was worried about because his resilience—this guy, this kid is going to be amazing. I don't think he would be here if we didn't have the kind of Medicaid we have and the kind of Medicaid my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are talking about limiting in a way that will affect so many people I have met across my State.

This is one of those votes that will go down in history. It is one of those votes that all of us will be answering for wherever we go for the rest of our lives.

The former Republican Senator from Minnesota, David Durenberger, outlined some of the reasons Senators should not vote for this consequential legislation in an excellent op-ed, a piece he wrote, and it was in USA TODAY today. Senator Durenberger—again, a Republican from Minnesota and someone whom I talk to a lot about healthcare—wrote this piece, saying resist the bullying, don't vote for a mystery healthcare bill.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD Senator Durenberger's op-ed.

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

FORMER GOP SENATOR: RESIST THE BULLYING. DON'T VOTE FOR A MYSTERY HEALTH CARE BILL

There will be no do-overs on this. Take it from me: a no vote this week is the only one that will be defensible in the years to come.

What do you do when you are a U.S. senator and the president wants you to vote for a health care bill that could radically change health care?

You ask questions. You hold hearings. You understand what it would mean to your constituents. You listen to those who know the system. And when it doesn't add up, you vote against it.

The year was 1979, and I was a freshman Republican senator from Minnesota. Inflation was driving the already high costs of health care through the roof. President Carter wanted to use Medicare and Medicaid to limit increases in hospital budgets in the face of rapidly inflating costs.

Ultimately, I decided to vote against it as it would end up hurting the people of my state and was inconsistent with my beliefs. And then, after the vote, we—Democrats and

Republicans—launched an effort to learn how best to change the cost curve of the entire health system by focusing on how we pay for Medicare.

This week, the Senate once again is set to vote on a health care bill that will radically change how people get coverage and who can afford their care. But unlike normal times, Senators, you are being asked to approve a Motion to Proceed to a vote:

Without knowing what will be in the bill.

Without knowing what the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office will say about the impact of major amendments and the final bill on coverage and premiums.

With full knowledge that the Senate parliamentarian, who rules on what can and can't be allowed in a budget bill, has said that the Senate must remove provisions intended to prevent an insurance market death spiral

Without knowing the details of the secret state Medicaid waivers the Trump administration insists will make the bill work.

Without knowing how your own state budget will be impacted.

Without knowing how you will defend the provisions you will only learn about later, including the payoffs and other things that will be sneaked into the bill at the last minute.

Without even knowing which bill you are being asked to vote on, what the defining amendments will be and how much time you will have when being pressed for a final vote you'll be stuck with. Forever.

A vote in these circumstances will rightly provoke anger and distrust unlikely to abate. Take it from me: A no vote on the Motion to Proceed this week is the only one that will be defensible in the years to come.

I have had my arm twisted by the best of them—presidents and Senate leaders and party whips alike. I know how uncomfortable it can be. Usually, they were able to attempt a convincing argument about what is good about the bill for the country or my state. But I never would have voted for something so far reaching without knowing the answer to all the questions above.

Never in all my years did I experience the level of bullying we see today. It doesn't look good in Minnesota, and I suspect it doesn't look any better in your state.

I know that some of you ran for office vowing to repeal the Affordable Care Act, hoping to improve coverage and decrease costs. As public opinion polls tell us, voters do not believe this bill does the job. The good news is we haven't run out of time to ask questions and to work together to fix what needs fixing if we take the time to return to regular order and hold hearings.

Seven years ago, Democrats supported a bill far from Democratic orthodoxy. It did not provide for single payer, nor Medicare for all. Not even a public option. They handed Republicans a chance to build a health system that plays to our unique strengths as a nation, not to our weaknesses.

As someone whose efforts earned the support of both Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush to reduce health care costs without leaving anyone behind, I know our party can do much better. But it should be obvious to all of you listening to your constituents that voting on this hodgepodge of mysterious bills is not the way.

Because there are no do-overs. The vote for the Motion To Proceed is likely a vote for final passage, and the House clearly stands ready to pass the Senate bill unchanged.

There is no making good on all of the issues later. Once the funds for health coverage are gone, it will take new tax increases to replace them. And what's the likelihood that will happen?

There will be no hiding this vote. Let me assure you, as the official scorekeeper, the

CBO will eventually score the entire bill, and that's what your vote will be evaluated on.

For those who worry about re-election politics, I can assure you that going into a campaign confident that you've done what's best for every one of your constituents, not just for those who want to stick you with a stale slogan, is the best medicine you'll ever have prescribed for you.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, there aren't many votes like this in a Senator's career so let's just lay this out. If you support the vote tomorrow, the following are some of the specific consequences that could follow and in many cases would follow.

First, it is a vote that would open debate on bills that would undermine protections for people with preexisting conditions. This could happen in one of two ways. This vote could open debate on the potential Cruz amendment, which would allow insurance companies, as long as they offer ACA-compliant plans on the exchanges, to also sell bare-bones, skimpy plans outside of the exchanges, with almost no consumer protections. Under this amendment, insurers would be allowed to deny coverage and charge higher rates to women, older adults, and individuals with preexisting conditions. To my Republican colleagues, I ask: Do you know someone who is pregnant? Do you know someone who has diabetes? Asthma? Depression? Cancer? Multiple sclerosis? Substance use disorders? Arthritis? Dementia? Sleep apnea? Parkinson's? All of these people could be denied coverage under the Cruz amendment, just as they were prior to the ACA.

The Cruz amendment will also bring back annual and lifetime limits, coverage exclusions, and more.

When I was campaigning in 2008, and I would go around Minnesota—cafes, VFW halls, bars—there would be a flyer up for a family who had gone bankrupt for someone who had gotten sick. This would bring back those annual limits, those lifetime limits. Do we really want to go back to that?

The Cruz amendment is intended to deceive. The amendment is designed to make people think it would lower premiums since it would allow insurers to offer stripped-down plans that don't comply with the ACA's consumer protections, but what it actually does is skyrocket the price of insurance for people with preexisting conditions like epilepsy, Crohn's disease, and stroke, while eviscerating the quality of insurance for those who don't yet need, or know they need, such coverage.

In fact, America's Health Insurance Plans, which is the national political advocacy and trade association of companies that sell health insurance to Americans, and the BlueCross BlueShield Association have said this proposal is "simply unworkable in any form and would undermine protections for those with preexisting medical conditions, increase premiums and lead to widespread terminations of coverage for people currently enrolled in the individual market."

The fact is, these high-deductible, bare-bones plans are a dangerous rip-off, and many people will not even realize what garbage insurance they have until it is too late.

Here is the thing. Even if the Cruz amendment were removed from the bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act would still undermine protections for people with preexisting conditions. That is because the bill would allow, and even incentivize, States to waive ACA protections like the guarantee of coverage for basic essential health benefits.

If you are allowed to offer plans that don't cover basic services like mental health, prescription drugs, and maternity care, then you have a backdoor channel to charge people who need those services more than those who don't. Not only that, States that seek waivers and end the guarantee of essential health benefits bring us right back into the world of annual and lifetime limits—a world where your care would end not because your doctor said so but because the insurance company would stop paying for it. This could be true even for people who get their health insurance through their employer. In fact, even if you work in a State that hasn't taken this waiver, your employer could have gotten their health insurance from a State that had.

In short, with or without the Cruz amendment, the Better Care Reconciliation Act breaks President Trump's promise to protect people with preexisting conditions.

Second, yes, tomorrow is a vote to end Medicaid as we know it. Medicaid is a lifeline, providing health insurance and access to care for more than 70 million Americans. That is about one in every five Americans. It includes seniors, pregnant women, people with disabilities, families with children.

Senator KLOBUCHAR was right about this being a lottery. Any of us can be in an accident. Any of us can be diagnosed at any time. Any of us can have a child who is diagnosed at any time with something unexpected.

Healthcare really should be a right. I don't understand people who say: I am healthy. My kids are healthy. Why should I suffer? I am the victim here. Nothing has happened to me. Why should we have a system where I am paying for people with preexisting conditions?

Really? Is that the attitude my Republican colleagues are taking? Because that seems to be the logic.

Medicaid had been a bedrock of our healthcare system since 1965. It was and is a Federal promise made to States and to all Americans over 50 years ago. And most of all, Medicaid works. But the Better Care Reconciliation Act would gut it. It would end the program's coverage guarantee, leaving States to either roll back coverage or slash other vital programs in order to meet their citizens' needs.

Finally, a vote to support the motion to proceed to this bill is a vote to drive

up people's total healthcare costs. The Republicans' plans decrease or eliminate the ACA's tax credits, which help people afford their insurance—that was part of the construct—and it dramatically hikes premiums for older Americans, although ones younger than I—I am now 66, but from 50 to 64. It drives up deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs that many people have to pay in order to receive care.

Americans don't like these proposals. In fact, new polling shows that only 17 percent of Americans think they and their families will be better off under the Republican plans. That is 17 percent.

What Americans want is for Republicans and Democrats to work together to build on and improve the Affordable Care Act. So why do my Republican colleagues continue to push forward on these terrible bills? It doesn't have to be this way. There is another option. This body can reject the wrongheaded and ill-thought-out proposals and allow for an open, bipartisan process under regular order where we can work together and do the things the American people actually sent us here to do—expand coverage, lower costs, and improve care. We should have bipartisan hearings where we hear from non-partisan expert witnesses about the challenges facing the Affordable Care Act so we can work together to fix what isn't working in the ACA.

What we do know from the last few years is that coverage matters. This is important. Coverage matters. Just having coverage matters. Healthcare isn't really about these big, heroic emergencies. A person's health is about some of those events, but what it is really about is having coverage and getting continuous care throughout your life.

Rigorous studies have shown that for every 300 to 800 adults who get coverage, 1 life is saved per year. Research summarized by Atul Gawande and his colleagues in a recent *New England Journal of Medicine* piece finds that health coverage expansions have improved people's access to care, improved their financial security, meaning fewer bankruptcies and medical bills sent to collections, improved chronic disease care and outcomes, improved self-reported health, and more. Overall, health insurance has been shown to help Americans live longer, healthier lives. Now is not the time to roll back our progress.

I urge my Republican colleagues to think about what a vote for proceeding on this terrible legislation would mean for the American people.

Paul Wellstone said that politics isn't about winning; it isn't about money; it isn't about power; it is about improving people's lives. Our constituents sent us here to improve their lives. So I urge my Republican colleagues to vote no. Let's work together to fix what needs to be fixed in the Affordable Care Act and do all we can to

make sure people have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare when they need it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to the Senator from New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Minnesota for his words and his advocacy on behalf of the people of his State and all across our country.

I rise today to join my colleagues and once again speak out against the Senate Republican healthcare bill and the dangerous impact it would have on the people of my home State of New Hampshire and Americans from all walks of life.

This week, Senate Republicans are pressing ahead with plans that would increase health insurance costs, give Americans worse health insurance, and strip away health coverage from millions of Americans. Yet, despite statements that a vote will come tomorrow or in a matter of days, Senate Republican leadership will not tell even their own Members what proposal we will vote on, let alone hold a hearing on the impact of the bill.

As version after version of this bill has emerged from behind closed doors, somehow each time it is even worse than the last, and every version would be devastating for people across New Hampshire. These bills would lead to higher costs for worse coverage. In fact, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has said we would see even higher deductibles than the ones we already see. This proposal would decimate the Medicaid Program and end Medicaid expansion. It would take coverage away from millions. The Congressional Budget Office has projected that between 22 and 32 million people would lose coverage, depending on which bill we vote on.

We know that rising healthcare costs are squeezing hard-working people across America. I have made clear to my colleagues across the aisle that I am willing to work with anyone who is serious about working together to build and improve on the Affordable Care Act, to lower costs, but unfortunately these Senate Republican bills would do just the opposite.

Over the past months, I have heard from people all across New Hampshire. They have shared their most personal stories, their frustrations, and their fears about what will happen if this bill becomes law.

Last month, Senator SHAHEEN and I held an emergency hearing in Concord to hear from our constituents about how proposals put forward by Senate Republicans would impact them. We held this emergency hearing at 2 p.m. on a Friday afternoon in the summer, with just a day's notice. Yet hundreds of people showed up, and more than 50 people got up and shared their most personal stories about the importance of healthcare, of how they have benefited from the important protections

provided under current law, including maternity care, prescription drug coverage, and coverage for substance use disorder services.

One of those Granite Staters was a woman named Maura from Exeter, NH. Maura told us that the Affordable Care Act has been a "financial life-saver" for her family. She explained to us how, when she signed up for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act, her premiums dropped by \$750 a month because of subsidies. As Maura described it, she and her family were able to put the extra \$750 each month toward childcare, food, and their mortgage.

On another recent visit to Granite State Independent Living in Concord, a nonprofit that provides a range of assisted-living services for Granite Staters, I also heard about the importance of Medicaid from a Granite Stater named Terry. Terry has physical disabilities and requires the assistance of personal care aides, who are paid through Medicaid. They help her with daily tasks, such as getting up in the morning and getting dressed and preparing meals. Terry said that without the support from Medicaid, she wouldn't be able to go to work, to her job, or do basic tasks, such as shopping on her own. Without Medicaid, she would need to burden her family in order to complete everyday, basic activities, and she wouldn't be able to go to work. Terry fears that this support could be taken away under this legislation, and she is right. It could be. She said that given the cuts to Medicaid and the provisions in TrumpCare, she "wouldn't get anywhere near what I need to survive."

Finally, I have heard from advocates and those in recovery from substance use disorders about how vital Medicaid expansion has been in helping them get the support they need in order to get well and back on their feet. In fact, those on the front lines of this epidemic have said that Medicaid expansion is the No. 1 tool we have in order to combat the heroin, fentanyl, and opioid crisis, which is the most pressing public health and safety challenge facing my State.

A few weeks ago, I visited Goodwin Community Health in Somersworth and heard from a woman named Elizabeth. At one point in her life, as a result of substance misuse disorder, Elizabeth was homeless and she had lost custody of her son. Elizabeth is now in recovery, and she works at the SOS Recovery Community Organization in Rochester, helping others get the support they need.

She said that she owes her recovery to Medicaid expansion and the Affordable Care Act and that holding on to Medicaid is essential because without it, many people who are in the throes of addiction would not be able to find help.

Elizabeth said:

I just really want to emphasize the ripple effect that recovery has on the community.

It's not just because I'm in recovery that I can help somebody else. Everyone around me is impacted. When we talk about the recovery revolution, it's about how everyone in the community is affected when someone gets into recovery.

Elizabeth is right. People who can get healthcare can get healthy, and that has a tremendous ripple effect. It lifts us all. It makes us productive and strong.

At the heart of all of these stories—Maura, Terry, and Elizabeth—and the stories that I hear all over my State is the basic fact that our communities, our families, and our entire country are better off when we give more people a chance to participate, to get the support they need, to live their lives with dignity, to contribute to our economy, and to thrive.

Unfortunately, if TrumpCare becomes law, the progress we have made will be lost, insurance costs will rise, and millions of people will lose the care that they need.

I am going to continue to stand with my Democratic colleagues and fight against this legislation until we defeat it once and for all.

I urge the people of New Hampshire and across our beloved United States of America to continue speaking out about how this legislation would impact their lives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I do not know—and I don't know if anyone knows—whether the Republican so-called healthcare legislation will pass tomorrow, whether the beginning of the debate will take place or whether it will not. I don't know that, but this I do know. The legislation being proposed—and by the way, we still don't know what that legislation is. In general, what we do know is that the legislation being proposed is the cruelest, most destructive, and irresponsible piece of legislation ever brought to the U.S. Senate in the modern history of our country.

I know the media focuses on, do the Republicans have the votes, how is this Senator going to vote, how is that Senator going to vote? All of that is interesting to those of us inside the beltway. The far more important issue—which we don't discuss enough; the media doesn't cover enough—is what this legislation actually would do if it were implemented.

Right now, unique among major countries on Earth, we do not guarantee healthcare to all people as a right. The result of that is that we now have today—before this disastrous legislation—28 million Americans who have no health insurance and even more who have high deductibles and high copayments, preventing them from getting to a doctor when they should.

We have a bad situation now. It is better today than before the Affordable Care Act was passed, when we had over

50 million people without insurance, but no one suggested what we have today is where we should be. Yet we have 28 million people uninsured. The Republican solution to this problem is to throw another 22 million people off of the health insurance that they currently have.

I want the American people to, for one moment, put themselves in the place of someone tonight who may be watching what we are talking about here, who has cancer, who has heart disease, who has diabetes or some other life-threatening illness. Millions of people are in that position. They are struggling for their lives right now. They are under treatment. They are thinking, what happens if this Republican bill is passed? Will I live and continue to get the treatment that I need or will I die?

I think there are very few Members of the Senate who have met with their constituents on this issue, who have not seen people break into tears, asking: What is going to happen to me or my children or my parents?

We did a teleconference townhall a few weeks ago in Vermont. We had some 16,000 people on the line, and a woman whose kid has a very, very serious illness called. The cost of the prescription drugs are off the chart. She asked: What is going to happen to my child if this bill goes through?

Do you know what? I didn't have the guts to tell her what might happen to her child. I don't want to be on the phone telling any person in Vermont or in America that their child might die because of the legislation that might proceed tomorrow.

This legislation would cut Medicaid by almost \$800 billion over a 10-year period, taking healthcare away from lower income and working-class families, including many children with special needs, kids with Down syndrome, kids who have serious emotional problems, kids whose lives now depend on Medicaid. When you cut Medicaid by \$800 billion, many of those children will lose coverage entirely or receive significantly fewer benefits.

This legislation, when we cut Medicaid by \$800 billion, will have a severe and dramatic impact on nursing homes all over America. A lot of people don't know this, but if your mom has Alzheimer's and is in a nursing home or your dad has a terminal illness and is in a nursing home, guess what: Medicaid pays almost two-thirds of the costs associated with nursing home care in America. What happens to the people in nursing homes when you slash Medicaid? How many of them will get thrown out of the nursing homes? Where do they go? Are families in America, working-class families, going to be forced to make the choice of whether they take care of their parents or whether they send their kids to college? Those are the choices that working-class families may have to make if this horrific legislation gets passed.

This legislation would dramatically decrease funding for the opioid and her-

oin epidemic that is sweeping this country, including my State of Vermont, including Kentucky, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Ohio, and States all over the country that are struggling with the opioid addiction problem.

The program that provides the most funding to help deal with addiction treatment and addiction prevention happens to be Medicaid. What happens to our efforts to try to get a handle on this terrible, terrible epidemic sweeping our country when you make massive cuts to Medicaid?

I found it amusing that when Donald Trump ran for President—oh, he was a great friend of the working class. He was going to stand up for the working class. Let me mention to workers all over this country who are in their sixties that if this legislation passes, your premiums are going to go up dramatically. That is one of the reasons the AARP strongly opposes this legislation.

If you live in Baltimore, for example, where I was this morning, speaking to the NAACP—in Baltimore, if you are 60 years of age and you make \$40,000 a year, your average health insurance premiums will go up from about \$4,000 a year now to \$8,800 per year, more than double. If you are a 62-year-old worker, making \$40,000 a year—not a lot of money—how are you going to pay that?

Remember, all that Donald Trump said about what a great friend of the working class he was. This legislation would defund Planned Parenthood.

I get a kick out of hearing my Republican friends talk about choice, freedom. Oh, my goodness, they love choice and freedom. They want the American people to go to any place they want to go. It is all about what America is about. Two and a half million women have made a choice, and the choice they have made is that they want to get their healthcare from Planned Parenthood. That choice, that freedom would be taken away from them, starting tomorrow, if this legislation is passed.

When you think about insurance, you think that insurance is about covering you in your time of need. Before the Affordable Care Act was passed, many millions of the American people could not get the health insurance they needed to address their particular healthcare crisis. If you had a heart disease, if you had breast cancer, if you had diabetes, the insurance companies would say: We are in the business of making money. Why on God's Earth would we want to insure you if you had breast cancer 5 years ago and it is possible it might recur? That is a losing proposition for us.

That is what insurance companies want to do. They are not in the business of providing healthcare. They are in the business of making money. They denied, unbelievably—think about how crazy this is; they actually would deny coverage to people who had preexisting conditions.

I have problems with the Affordable Care Act. It is far, far from perfect. It did end that obscenity of allowing insurance companies not to cover people who had preexisting conditions—something that is quite unbelievable.

Guess what. If this legislation is passed, in all likelihood, many people in this country with preexisting conditions will not be able to get healthcare that they need at a price they can afford. We don't quite know how many of them will die. Nobody can make that prediction.

I want to read for you a very interesting article that appeared from an institution called PolitiFact. PolitiFact is an entity that tries to keep a check on what politicians say. They look at you and you make a statement, and they say: Is this true or is this guy not telling the truth? I was on a TV program called "Meet the Press" a number of weeks ago. I said: Well, you know, if this Republican legislation is passed, thousands of Americans will die.

And my Republican colleagues and the rightwing media said: BERNIE SANDERS is engaging in hyperbole. He is exaggerating. Who wants to see anybody die?

I know nobody here wants to see anybody die. Of course not. No Republican does. No Democrat does. No Independent does. But we have to look at the consequences of what we do.

So what PolitiFact did was take a look at the studies to see whether I was telling the truth.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the PolitiFact article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From www.politifact.com, June 27, 2017]
BERNIE SANDERS' PROJECTION OF THOUSANDS' OF DEATHS FROM LOST HEALTH COVERAGE IS WELL-SUPPORTED

(By Louis Jacobson)

During an interview on NBC's Meet the Press, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-VT., didn't hold back in his criticism of Republican efforts to roll back the Affordable Care Act: He said such legislative efforts will literally be deadly.

"What the Republican proposal (in the House) does is throw 23 million Americans off of health insurance," Sanders told host Chuck Todd. "What a part of Harvard University—the scientists there—determine is when you throw 23 million people off of health insurance, people with cancer, people with heart disease, people with diabetes, thousands of people will die."

Sanders continued, "I wish I didn't have to say it. This is not me. This is study after study making this point. It is common sense."

Even if it seems like common sense that insurance would save lives, would it be on the scale of "thousands," as Sanders said? And would legitimate studies show that?

STUDYING THE STUDIES

When we contacted Sanders' office, spokesman Josh Miller-Lewis cited two sources.

One is the "Harvard study" Sanders mentioned—published on June 22, 2017, by the liberal Center for American Progress. It was

coauthored by a Harvard professor of social epidemiology; two medical students who graduated from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and two policy specialists at the Center for American Progress.

To come up with their estimates, the authors of the Harvard-Center for American Progress report adapted the results of a peer-reviewed 2014 study of the Massachusetts state health care law—a law that was a model for the Affordable Care Act. The 2014 study was lead-authored by Harvard professor Benjamin D. Sommers.

The Harvard-Center for American Progress study projected that there would be one excess death for every 830 people who lose coverage as a result of the AHCA. Using Congressional Budget Office projections of the impact of the House version of the bill, the authors estimated an additional 217,000 deaths over the next decade, or 21,700 per year.

The second piece of evidence Sanders' office cited was an op-ed by yet more health policy specialists who are affiliated with Harvard—David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler, who are professors of public health at Hunter College-City University of New York as well as lecturers at Harvard Medical School.

The op-ed—published on Jan. 23, 2017, well before either chamber's Republican health care bill was introduced—used as its basis a different study lead-authored by Sommers. This 2012 study tracked what happened after states expanded Medicaid.

Adapting the findings of the 2012 study to a scenario in which 20 million Americans lost coverage—which turned out to be lower than what the CBO found for the House bill—Himmelstein and Woolhandler estimated that there would be 43,956 deaths annually due to the GOP's health policy changes.

It's worth noting, however, that both of these projections come from the ideological left. As we noted, the Center for American Progress is a liberal think tank. And Himmelstein and Woolhandler are founders of Physicians for a National Health Program, a group that advocates for single-payer national health insurance—a proposal that is even further to the left than the Affordable Care Act.

So can Sanders' assertion be supported by the peer-reviewed literature alone?

WHAT PRIOR STUDIES SAY

In our previous fact-checking of this issue, we found at least seven academic papers that detected a link between securing health insurance and a decline in mortality. Here's a rundown.

In 2002, a panel of more than a dozen medical specialists convened by the federally chartered Institute of Medicine estimated that 18,000 Americans had died in 2000 because they were uninsured. In January 2008, Stan Dorn, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute, published a paper that sought to update the IOM study with newer data. Replicating the study's methodology, Dorn concluded that the figure should be increased to 22,000.

A 2009 American Journal of Public Health study concluded that a lack of health insurance “is associated with as many as 44,789 deaths in the United States, more than those caused by kidney disease.”

Three studies looked at state-level expansions of Medicaid and in each case found “significant” improvements in mortality after such expansions of coverage. These include a 2012 New England Journal of Medicine study of New York, Maine, and Arizona by Harvard researchers, and a 2014 study of Massachusetts by researchers from Harvard and the Urban Institute. (These were the two articles that formed the basis of the analyses cited by Sanders' staff.)

A 2014 study published by the blog of the health policy publication Health Affairs looked at states that, at the time, had declined to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. It estimated that the 25 states studied would have collectively avoided between 7,000 and 17,000 deaths.

A 2014 study in the Journal of Clinical Oncology found improved survival rates for young adults with cancer after securing insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

A 2017 study in the journal Medical Care looked at a provision of the Affordable Care Act that allows young adults to be covered under a parent's policy. The study found a decline in mortality among this population from diseases amenable to preventive treatment. (Mortality from trauma, such as car accidents, saw no decrease, as would be expected.)

We found two papers with results that were more equivocal.

A paper published in April 2009 in HSR: Health Services Research. In it, Richard Kronick of the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California (San Diego) School of Medicine, raised questions about the conclusions of the seminal Institute of Medicine study from 2002. Kronick's study adjusted the data—as the IOM had not—for a number of demographic and health factors, including status as a smoker and body mass index, and found that doing so removed the excess number of deaths found in the original study.

A 2013 paper in the New England Journal of Medicine coauthored by Katherine Baicker of Harvard University compared about 6,000 patients in Oregon who got coverage through a 2008 Medicaid expansion and about 6,000 who didn't. While the study found improvements in out-of-pocket medical spending and lower rates of depression among those who got coverage, key benchmarks for physical health—including blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar—did not improve in such patients.

But even the two lead authors of the more equivocal studies have told us that the scholarly record demonstrates that having health insurance saves lives, and that not having insurance can lead to additional deaths.

We asked several of the authors of these papers whether they believe Sanders' assertion of “thousands” of deaths is generally supported by the scholarly evidence. We heard back from three of them.

“‘Thousands’ is completely fair,” Dorn said.

Baicker agreed. “It is of course difficult to pin down an exact number of deaths that would be caused by a specific new policy,” she said. “But a number like ‘thousands’ does not seem unreasonable, based on the available evidence.”

And Sommers—whose work formed the indirect basis of the studies cited by Sanders—concurred.

“I agree that it's challenging to pin down an exact number on this,” Sommers said. But overall, the academic evidence “certainly gets you into the range of thousands of deaths per year.”

OUR RULING

Sanders said, “When you throw 23 million people off of health insurance—people with cancer, people with heart disease, people with diabetes—thousands of people will die. . . . This is study after study making this point.”

Sanders' statement on Meet the Press was phrased generally enough to be defensible. We found ample evidence in the academic literature to suggest that legislation on the scale of the House bill would produce “thousands” of additional deaths.

That said, we can't say with any specificity how many deaths will occur. It's im-

portant to note that the studies provide estimates only, and each study found a slightly different result. On balance, we rate the statement Mostly True.

Mr. SANDERS. One of the studies my office cited was published on June 22, 2017, by the Center for American Progress. It was coauthored by a Harvard professor of social epidemiology, two medical students who graduated from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and two policy specialists at the Center for American Progress. I won't go through all of the details, but I will say this, quoting from PolitiFact:

The Harvard-Center for American Progress study projected that there would be one excess death for every 830 people who lose coverage as a result of the AHCA.

The Republican bill.

Using Congressional Budget Office projections of the impact of the House version of the bill, the authors estimated an additional 217,000 deaths over the next decade, or 21,700 per year.

That is not BERNIE SANDERS; that is a study done at Harvard.

The second piece of evidence Sanders' office cited was an op-ed by yet more health policy specialists who are affiliated with Harvard—David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler, who are professors of public health at Hunter College-City University of New York as well as lecturers at Harvard Medical School.

Adapting the findings of the 2012 study to a scenario in which 20 million Americans lost coverage—which turned out to be lower than what the CBO found for the House bill—

They estimated 23 million would lose coverage—

Himmelstein and Woolhandler estimated that there would be 43,956 deaths annually due to the GOP's health policy changes.

Quoting again from PolitiFact:

So can Sanders' assertion be supported by the peer-reviewed literature alone?

Then they cite some studies.

In 2002, a panel of more than a dozen medical specialists convened by the federally chartered Institute of Medicine estimated that 18,000 Americans had died in the year 2000 because they were uninsured. In January 2008, Stan Dorn, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute, published a paper that sought to update the IOM study with newer data. Replicating the study's methodology, Dorn concluded that the figure should be increased to 22,000.

A 2009 American Journal of Public Health study concluded that a lack of health insurance “is associated with as many as 44,789 deaths in the United States, more than those caused by kidney disease.”

And on and on it goes. This is not BERNIE SANDERS talking; this is scientific and medical study after medical study saying what is obvious—that if you have a life-threatening disease and cannot get healthcare, you will die.

So I would hope that my Republican colleagues, as they vote tomorrow, understand the consequences of their vote. I know no Republican—nobody here—wants to see anybody die, but when you take 23 million people off of the health insurance they have, many thousands of those people will die.

I think most Americans would think that when you are dealing with an

issue like healthcare, which impacts, by definition, every single person in our country, and when you are dealing with an issue that impacts about one-sixth of the American economy—over \$3 trillion a year—that you just might want to have some serious discussions on that issue. You might want to ask—here is a radical idea—doctors what they think about this legislation. What is it going to mean to their patients? Wow, that is a pretty radical idea when dealing with healthcare for all the American people. You might want to have one hearing, maybe, and say to doctors: Doctors, what do you think about this bill?

What about hospitals? How will this bill impact hospitals, especially rural hospitals in Vermont, Virginia, and all across this country? You might want to talk to a hospital administrator. You might want to talk to a patient advocate, maybe somebody from the American Cancer Society or somebody who is active in the diabetes effort. You just might want to talk to the experts on healthcare as to how this legislation might impact the work they do. But, amazingly, in an unprecedented way, this legislation was written behind closed doors. I think it was 12, 13 Republican Senators who wrote this bill. Most Republican Senators don't even know what is in this bill, let alone Democrats and let alone the American people.

How do you write legislation that impacts every American, one-sixth of the economy, and not have one public hearing to hear from those most knowledgeable about healthcare in America? But that is exactly what the Republican leadership has done. I know why they did that. It is not a secret. If you had a horrific piece of legislation, trust me, you would want as little public discussion as possible. You would try to hide what this bill does. I understand that. Yet, despite all of that, it turns out that virtually every major healthcare organization in America opposes this bill.

I don't know how you can go forward with legislation that has had zero public hearings, that is opposed overwhelmingly by the American people—last poll that I saw from USA TODAY had 12 percent support for this legislation—and go forward with legislation opposed by every major healthcare organization in America. This bill is opposed by the AARP, the largest senior group in America. It is opposed by the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, the Federation of American Hospitals, the Catholic Health Association, the American Lung Association, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the March of Dimes, the National MS society; and the American Nurses Association. In other words, virtually every major

healthcare organization does not want to see this bill passed.

The American people overwhelmingly do not want to see this bill passed. So how come it might pass? People don't want it. Healthcare organizations don't want it. Who wants it? I will tell how wants it—people who are going to get tax breaks. They think it is a great idea. Billionaires who got \$200 billion in tax breaks from the House bill think it is an extraordinary idea. So what if 23 million people lose their health insurance from the House bill. The top one percent will get \$200 billion in tax breaks. Large healthcare corporations like it. The insurance companies and the drug companies are going to get a combined hundreds of billions of dollars.

I will tell you who else likes it: those people associated with the Koch brothers who are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on elections. They like it because their ideology, their philosophy is that government should play no role in the concerns of the American people. Mark my words—if this bill, which would cut Medicaid by \$800 billion, passes, Medicare will be next. And in the House, they have already passed legislation that would voucherize Medicare. Social Security will not be far behind. That is the ideology of the Koch brothers and the people who fund the Republican Party. Their concern is with large campaign contributors, not the American people.

I hope very much that tomorrow when we assemble here—I gather in the afternoon—for a vote, the Republicans will think more about people in their own State, about their children, the elderly, the sick, and not just about their campaign contributors.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise this evening to help deliver a message from American families to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. The American people have sent a clear message to Washington. The message is that they do not want us to go forward with this partisan—and mean—healthcare repeal bill. But, incredibly, we are today about to embark on a vote to do the exact opposite.

What is happening in Washington this week is that we are completely ignoring the message that Wisconsinites and the hard-working American families across this country have sent for us to hear. Haven't you been listening?

To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, have you been listening to the calls pouring in from families in your States? Have you been listening to the voices of parents and their children, the schoolteachers and doctors, and the working people who are daily struggling to get ahead? These messages have been sent to Washington. They have been sent loudly and for too many months—in fact, for too many months for you to possibly not have

heard them. The American people don't want to pay more for less care. They don't want the age tax or the higher premiums this plan is offering. People with preexisting conditions don't want to be thrown into a high-risk pool or priced out of the coverage they have today. They don't want bare-bones insurance that doesn't cover the essential services and lifesaving care they may need. They don't want their loved ones who depend on Medicare for nursing home care or their disabled children who rely on Medicaid funding at school to have their care put at risk through caps and cuts. The American people don't want a plan that will make things worse.

It is hard for me to believe that Washington hasn't heard this message because I have been listening.

I have been listening to people like Jean. Jean is from Baraboo, WI. She told me that she is scared because her Crohn's disease would cost her a fortune if her preexisting conditions were not covered. She told me that she needs the healthcare she has today because "my husband ruptured a disk in his back that prevented him from getting a job that promised us coverage. So now he works multiple jobs."

I have been listening to Mary from Kenosha, WI. I met with Mary recently, and she told me about her son Kyle. Kyle, at a young age, was diagnosed on the autism spectrum and was never expected to learn to even speak. When Kyle was 7, medical professionals spoke with Mary and said that Kyle might have to be removed from his home and left to be cared for in an institution. But Mary had hope, and thanks to Medicaid, Kyle was able to receive some very specialized medical therapy for his autism, and he was able to remain at home. He was able to receive an education. He was able to get his driver's license, and now Kyle is attending college.

Mary is terrified, nonetheless, that this bill's drastic cuts to Medicaid would rob Kyle of the care he needs to achieve the independence that he has worked so hard for during his entire life. Mary told me about her concern for so many other families with similar situations.

I have been listening to Greg. Greg is from Stoddard, WI. He has no idea how he and other older Wisconsinites will be able to afford higher costs for healthcare. Greg's sons, both of whom have diabetes, are already struggling with skyrocketing insulin prices.

I have been listening to the Schaumburg family in Seymour, WI. Their daughter Zoe was born with a congenital heart defect. She had to have open heart surgery at 5 days of age. Now, Zoe is guaranteed coverage without being denied or charged more, but Zoe's parents are scared that this repeal plan will make things worse. When Zoe's mom, Chelsey Schaumburg, was told about how this plan would weaken the guaranteed protections and care that people have today, she said

this in her letter to me: "To me, it's like they're taking the American Dream from her . . . kids in Wisconsin with preexisting conditions . . . are counting on you to protect that right."

This isn't right. This isn't fair. It is not who we are.

If my colleagues who have been drafting this plan behind closed doors have not been listening to the messages of fear and anxiety from the American people, maybe they will listen to why this proposal is very personal to me.

When I was 9 years old, I got sick. I got really sick. I was in the hospital for 3 months. Following getting out of the hospital, I required significant follow-up care for nearly a year before I regained my full strength and fully recovered.

But when it came to health insurance, it was like I had a scarlet letter. My grandparents, who raised me, couldn't find a policy that would cover me, not from any insurer and not at any price. They had to pay for my care out of pocket, and I can tell you they made some major sacrifices to do so, all because I was a child who had been branded with those terrifying words "preexisting condition."

So what are we doing here? It is time to stop the partisan nonsense. The people of Wisconsin did not send me to Washington to take away people's healthcare. They sent me to fight for people like Zoe, Kyle, and Jean. What I hear from people in Wisconsin is that they want us working together to protect the care people have and to make it more affordable.

We should be working together to lower costs like skyrocketing prescription drug prices. We should be working together to strengthen the insurance market and give people more options. But we should not be working on partisan repeal legislation that will make things worse, that will leave millions uninsured, that will make healthcare more expensive, and that will price families out of the care they have today.

It is time we listened to the messages that are being sent to Washington. It is time we worked together across the partisan aisle to do our jobs—the jobs the American people sent us here to do on their behalf.

I hope the congressional majority will join me and my colleagues to work together to strengthen healthcare and to move our country forward.

I thank the body.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

MR. KAINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wisconsin and also my colleague from Vermont. Their words have been very powerful.

I also rise to talk about healthcare. We are told in the Senate that tomorrow we vote, but we don't know what we will be voting on. We will bring up a House bill that, by virtually every account, is not going to be the bill that we will be voting on, but we don't yet

know which version of healthcare we will be voting on if we proceed to the debate.

It is like a three-card monte game. There are all sorts of different versions that are out there on the table. One version would take health insurance away from 22 million people, one from 25 million, and one from 32 million, and we are not being told which one we will vote on.

When I was a kid, there was a TV show we used to watch, "Let's Make a Deal." One of the features of the show was this: What is behind door No. 1, and what is behind door No. 2? The contestants would have the opportunity to pick. One would be great, and one would be a disaster. That was the fun of the game show: What is behind door No. 1? What is behind door No. 2?

But this isn't about a game show. We are not participating in a game show. We are participating in a decision about the most important aspect of any person's life—their health—and about the most important expenditure they ever make with a dollar—a healthcare expenditure—and about the largest sector of the American economy—healthcare.

Instead of treating the issue with the gravity it deserves, there is a secret plan and a mystery vote without any hearings, shutting out the committees, including the HELP Committee, where I serve, shutting out the minority party, which represents 48 of the 100 Senators in this body, and, most importantly, shutting out the public. As the Senator from Vermont mentioned, in this body, the greatest deliberative body in the world, we have not had a single hearing. We have not heard from a single doctor, a single patient, a single hospital, a single nurse, a single insurance company, or a single medical innovator. We are about to take a vote on the most important expenditure in anyone's life and the largest sector in the American economy following a completely closed process where it has been the will of the majority to keep the door shut.

This isn't a game show.

Let me tell you how real this is. I did something on Friday that I often do. I started doing this in 2002. I live in Richmond, but I drive a number of hours to Wise County, VA, which is a county on the border between Virginia and Kentucky. It is a county where my wife's family is from. She grew up in Roanoke, but her dad is from Big Stone Gap, VA, in Wise County, right across the border from Pike and Hazard Counties in Kentucky.

There is a fairground in Wise—the Virginia-Kentucky fairgrounds. Back in the late 1990s, a Catholic nun, Sister Bernie, and two other wonderful nurses who have become friends—Teresa and Paula—decided to try to offer healthcare for people who didn't have health insurance at this county fairground. They just set up with a few volunteers, and they said: If you live in Appalachia, if you don't have health

insurance, if you need medical care or dental care, just come and we will see what we can do. They do this every July, for one weekend a year.

Here is what this has grown into. I first went when I was Lieutenant Governor in 2002. People start to arrive. I have talked about this on the floor. I just did it Friday, and I want to share some stories. They start to arrive Tuesday or Wednesday in cars. They camp in the campground. Now, it is July, and this weekend was the hottest weekend in the summer. They start camping with their kids, often in cars. Some are sleeping in cars. Some are throwing blankets out on the lawn next to a chain-link fence. They wait in the tens, in the dozens, in the fifties, in the hundreds.

Then they open the door at 6 a.m. It is Friday morning, and the people who have waited for days come in and get a number to see if they can get healthcare on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday from volunteer doctors in the richest Nation and the most compassionate Nation in the world.

When they opened the door on Friday morning, I was down there. I do what I do. I go and I work the registration booth, and I talk to people and register them so they can get healthcare. I got there a little late. They had opened the door at 6 a.m., and I got there 8 a.m. They had already given out numbers to 1,200 people in the first 2 hours. Over the course of the weekend, they serve thousands of people.

They come in to get dental care. For most of them, their teeth are too far gone. So it is just a matter of pulling their teeth. Some come in to have most of their teeth pulled, and then they can get dentures. They get an eye exam and find out: Wow, I should have gotten glasses 5 or 10 years ago. No wonder I have been such a poor student all the way through school, or no wonder I have had such a hard time on my job. I needed glasses.

They get a cancer screening. Sometimes they get something caught early, and sometimes they get something caught very late.

It is an amazing spectacle. It is uplifting because of the volunteers who turn out—doctors, dental hygienists, nurses, and the Lion's Club, which comes to do vision screenings. That is uplifting.

It is depressing and it is heart-breaking to see people sleeping up against chain-linked fences and sleeping crunched over in their car for days so that they can get a little bit of free healthcare in the richest Nation on Earth.

When I work the registration booth, I have to ask people a series of questions so that they know who they can go see when they are there. I worked the booth for about an hour and a half. Here is a question you ask everybody: How long has it been since you have seen a doctor? How long has it been since you have seen a doctor?

I had a mother of four kids. The kids were 12 and under, and they were sort

of buzzing around. The mom was sitting in a chair. You know what happens if you are a mom with kids that young. Your kids pick up something in school. They bring it home, and you get sick. This is what happens to parents. I have a colleague here with young kids, and he knows what I am talking about.

I asked the mother: How long has it been since you have seen a doctor?

I am not really sure.

So I was kind of going through my checklist. Have you seen a doctor within the last year?

No, not within the last year.

Have you seen a doctor within the last 2 years?

Not within the last 2 years.

Have you seen a doctor within the last 3 years?

I might have seen a doctor in the last 3 years.

That was a mother of four young kids.

I had somebody sitting across from me, and I asked her another common question: Are you employed? You ask everybody this. Part-time? Full-time?

I am not employed, but I am about to get my nursing license back.

Well, that is interesting. So you are in healthcare.

Well, I used to be. I am about to get my nursing license back.

Well, what happened?

Now, this wasn't on the questionnaire, but I couldn't resist asking her: What happened?

Well, I was a nurse. I had a great career. I had a great life. But then a doctor prescribed me opioids for arthritis, and the bottom fell out of my life. I got addicted to opioids, and I lost my license, and I lost virtually everything in my life. Now I am unemployed, but I am working as a counselor at a church, trying to help people who are also opioid addicted. I am about to get my license back, but I am not working yet, and I don't have insurance yet, and that is why, even though I am a nurse and I am a healthcare professional, I have waited in line for a couple of days to come get healthcare.

There was a woman from Maryland who had been laid off as a supervisor at McDonald's a number of months ago. She was unemployed. She had horrible dental problems that were way past being solved. She just needed to get a bunch of her teeth pulled to ease her pain. So get what this woman did. This is about an 8 or 9 hour drive from her house. When her teeth got so bad and so painful after her firing and she needed to have her teeth pulled, she couldn't go anywhere. She didn't have anybody to do it.

She said: I think there is this free clinic in Appalachia. Now, it is a couple of months out. So I am going to have to suffer through the pain for a while, but I also have to save up some money.

She saved up her money like most people would try to save money for a summer vacation. She saved up her

money so she could put enough gas in the car and pay for one night at a hotel and so she could drive for 9 hours to Wise County, VA, and wait in the line for days and come and get a bunch of her teeth pulled in the richest and most compassionate Nation on Earth.

By the way, I had another guy, and I asked him the question: What are you here for? Are you here for medical services, are you here for dental services or are you here for vision services?

He said: I am actually here for all three, but the problem is, it is the hottest day of the year. It is 95 and humid, and I am so sick, I can't sit out in the Sun all day. So I got to do two out of three. I can't do all three.

I said: Which are the two worst, is it the medical and dental or vision and dental or vision and medical? He said: Look, I will do dental and medical, but even though I have glasses and I need to get an upgrade, I can't wait around because I am so sick out in the hot Sun for so long. So you are just going to have to give me two out of the three. I can't wait all weekend. I can't wait all day in this dusty fairground on the 21st of July to get healthcare.

These people need us. They need us to be at our best. They need us to be thinking about them.

The first time I went to this clinic in Wise, I was struck by the magnanimity of the volunteers, I was struck by the need, but what really hit me was when I went into the parking lot. I expected to see cars from Virginia and Kentucky because Kentucky is 10 miles away from the fairgrounds. I might have expected to see cars from West Virginia, which is 100 miles away, or Tennessee, which is 40 miles away, but North Carolina is 150 miles away, South Carolina is 350 miles away, Georgia is 400 miles away, Alabama is farther, and Oklahoma is farther. People drive from all over the Southeast in the United States, in the richest nation on Earth, in the most compassionate Nation on Earth, to wait for days in a dusty campground in the heat of the hottest part of the summer so they can have their teeth pulled because they don't have healthcare.

The Affordable Care Act has cut the uninsurance rate to one of the lowest in recorded history, but we haven't gone far enough. We have to do better by these people who are sleeping in their cars or up against chain-link fences, who are traveling for 9 hours to get their teeth pulled, not worse. We want to have fewer people like this and fewer folks who need to do this, not more.

The vote we are going to have about whether it is 22 million or 25 million or 32 million people who lose health insurance, that is going the wrong way. We have to go a different way. We have to do better, not worse.

Most of the things we talk about in this Chamber are about issues. This isn't about issues, this is about who we are. This is about who we are as Senators. This is about who we are as

Americans. This is about who we are as thinking, feeling, breathing, believing human beings. It is about who we are.

A great teacher, a great teacher once laid out the yardstick: "I was sick and you took care of me." That is one version of the New Testament. There are other phraseologies from the 25th chapter of Matthew: I was sick and you visited me. I was sick and you cared for me. I was sick and you looked after me. The Teacher basically says, the way you treat someone who is sick is the way you treat the Creator.

It is important to be compassionate to somebody who is sick, and anybody who is hearing these words, you don't have to think for a second to think about somebody in your family who is suffering from cancer or dementia or mental illness or who has been the victim of an accident. There are faces appearing in your minds right now because we all have this in our families. The way we treat people who are sick is not just a measure of us, it is a measure of what we think about the Creator. When a great teacher said, "I was sick and you took care of me," he was giving an instruction to us about the way we should behave.

In the last week, I am struck by the fact that this body has been jolted by the news about two of our colleagues, both of whom who have had cancer diagnoses. Last week, we were shocked and saddened to hear about our colleague from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN, who is my chairman on the Armed Services Committee who is suffering a very tough form of cancer, and cancer is going to find a match in Senator MCCAIN.

This touches us in this body. A week or two before, we heard about another colleague on the Armed Services Committee who sits next to me at every committee hearing, Senator HIRONO, who just announced she has kidney cancer and just underwent surgery. I was chatting on the floor with her earlier tonight. I don't think she would mind me saying, she is strong and she is a fighter, like Senator MCCAIN is a fighter, but she is worried about it just like Senator MCCAIN would be. This touches everyone.

It touches the powerful, it touches the powerless. It touches the wealthy, it touches the poor. It touches men, it touches women. It touches the young, it touches the old. It touches everyone, and the way we treat people who are sick, the way we treat people who are anxious about their health is the way we treat the Creator. That is what we are taught. So let's live up to that standard.

Why would we do otherwise? Why are we here? Why did we run? Why do we serve? What do people expect of us? I was sick, and you cared for me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was sick, and you looked after me. I was sick, and you took care of me.

Is it that hard? Is it so important to rush it through and not have hearings and not have committees and not engage the Democrats and not listen to

the people sleeping against chain-link fences or driving 9 hours to get their teeth pulled?

We can't afford to get this wrong, and the talent of the people in this body convinces me beyond a shadow of a doubt that if we take the time, we can get this right. If we can get this right, why will we not take the time to get this right?

So I would plead with my colleagues, let's stand together on behalf of the sick, let's stand together on behalf of those who are counting on us.

Another part of the New Testament is the Letter of Paul to the Hebrews: "Because we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, we have got to do the right thing." We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who want us to do the right thing, and I know we can, and I pray we will.

With that Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I was really glad to be on the floor to hear the remarks of my great friend Senator KAINE.

It is gut-check time in the U.S. Senate. The legislation we are going to consider tomorrow would hurt a lot of people in ways I think that are very hard to fathom. One of our colleagues said: I didn't come here to hurt people.

Everybody came here with designs on how to make their community, their State, their Nation a better place, and we are on the verge of taking a vote on a bill that objectively will rain a level of devastation down on this country that is really hard to fathom.

I can't match Senator KAINE's eloquence talking about the personal stakes here. We take for granted the fact that as employees of the U.S. Senate, we get a health benefit that makes sure that if we do fall ill or if our children fall ill, we will not have to think about whether we have the money to be able to afford treatment, but that is not how it is for all of those families who lined up in Virginia to receive care. That is not how it is for those who come to a similar event in Connecticut that is targeted just for dental services but has a line that begins the night before and is oversubscribed before the event begins the next morning.

That is not how it was for the millions of American families who used to go bankrupt because, when faced between a choice of personal financial ruin and the death of a child or a loved one, they chose financial ruin. Until you have been faced with that choice, I don't think there is any way to understand it. It certainly is a choice no one in this Chamber will ever have to make.

In Connecticut, the Burger family made that choice. Before the Affordable Care Act was passed, in the 2-week period of time where Mr. Burger didn't have healthcare insurance, their son was diagnosed with cancer, and when he got on his new plan, it was a pre-

existing condition so it wasn't covered, and the Burger family lost everything. They went through their savings account. They lost their house. They went bankrupt. They were one of thousands and thousands of families who made that choice. That rarely happens any longer. The number of personal bankruptcies in this country has been cut in half because of the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act hasn't made healthcare magically affordable for everyone, but it has meant that people don't have to make that choice any longer. The scope of the pain we are talking about, if any of the three versions of this bill get the vote, is really hard to fathom. Under the original version of the bill, 23 million people would lose insurance.

I amended this chart when a series of changes were made at the last minute that CBO scored to reduce that number to 22 million, but this is the entire population of Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota and West Virginia, all losing healthcare at the same time, and the majority of that happens in the first year. So of the 22 million, 14 or 15 million of those people lose insurance next year. The scope of that devastation—12 months from now, 15 million less people having insurance, 15 million more people showing up in emergency rooms to get care—is something I don't think any of my colleagues really can get their head wrapped around.

For all the times President Trump said the Affordable Care Act is dead, that ObamaCare is in a death spiral, that is not true. It is a lie. It is a lie because the Congressional Budget Office says the death spiral only occurs if you pass any of the versions of the legislation we are considering; that if the Affordable Care Act stays in place, 28 million people will not have insurance—which is far too many—but if one of these bills go into effect, at the end of 10 years, we will have 50 million people without insurance.

A new report from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that the ACA markets are not collapsing despite what the White House says—despite the lies they perpetuate. Early results from 2017 suggest the individual market is stabilizing and insurers in this market are regaining profitability. "Insurer financial results show no sign of a market collapse." That is the Kaiser Family Foundation's finding which mirrors the finding of CBO.

The collapse in our insurance market only happens if one of these bills pass, and it is not just the number of people who lose healthcare. The folks we should care most about—the people who are making just enough money so they don't qualify for Federal programs but not enough money that they can save for retirement and pay for their kids' college bills and do all the things you need to do in order to lead

a respectable life—those people are going to be hurt worst by this bill.

If you are a 64-year-old getting ready for Medicare coverage, you are making \$56,000 a year, you are going to pay 170 percent more under this bill just in your premiums, never mind the extra money you are going to pay in copays and deductibles.

The CBO says that if these bills are passed, a single policyholder who purchases a plan at a 58-percent actuarial value in 2026 would have a deductible of roughly \$13,000 for medical and drug expenses combined, which is absolutely unaffordable.

By every metric, whether it be the amount of money that you pay or the number of people who do not have healthcare coverage, the CBO answers this question: Who gets hurt under the GOP healthcare plan? Pretty clearly, everybody, unless you are an insurance company, a drug company, or rich. If you are affluent and you can afford your own healthcare, you will be fine. If you are an insurance company or a drug company, you are going to get a big tax cut out of this. But everyone else will get hurt and get hurt really badly.

I have watched my Republican friends process this information. I have watched them, largely, stay silent. The Democrats are the only people on the floor of the Senate these days who are talking about healthcare. Most of my Republican friends are not willing to come down and defend any of these products, but those who have been have shifted their rationale.

Republicans who have been willing to come down and defend their plan concede that millions and millions of people will lose insurance, and they concede that rates will go up for most Americans. So they cling to one last value that underpins the Republicans' healthcare plan. In their words, that value is freedom—the freedom not to be insured. The Republicans suggest that you should not really worry about 32 million people losing insurance because those people really did not want insurance and now they will be free not to have it. That is just not what the CBO says. The CBO says that millions and millions of these people who will lose insurance desperately want it; they are just not going to be able to afford it.

It is also not true that the bill grants that kind of freedom. Insurance is compulsory under the Republican healthcare plan just like it is under the Democratic plan. It is just compulsory in a different way. The Republican plan says that as a penalty for not having insurance, you will be banned from purchasing insurance for 6 months. The Affordable Care Act says that if you do not purchase insurance, you will get a penalty on your tax form. Either way, it is a penalty.

Yet a new wrinkle has been thrown into this debate because last week it was ruled that, in a reconciliation, the Republicans cannot include this penalty provision. Without it, the entire

bill falls apart. Markets would collapse.

For all of the Republicans' talk about the freedom not to purchase insurance, they included a requirement in their bill that people buy insurance. They know they had to because they know that without it, the entire insurance market would collapse. Why is that? If you require insurance companies to charge the same thing for sick people as for non-sick people, then you have to encourage people who are not sick to buy insurance. If you do not, folks will just wait until they are sick to buy insurance, and the only people who will have insurance will be the people who have acute conditions. That will make insurance itself unaffordable, and insurers will stop offering products, or they will jack up rates to the point that it will be totally unaffordable for everyone.

In the Affordable Care Act, that is what led to the individual mandate. In the Republican healthcare bill, that is what led to this provision that locks you out of insurance for 6 months. But that has been ruled veritable. That has been ruled essentially out of order under reconciliation.

The Republicans are going to be faced with a choice if they are able to get on this bill. They will either remove that provision and guarantee the collapse of the entire insurance market in this country or they will have to strengthen that penalty in order for it to be allowed under reconciliation, but that will essentially rob the last rhetorical argument that the Republicans had in favor of this bill. They cannot argue that it provides more people with insurance. They cannot argue that it helps with cost. They cannot claim that it increases quality. They know that. The only thing left that they could argue is that it allows some people to go without insurance if they do not want it. In truth, their bill does not do that, and the rules of the Senate are going to require that they increase that penalty even more if they want any plausible, workable version of this bill to survive.

It leaves us in a place in which there is no argument to do this. It does not advance values that Republicans hold dear, like personal freedom, it does not improve people's healthcare experiences, and it does not increase the number of people who have healthcare insurance.

It really does beg the question: Why are we doing this? Did anybody come to the Senate with the desire to hurt this many people?

If I had told my Republican colleagues 4 years ago that their ACA replacement plan was going to drive up the number of people without insurance by 32 million and increase rates by 20 percent in year 1, would you have believed it? No. For 6 years, I took my Republican colleagues at their word. I did not agree with them that we should repeal the Affordable Care Act, but at least I thought they had the same

goals in mind as we did—more people having access to the healthcare system and costs being controlled for as many people as possible. It is now clear that we do not. The Republicans are about to vote on a bill that will inflict unthinkable amounts of pain on this country. Who gets hurt under the GOP health plan? Everybody.

I said this on the floor last week, and I will just say it again to close—that it does not have to be this way. We have accepted for so long that healthcare is a political ping-pong ball that gets tossed from one side to the other every 5 or 10 years.

Why is it so inconceivable that Democrats and Republicans could not sit down together and try to work out keeping the parts of the Affordable Care Act that are working and improving the parts that are not? Why couldn't the Democrats understand that the Republicans want flexibility of benefit design and give Republicans something on that if you understood that we want some certainty of these marketplaces? We do not want President Trump to be able to sabotage and undermine these markets. Why can't there be a compromise and a deal there?

There is still time. If this vote fails tomorrow, there is still the ability for us to come together, because in the end, there is the story Senator Kaine told about rural Virginia. Everybody here knows that story. Everybody here knows there is enormous work still to be done, and nobody out there is believing the lies about this bill, this wonderful healthcare plan President Trump is promising. Everybody in this country hates this bill. It has a 15-percent approval rate. These folks know there is virtually no one who is helped by this bill other than insurance companies, drug companies, and people who are very affluent and fortunate enough to be healthy.

We do not have a communicable disease on our side of the aisle. We are not going to physically hurt you if you get in a room with us. We actually do deeply desire to improve the healthcare system. You have just got to give us a chance.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to address the Republican plan to have a vote to proceed to a healthcare bill tomorrow. The only challenge is that we have no idea what bill we are being asked to proceed to. This is hardly the way a democratic republic operates in which the leader of the majority says: We want to come to the floor with no committee deliberation, no consultation with healthcare experts, no dialogue with the public, no amendments in committee of any kind, and vote on a mystery bill.

The biggest mystery to me is how it is possible that the majority of Republicans are taking seriously a plan to rip healthcare from 20 million-plus Ameri-

cans in order to give fabulous giveaways to the richest among us. The bill they entertained previously would have given \$33 billion to the richest 400 Americans—\$33 billion. I have mentioned this number before. Some journalists have quoted it as \$33 million, and some citizens have said that I meant \$33,000. No. It is \$33 billion to the richest 400 Americans—enough funds to pay for Medicaid for 700,000 people.

What individual would say it is moral to rip healthcare away from 20 million people in order to give tax breaks to the very richest among us? In some misguided, mysterious way, something has gotten ahold of the hearts and minds of my colleagues and made them think this was some kind of good idea to do so much damage to so many.

In fact, we have been having this conversation since January. It was earlier this year, when President Trump was sworn in, when the majority said: We are going to come to the floor of the Senate, and we are going to repeal healthcare for millions of Americans in short order.

Here we are 6 months later, and it has not happened yet—in part because when people look at the details, they start to raise questions.

It took a long time for the House to send a bill over to the Senate, and then the Senate proceeded to work on this bill with a group of 13 secret Senators—working in a secret room, in secret meetings—with the public not allowed, with fellow Senators not allowed. They came up with a bill that looked very much like the House bill, and we will talk more about that later.

The President said in his campaign and throughout much of this year: You are going to have such great healthcare at a tiny fraction of the cost, and it is going to be so easy.

Well, it has not been that easy. We have seen the President back a plan from the House and invite everyone over to celebrate at the White House and get the champagne bottles out and say how wonderful it was that the House had passed this healthcare bill—this bill that would strip healthcare from more than 20 million Americans. Then, a couple of weeks later, someone explained to him what was in that bill, and he said: Oh, well, that bill is mean and heartless. Then the secret 13 here in the Senate meet, and they come out with a very similar bill. And now Trump is all excited; now we have a really good bill, except that in a single year, it would do even more damage to healthcare in America.

Along the way, the President moderated his dialogue a bit and said: Who knew healthcare could be so complicated? Well, Mr. President, most of the people in America realize we have a complicated healthcare system. We have an overlapping system of six different systems of healthcare. It really is quite messy and difficult. It would be great if we could, in fact, adopt a much simpler system. And I certainly have

been advocating for us to have a much simpler system, so just by right of being an American, you are born into this world and you have healthcare. That is the way most developed nations do it, but not here in the United States of America. We have a great healthcare system for the very wealthy, and we have a very complicated, stressful system for everyone else.

What are we going to vote on tomorrow? I wish the majority leader would come to the floor and tell us. Will we vote on a motion to proceed to a bill that looks like—what? What can you tell us? Is it TrumpCare 3.0? How does it differ from TrumpCare 1.0 or 2.0? Will it have the Cruz amendment in it for fake insurance, the provision that would do enormous damage on both ends of the insurance market, providing fake insurance policies to the young and the healthy and destabilizing healthcare and putting it into a death spiral for everyone else? Or, Mr. Majority Leader, maybe you could come and tell us if you are planning a straight repeal of the ACA—a straight repeal that would raise costs and premiums even higher and not just rip healthcare from 20-plus million people, but from 30 million-plus people, a plan that would be even more devastating than the previous plan. Is that what you want us to vote to proceed to tomorrow?

I can tell you that we shouldn't be voting to proceed to any version on healthcare, something that so affects the peace of mind and the quality of life of Americans. We should be operating like a democracy, like a democratic republic—holding committee hearings, holding a conversation. This is what we did when we talked about the ACA those several years ago. We had more than 100 committee meetings, roundtables, and walk-throughs here in the U.S. Senate. We had the single longest markup of a healthcare bill in the HELP Committee ever in the history of the United States. We had the second longest session marking up the bill in the Finance Committee. We had the entertainment of hundreds and hundreds of amendments, and we adopted over 100 Republican amendments. There was a very public, extended process, with a ton of time to go home and consult with healthcare experts and stakeholders in our own States and with the most important stakeholders—the citizens of the United States of America—the men and women and sons and daughters and grandparents. How did they feel about these changes?

Well, as everyone knows, President Trump did call the House bill mean and heartless, but we just keep getting bills that are meaner and more heartless. The House bill would kick 23 million people off insurance over the next decade and 14 million just next year. The subsequent bills don't look that different.

The secret 13 here in the Senate went and did their deliberations, adopted

pretty much the same thing as the Senate, only they made it worse. That June Senate bill would kick 15 million off in a single year, rather than 14 million. And then we had the brilliant idea of a repeal-only bill, which would do even worse, kicking 17 million people off in a single year and 32 million off within the 10-year period.

Then we have the bill that isn't even on here because we didn't get a Congressional Budget Office score on it; that is, the special Cruz fake insurance amendment bill—the one that would say: Hey, insurance companies, you can offer policies that are not worth the paper they are written on. Oh, they are very appealing. There is a health insurance policy. You only have to pay \$40 a month. Isn't that great? And then the policyholder who has it, they get in a car accident, they get a broken bone, and they find out the emergency room is not covered, the x rays are not covered, the cast is not covered, the doctor is not covered. Nothing is covered. That is why it is fake insurance. That is why it costs only \$40 a month. It might as well be 40 cents a month, for all we care, because it just doesn't cover anything.

Then, your spouse—your wife—has the great, joyful news that you are going to have a child together, and guess what. Maternity care is not covered. Can you imagine in this modern era not covering maternity care? Yet, before the Affordable Care Act, many, many policies in America didn't cover maternity care.

Well, in addition, these brilliant plans by my colleagues would cause premiums to skyrocket. Then, we have, of course, the fact that they do diabolical things to those who have pre-existing conditions.

Now, let me spend a little more time on the special Cruz fake insurance version of this. Yes, it gave those very cheap policies that aren't worth the paper they are printed on to the young and the healthy. But then, those who are older—those who are sick or have injuries or have preexisting conditions or are concerned that they may develop difficult medical issues—they need to buy a policy that actually covers the things that one would expect, that has an essential benefits package, the same as every single policy in America today has. But, because the young and the healthy are buying the fake policies, that means that the costs skyrocket on the policies with the essential care benefits. As a result of that, more people bail out who feel like they are not directly in danger of getting sicker or injured, and then the cost of the policy goes up even more. It is a death spiral for insurance: fake insurance at one end, destruction of the insurance market at the other end.

So my colleagues decided to not even share the Congressional Budget Office analysis of that bill. It was that bad.

Let's see what some folks said about this. Larry Levitt, senior Vice President of the Kaiser Family Foundation

said: "If there were a Joy of Cooking for insurance, this would be the perfect recipe for destabilizing the market and turning the marketplaces into high-risk pools."

That is his comment about the Cruz fake insurance plan.

Let's turn to a joint letter from Blue Cross Blue Shield and from America's Health Insurance Plans about the Cruz insurance plan, the Cruz fake insurance plan. Their letter says: "It is simply unworkable in any form and would undermine protections for those with pre-existing medical conditions, increase premiums and lead to widespread terminations of coverage for people currently enrolled in the individual market."

Or how about an article in the Atlantic by Vann Newkirk, published just a week ago, July 14 of this year: "The Cruz amendment creates almost a textbook scenario of wide-scale adverse selection—whereby riskier and more expensive patients wind up concentrated in risk pools—and entirely undermines any tools for managing that adverse selection."

That is a fancy way of talking about the death spiral in insurance for those who are not young and healthy.

Then we go to the conversation that CBO says is the worst option of all: 17 million would lose coverage in the first year and 32 million by 2026 under the repeal-only plan. Next year, in just 1 year, premiums would skyrocket above what they might have gone to anyway by an additional 25 percent.

Now, our majority leader likes to say that wouldn't actually happen because provisions in the bill don't go into effect for 2 years. Well, these estimates and these commentaries take that into account, because the destabilization in the marketplace begins immediately. Does anyone really think insurance companies are going to stick around the marketplace that they don't know is going to exist in 1 or 2 years?

This repeal-and-run strategy would throw our healthcare industry into chaos. If you think it is a good plan, well, I have some beachfront property in Arizona you might want to buy.

Every version of this Republican TrumpCare plan is worse and worse for the American people, yet these are the options that are being put forward. The majority leader wants us to vote to proceed to this set of undesirables tomorrow, these undesirable—in fact, "undesirable" is just too kind of a word for these policies. These are despicable. These are destructive. These are, as the President said, mean and hard-hearted.

Shouldn't we try to pursue options that will make our healthcare system work better? That is what we need to do. Let's start by nailing down the cost-sharing reduction payments, or CSRs. These payments are a lifeline to more than 12 million low-income Americans. They lower the premiums, and they lower the deductibles. They are important sources of stability for

insurance companies. But our President has said: I am not sure I want to release these CSR payments. So what happens with that? Insurance companies have to assume they are not going to get them, so they are raising their rates or perhaps bailing out of the market completely.

If these CSR payments are terminated, insurers may leave these exchanges altogether. For those who do stay in, the average premiums for silver plans would need to increase by 19 percent just to compensate for the loss of the CSRs. Because insurance companies are like any other business, they need to know how much they are going to be paid if they provide a product, and right now, they don't know.

Let's hear what some have had to say. When the insurance company Anthem pulled out of Ohio in June—last month—the company cited “continual changes in Federal operations, rules and guidance” as the main reason for exiting the marketplace.

The company also said that “the individual market remains volatile and the lack of certainty of funding for cost sharing reduction subsidies . . . does not provide a sustainable path forward.”

Then there is Brad Wilson, the president of Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, who said:

The biggest single reason for that rate increase is the lack of the federal funding for Cost Sharing Reduction Payments in 2018. We cannot assume nor should we that the money is going to be there based on what we know today.

At another point Mr. WILSON was quoted as saying:

The failure of the administration and the House to bring certainty and clarity by funding CSRs has caused our company to file a 22.9 percent premium increase, rather than one that is materially lower. . . . The rate increase would be 8.8 percent if the CSRs were guaranteed for 2018.

A single-digit increase versus more than a 20-percent increase, and they have to go with the higher increase because they don't know if the President is going to make the payments that he is obliged to make.

I think a piece from the Baltimore Sun from May 5 describes the situation we find ourselves in best, when it says:

It's not the problems in the Affordable Care Act exchanges that are driving the Republican effort to repeal Obamacare. It's the Republican effort to kill Obamacare that's causing problems in the exchanges.

President Trump and the Congressional Republicans are trying to exacerbate them. He closes by saying: “No wonder rates are going up.”

This really does make clear the situation. The President wants to say the exchanges have problems so we need to repeal and run or repeal and replace. Our answer to the exchanges having problems is to drive 20 million people-plus off healthcare, maybe 30 million people off healthcare. In fact, the exchanges are having problems because they are being sabotaged by President Trump and our Republican colleagues;

first, by wiping out the reinsurance proposal, which enables companies to go into a new area and compete but only if they have insurance against getting a disproportionate share of the really sick people. That is a very logical part of an insurance plan which encourages companies to go into new markets to compete, and my colleagues sabotaged it.

The cost-sharing reduction payments we just talked about, a very key part of lowering premiums and making the policies affordable so struggling, hard-working Americans can buy those policies and have lower premiums and lower deductibles, but my colleagues and President Trump have sabotaged it.

That is not a service to the American people. Maybe they feel they are doing a service—to whom? To the rich who can buy insurance without any of this effort to provide insurance throughout our society. Do my colleagues really want a world in which we only have wealth care? That is healthcare that only the wealthy can buy. Do they really want to denigrate, tear down, and destroy the quality of life of millions of their constituents by pursuing this path?

It was not that long ago that Franklin Roosevelt said: “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.”

But in their bills, my colleagues have been saying: We want to give massive tax giveaways to those who have the most by ripping healthcare away from those who are struggling, hard-working Americans.

It is the opposite. It is the opposite of the belief that we are all in this together, and we want a foundation for every family to thrive. I want a foundation for every family to thrive. That means peace of mind that if your loved one gets sick, they will get the care they need. It is the peace of mind that if your loved one gets sick, they will not end up bankrupt.

We are not just talking about ripping healthcare insurance away from more than 20 million people. We are talking about ripping peace of mind away from 20 million people. We are not just talking about those individuals. We are talking about undermining the rural and urban healthcare infrastructure which helps everyone.

I have been out in very rural, Republican parts of my State holding town-halls. I am hearing from those who are in clinics, and they have improved considerably. Some of them have doubled their number of employees over the last 8 years because of the support for healthcare clinics in the ACA and also because their uncompensated care—the number of people they were serving who couldn't pay their bills—has dropped enormously.

So not only have they been able to employ a lot more people providing healthcare in the community, but they

have been able to do additional things. They have been able to provide more preventive services, more mental health services, and so forth. So it has been a big win for rural America, and my colleagues want to tear that down. That just doesn't make any sense at all.

That is why everyone here should vote unanimously to oppose going onto a mystery healthcare bill tomorrow. There is so much we could do together if we want to improve healthcare: fix those CSRs; provide a fix to reinsurance; proceed to have a full enrollment period rather than cutting it short; retain and reinforce the individual mandates so those who have insurance are covered throughout the spectrum, from the young and healthy to those who are older; provide the sort of advertising that enables people to sign up and make the signup process a lot easier than it is right now. There is so much we can do together to make our healthcare system work better.

My colleagues have come to the floor tonight to say this really matters. Quit playing games with people's lives, quit trying to destroy the foundation for our families to thrive, and vote no on a motion to proceed to a mystery healthcare bill tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, the Senate Republicans are about to take one of the most reckless actions in Senate history. They are going to vote to blow up the American healthcare system and do I don't know what next.

I want to be really clear about this. Never before has the Senate voted on major legislation that would reorder one-sixth of the American economy and impact tens of millions of American families without even knowing what the bill does. There has been no bipartisanship. There have been no hearings.

Let me just say something about hearings. This may seem like sort of a process or procedural complaint, but this very much matters. Hearings matter because it is how you get experts to tell you whether your bill is any good, whether it is smart or stupid, harmful or helpful. Hearings matter because they subject your bill and the process to public scrutiny. The media is able to report on what you are up to, and your constituents know what you are up to. So it is not a small thing to complain about no hearings. In fact, you can't be a good legislator without having hearings, and you can't be an effective legislative body without conducting public hearings. We never have major legislation without hearings, but that is exactly what they are doing, and there is one very simple reason for this. They are embarrassed by what is in this bill.

It is true we don't know exactly what is in this bill. There are lots and lots of versions and lots of notions being kicked around, but we can be sure of a few things.

First, we know this; that whatever problems there are with the Affordable Care Act, this bill doesn't even bother to try to fix them. To the extent that people are worried about high deductibles, it actually increases the deductibles. To the extent that people are worried about the lack of choices on the healthcare exchanges, it doesn't even try to fix that.

Second, we don't know exactly how much they are going to cut Medicaid, but they are going to cut Medicaid. Whether it is rolling back the Medicaid expansion or making these radical structural reforms, essentially block-granting Medicaid to the States, they are going to deeply cut Medicaid. This hurts people. It hurts people in nursing homes. It hurts people with drug addiction. Medicaid is a program that works and delivers care for millions of Americans, and it will be slashed massively tomorrow.

We also don't know whether they are going to keep the capital gains tax cut or get rid of it. In any case, they are going to get rid of most of the revenue in the Affordable Care Act. They are cutting taxes for the very wealthy, and the way they pay for that is to cut Medicaid. So under the guise of fixing the ACA, they do the thing they wanted to do all along—cut taxes, cut Medicaid. It has nothing to do with ACA: cut taxes, cut Medicaid. That is what the bill tomorrow will do. I don't care if it is the 2015 version. I don't care if it is BCRA. I don't care if it is a new Senate version. I don't care if it is CRUZ's. All this cuts taxes for the wealthy and cuts Medicaid. That is what this legislation does.

Americans are going to be hurt by this legislation; people with pre-existing conditions, families with a loved one struggling with opioid abuse, people in nursing homes, people who rely on Medicaid, people who rely on Planned Parenthood. The tens of millions of people who will lose their insurance almost instantly. That is why every single patient advocacy group, from the American Cancer Society to the March of Dimes, to the National Physicians Alliance, to disability groups, to the AARP—everybody hates this bill. Make no mistake, they hate every version of it.

It is not like there is a less harmful version. Either 22 million or 23 million or 32 million lose their healthcare. We don't have to do this to ourselves. We don't have to do this to the American people.

So there are lots of different versions of this legislation. What the leader is doing, very cleverly, is allowing people to believe that the thing they are moving to is the thing they may prefer. In other words, it is a blank canvas. It is just a motion to proceed. It is just a motion to begin debate.

Make no mistake, the vote tomorrow is to repeal the Affordable Care Act with no plan to replace it. That is what they are doing tomorrow, and they have been totally secretive because

they know the moment they start talking specifics, the whole thing comes crashing down.

There are core elements of this vote tomorrow that are true no matter what. It cuts Medicaid; it cuts taxes for the rich; it reduces patient protections; it reduces the number of people who have insurance; and it will all be done with no hearings, no Democrats, no experts in healthcare. This thing will be dropped on us without enough time to review it, without enough time to interact with our home State to figure out what the impact would be.

We are being asked to do one of the most reckless things any group of legislators has ever been asked to do, which is to jump off a policy cliff—a healthcare cliff, a political cliff—and eventually they are going to tell you it is going to work out. Make no mistake, the reason they can't tell you what is in the bill is the moment they do, this thing will come crashing down.

What we have to do is make sure this thing comes crashing down anyway, and we have to do it for the tens of millions of Americans who depend on Medicaid and the ACA. We have to do it for our rural hospitals, we have to do it for people with preexisting conditions, and we have to do it for people without power, without money, without the ability to walk 200 yards from this Chamber to the U.S. Senate doctor, the best healthcare in the world.

Not only are we on the exchange—I have a Kaiser plan so we are on the exchange, we are in ACA—but also, anytime I want, if I have a headache, if I have a stomach ache, if I have something more serious, I can literally walk about 200 yards from here, go to the Senate doctor, and get whatever kind of healthcare I need.

I want you to understand how lucky the people who are voting on your future are and how privileged we all are in this literally gilded place, when people's lives and livelihoods and life savings are on the line tomorrow, and if I get so much as a hangnail, I get to call my staff and have them help me out. We are lucky people, and we need to think about whom we are representing. I will be fine. Every Member of this Chamber will be fine, but our job is not to take care of ourselves. Our job is to represent our constituents.

This bill has earned a really historic title: Most unpopular major bill in American history. Most unpopular major bill in American history. How that can get 20 votes, let alone 51, is beyond me.

I want to make one last point. We need to kill this bill, not just because of all the harm it is going to do to the country, we need to do it for the legislative branch of the U.S. Government. We just can't make laws like this.

Right now, the majority party is shortsighted because at some point Democrats are going to have the gavel. The temptation to follow this precedent being set this week, to enact major legislation without hearings and

without the other party, might destroy the Senate itself. There is still time. There is still good will. We can walk back from the brink and do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, it is nice to see you here at 11 p.m. on Monday night. One of the privileges we have of being in the majority is that we get to preside over the U.S. Senate, so we can listen to all of our colleagues talk to this august body.

I have been in that chair for the last couple of hours. I can't go to bed tonight without putting the record straight in this body. I don't think there is a Member of the U.S. Senate who doesn't want America to have the best healthcare in the world. The problem is, we have a campaign of disinformation that is underway right now, and it is outrageous. I cannot let it stand.

My mission tonight, very briefly, will be to put some facts on the table, on the record, because we have a lot of innuendo right now, a lot of disinformation: Oh, my God, people are going to die.

Let me remind everybody, we are sitting here with a healthcare system that is collapsing. There is no other way to describe it.

Why are we here tonight at 11 p.m.? Before I get to healthcare, I want to remind the American public of why the U.S. Senate is open tonight. We also did this earlier in the spring because something historic is underway right now in the United States of America and that is this: For the first time in our history, the minority party has not waived a Senate rule that would bypass the time requirements when confirming a nominee by the President of the United States. Because of that, we today have confirmed only around 29 percent of this President's nominees. The prior President, at this very point in time, had over 70 percent—over 70 percent—almost 300 people. I think the number today is under 50 for this President. It wasn't until a month or so ago that he could even have a full staff meeting.

By the way, who is running America today? Holdovers from the last administration because we haven't been able to confirm the new nominees. Over 200 people right now stand in line, waiting to be confirmed by this body. It is outrageous.

The American people ought to be upset. They ought to be more than upset. Let's define who is doing that. It is not the majority. The minority party is dragging their feet because it slows down everything else.

Guess what doesn't get done this year if we continue with this schedule. Unless we are here every night, as we are tonight, we will not have time to get to taxes this year. We will not have time to get to what the American people are assuming we are going to get to. Consumer confidence is at a 13-year high

because they are anticipating that we are going to clean up some of this mess.

Let me quickly move on to healthcare and put a few facts on the record tonight before we close. There are five healthcare systems in America. We forget this. We talk only about ObamaCare right now, but there are five healthcare systems in America.

First, we have group policies. This is where almost the majority—the vast majority are in this. Anyone who works in a company or in a large organization has a group policy.

Then there is the individual market. The individual market is what ObamaCare addresses. It is only 13 percent of the entire healthcare system.

Then there is the VA.

Then there are Medicare and Medicaid.

There are five different systems of healthcare in the United States. What we are dealing with is the individual market and Medicaid—mostly the individual market.

Let me try to describe the situation as we see it today. In 2008, before the ACA, there were 48 million people in America who did not have insurance. That is a catastrophe by anyone's measure. In the richest country in the history of the world, we had 48 million people who did not have insurance. You could be precluded from having insurance because of a preexisting condition. You could lose your insurance. You couldn't transfer across State lines. If you changed companies, even in group policies, you could be denied coverage under the next employer's policy.

There were real problems. Both sides had responsibility for that, but today after the ACA, 28 million people, as we stand here tonight, still do not have insurance in America—28 million. Of the 20 million who got it, 16 got it only because of the expansion of Medicaid, not because of ObamaCare's work in the individual market; 16 million got it because of the expansion of Medicaid.

All that was, was bribery from the Federal Government to certain States that decided to take the money and run. They didn't do their citizens a full justice. What we see of the remaining 4 million of the 20 million who got insurance during ObamaCare—remember, 16 million got it because of the expansion of Medicaid; of the remaining 4 million, 2 million are like my wife and me.

Do you remember the day when President Obama said that if you like your insurance, you can keep your insurance and if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor? Like most Democrats in the Senate and the House who voted on ObamaCare without reading it, he obviously didn't know what was in the bill because neither of those things were true.

I was canceled. In an individual policy before I ran for the U.S. Senate, my individual policy as a retiree was canceled, and the only policy we could get under the exchange in ObamaCare in-

cluded things like vision, hearing, drug rehabilitation. I have never had a problem with that. My wife hasn't either.

By the way, maternity—I met my wife in first grade. We are not having babies at this age. What is that? My rate is almost double because we had to take things in policies that we did not need.

Of the remaining 2 million, 1 million are the most destitute, low-income people who really do need our help, but we have disrupted the entire healthcare system because the Democrats thought that the bigger government approach would work.

How has that worked out in places like the VA? I hear talk now about single payer; I will get to that in a second. If you like the VA, you are going to love a single-payer system because that is exactly what it is.

Let me go on. I have heard a lot of talk in this Chamber tonight about, oh my God, the Republicans are going to hurt people in America—hurt people in America.

Let me talk about who is hurting people in America today. This is a travesty in itself. We cannot get the information from the IRS. We have just now gotten the information from the IRS. In 2014, the IRS, under the rules of ObamaCare, fined 8 million people \$1.8 billion.

Mr. President, I don't know about you, but I am outraged. I know you are too.

The irony of that is that 85 percent of the people who were fined in 2014—\$1.8 billion—85 percent made less than \$50,000, and less than half of them made \$25,000.

What our Democratic friends did was cram down the throats of Americans this thing called ObamaCare, and then they put fines on people who couldn't afford insurance, and they are the poorest people in our country.

Who is standing for those guys today—the Democrats? Don't you bet. They want a Big Government solution that gives them more power, and they could not care less about the very poor people they claim to champion. I have had enough of it. This is outrageous.

Twenty-two million people are going to lose insurance. That is what they tell us. Let's clean this up right now. The CBO's own estimate says that once you remove the mandate—forget about what else is available. If you just remove the mandate, because the policies are so expensive, 15 million are going to give it up. That is happening today.

By the way, do you know that CBO is using a March 2016 baseline to compare these numbers to? It is outrageous. In business, you would never accept this. Yet today they are determined to be the "holy grail" up here. I haven't seen a number come out of the CBO that I would depend on yet. In fact, in 2010, they overestimated the number of people who would sign up for ObamaCare by 12 million people. They missed the estimate by more than 50 percent. This isn't a rounding error. They don't know what they are doing.

Right now, today, we have the same problem. Fifteen million people say they will give up their insurance voluntarily because it is too expensive. That has nothing to do with the new plan. That is because ObamaCare is too expensive.

They also say that 4 million people will give up Medicaid. Medicaid is free. Why would somebody give up Medicaid?

They say ObamaCare is so good and so affordable that they are going to add 5 million people to it. There is no evidence today that would back that claim up. That is not a quantified model outcome. It is the estimate of a person who sits over there and makes this up. The other side is acting like, oh my goodness, this is the "holy grail."

Let's talk about this. The premiums under ObamaCare prior to this year, over the last 2 years, are up over 105 percent in America. They say that the reason premiums are going up is because of uncertainty coming out of the White House. This year's rates were determined last year, before we even knew this President was going to be a nominee. That is more disinformation.

What I am fed up with is that it sounds like a good story until you see the facts. The premiums in my State alone going into next year are going up 42 percent.

Here is the untold truth: In my State, 96 of 159 counties have only one carrier. That is a monopoly. They can do pretty much whatever they want. That is under ObamaCare, not anything else we are talking about. That is the reality today.

By the way, here is the real comeuppance. Today in my State—and you have the same problem in your State—300,000 people who make less than the poverty rate in my State cannot get insurance today under ObamaCare. Forget about what we are talking about to fix this mess. Today under ObamaCare, they can't get insurance—300,000 people in my State. That is true in every State in our country. That is the untold ugliness of ObamaCare.

ObamaCare is hurting people right now. I am tired of hearing the other side talk about how they care for people—they care for people—and then they fine the poorest people in America \$1.8 billion. Then they deny 300,000 people in my State access to healthcare. Enough already.

What are we doing about it? Six months ago, this President said that there were four objectives that any healthcare system in America and the individual market had to meet. The first was access. We have already talked about how ObamaCare is failing people who need access to it. The lowest income people in America are being denied insurance under ObamaCare. We fixed that. People who want insurance are going to get insurance.

By the way, premiums were the second thing we had to do to try to get costs down because it is becoming too

prohibitive. I have sons in the middle of their careers. They can't really afford the insurance they are being offered today. I feel it firsthand in my own life.

Premiums right now, though—if we put into place the suggestions we have on the table right now, the HHS Department has estimated just last week with a very credible model that rates could come down as much as 78 percent in the next 4 years. Has anybody heard the other side remind us of that data point? No. Why do those rates come down? Because the free-market system gets to act again, instead of being shackled in choices being removed. All of a sudden, now we move into it.

By the way, they talk about these made-up fantasy policies. Wait a minute. I had one of those made-up fantasy policies that you can't get today under ObamaCare. It is called catastrophic coverage. For some people with a high deductible, catastrophic coverage—that works. They are denied that today because Big Government knows more about what you need in your personal life.

The third thing we had to do—and this was very important. The second part of this problem is that Medicaid was not on a sustainable path. I am sorry. They have overpromised, and they cannot deliver. There is no way over the next 30 years that we can sustain Medicaid. Just as Medicare and Social Security are going bankrupt, we cannot afford to do what they are promising people we are going to do. They know that. They already know that.

Just like the Great Society, these Big Government programs that they promise all the time are going to work have never worked. The Great Society, the War on Poverty was going to remove poverty from America. I remember that.

I sit at a desk where that bill was signed by the then-Democratic leader of the Senate, Richard Russell, before it went to the White House. I am reminded every day of how Big Government has failed the American people. That war on poverty has spent trillions of dollars trying to reduce poverty in America. Yet, today, the poverty rate is fundamentally the same as it was in 1965 when that was signed into law.

Big Government does not work in situations like this. I lived under a single payer. My son lived under a single payer. This is the alternative they are after. I have heard it mentioned three times on the floor of the Senate to-

night. We cannot go there. It bifurcates delivery. It would add \$3.2 trillion. That is more than we spend on all of our mandatory expenses today—\$3.2 trillion every single year. That is impossible. If you think that would work, imagine this. Go home and look at your tax bill. Whatever you paid the Federal Government last year, double it. That is what that would mean. It is not workable.

The fourth thing we had to do was make sure preexisting conditions were protected. I worried about that through my entire career. If I changed jobs, if I had been sick or my family had been sick, I might have been denied insurance. We can't allow that. This bill doesn't allow that. We protected preexisting conditions. We put Medicaid on a sustainable path for the long term. We also bring premiums down. That was a major priority here. And we give everybody in America access to healthcare—period, end of the conversation.

That is not good enough. The other side is not going to be happy until this Federal Government steps in and takes over 18 percent of our economy called healthcare. They tried to do it in 1992 to 1994, under HillaryCare. They tried to do it here. I remember the Speaker of the House saying: If you want to know what is in this bill, you have to vote for the bill. We are not doing that today. This cloud of innuendo that the other side has perpetrated on the American people is just not true.

In 2010, not one Republican voted for ObamaCare. Not one amendment got to the floor of this Senate. Yet they want to talk about this great open policy. They had 7 years to fix this mess. People in my State have been hurt by it. It is unforgivable, and we can do something about it this week.

Senator JOHN MCCAIN is very sick. He is a fighter. He will take care of this. I hope he will be back this week to help us. If he can, I think he will. We are going to vote on it this week. We have to do this for the American people.

I want to remind everybody what is at stake here. If we don't pass this tomorrow, then we end up moving toward a single-payer system. Let me remind everybody of the other Big Government failures we talk about: the VA and the Postal Service. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are bankrupt. We talk about the ObamaCare failures. Then there is the Great Society of rural poverty. I want to remind everybody.

Let me close with this. I heard tonight that this is a reckless action, the

new policy. I heard New Testament examples about how to take care of your brethren. It is shocking to me that somebody on the other side would say that when they know these statistics of what they have done—8 million of the poorest people in America have been fined \$1.8 billion. Half of them make under \$25,000 a year. That is taking care of your brethren all right. I am embarrassed. We can fix that.

I believe we heard the rain of devastation: No one is helped by this bill; it is a reckless act. Here is the one I love: We want to work with you. We want to work with you to help fix this thing. Just a year ago, I didn't hear any speeches in here—I don't think you did from that Chair—where anybody on that side acknowledged that there was anything wrong with ObamaCare. You hear today: We want to work with you to help fix ObamaCare. It is 7 years too late, in my opinion. It would have been nice to have been included in the conversation in 2009 and 2010 when it was crammed down the throats of Republicans.

I believe this is a historic moment in America, not just for healthcare. Healthcare is very important, but it is bigger than that. This is about the direction of our country. Are we going to try to trust Big Government again and again until we can't afford it? We are already well down that rabbit hole. We cannot afford this chance again. We have already proven it doesn't work.

I hope that this week colleagues on our side will get together and we will vote this thing in. I welcome any Democratic support as well. I know we are not going to get it. This is a time to stand. I hope we will have that vote. I fully encourage my colleagues here to support that. Let's get on with business.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 11:19 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, July 25, 2017, at 12 noon.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate July 24, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

DAVID BERNHARDT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE GRAND OPENING OF THE CNY CHINESE CULTURE CENTER'S ROCK CENTER FACILITY

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Central New York Chinese Culture Center's new Rock Center facility in Syracuse, New York.

The CNY Chinese Culture Center plans to reopen the former Rockefeller United Methodist Church building as the Rock Center on July 22, 2017. The building has undergone significant renovations, but the structure's architectural character and history have been preserved to help facilitate the cultural exchanges that will occur at the Rock Center. The CNY Chinese Culture Center's hope for the Rock Center is to continue serving the Syracuse University and DeWitt communities with a wide array of programs, classes, and clubs.

Over the years, the CNY Chinese Culture Center has become a driving force in the Syracuse community, utilizing grassroots efforts to introduce Chinese heritage and culture to our community and foster cultural exchange. I am proud to recognize the grand opening of the CNY Chinese Center's Rock Center and I wish this outstanding organization continued success in the years to come.

CLEVELAND METROPARKS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the oldest park district in Ohio, Cleveland Metroparks, on celebrating their 100th Anniversary, marking a century's worth of service to our region.

In 1917, following the Ohio General Assembly's passage of landmark legislation allowing for the creation and development of park districts, Cuyahoga County probate judge Alexander Hadden appointed the first board of the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District. In an effort to support resource conservation and through the vision and leadership of their first director, William Stinchcomb—a self-taught engineer who first conceptualized the idea of a chain of parks connecting our communities—the Emerald Necklace was born.

From modest beginnings, Cleveland Metroparks held and preserved just 109 acres of land in Cuyahoga County's western and southernmost suburbs. Yet, within their first decade, what started with just one hundred acres of donated land would soon grow to encompass 9,000 acres throughout more than a dozen communities.

As a national leader in sustainability, Cleveland Metroparks' successes in natural resource conservation, as well as innovation in green infrastructure, provide essential environmental, health and economic benefits for all people. In fact, last year, Cleveland Metroparks won the prestigious American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration's National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management—an award that Cleveland Metroparks has received 4 times since 1994.

Our park systems play a crucial role in environmental stewardship and community health, ensuring not only the preservation and prosperity of our flora and fauna—but improving public health and wellness by preventing health related problems ranging from asthma and obesity to diabetes and mental health.

The Cleveland Metroparks also has a tremendous impact on the regional economy. Tourism remains one of Ohio's largest and fastest growing industries, producing \$43 billion in sales annually. Of that, Cuyahoga County contributes nearly 20 percent, generating \$8.1 billion for the economy in 2015. What's more, a recent study conducted by The Trust for Public Land found that Cleveland Metroparks alone generate nearly a billion dollars annually for the local economy.

Cleveland Metroparks has built an admirable legacy, from the Rocky River Reservation, the first land purchased by the park district, and its many trails weaving through the Valley's forests and wetlands, to the Centennial Trail improving access and re-connecting our region with Wendy Park, Edgewater Beach and Lake Erie's shore. The Metroparks have remained committed to the conservation of natural resources, the education of our community and the recreation opportunities for our friends and family.

Today, 100 years later and spanning 47 diverse communities, Cleveland Metroparks' more than 23,000 acres of preserved wetlands and forests, trails and paths, lakefront beaches, rivers and streams, golf courses and a nationally acclaimed zoo, have become a destination and gathering place for millions of runners, hikers, cyclists, boaters, kayakers, fishermen, birders, nature enthusiasts and families from all across the country.

In recognition of the 100th Anniversary of Cleveland Metroparks, please join me in thanking all those whose vision and leadership have shaped this vast network and helped create one of the most valuable and significant resources in Ohio.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF JOSEPH GRANADOS ELIAS

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of a special person that gave greatly

to our community, Joseph Granados Elias, who passed away July 6, 2017 at the age of 81. Mr. Granados Elias was a respected business owner, a loved community member, and a selfless husband and father.

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, Mr. Granados Elias moved to California where he was the longtime owner of Fiesta Juice in downtown Santa Ana. A fierce advocate for Latino businesses, Mr. Granados Elias was known in our community as a fearless warrior and loving friend.

Mr. Granados Elias truly had a heart for others, and he spent his life serving those in greater need than him. One of the first Latino members of Kiwanis, Mr. Granados Elias was heavily involved with the organization, always thinking of how best to offer his time. When a community park needed more money to build a playground accessible for children with special needs, Mr. Granados Elias was instrumental in working with Kiwanis to raise sufficient funds.

This is just one example of how greatly Mr. Granados Elias cared for his community and how strong the relationships he built were. Mr. Granados Elias was known for his warmth, generosity, and incredible joy, which is reflected in the close relationships he shared with his family.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring and remembering Mr. Joseph Granados Elias, whose innovative entrepreneurship and loving spirit will live on in the hearts and lives of all those he knew and loved. He is an example to us all of what it means to be a public servant, and I extend my deepest condolences to his children, Suzanne, Sharon, Elizabeth, David, Paul and Albert; his ten grandchildren, and his seven great grandchildren. May God bless this family.

RECOGNIZING LONGEST SERVING SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER, VELMA LEE SEBRING, FOR OUTSTANDING MENTORSHIP

HON. MO BROOKS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Velma Lee Sebring for her service over the last 74 years as a Sunday school teacher at Centerpoint Baptist Church in Scottsboro, Alabama.

Mrs. Sebring began teaching Sunday school at Centerpoint Baptist Church in 1942. Having taught at the same location for approximately 74 years, she has surpassed the known Guinness World Record for the longest serving Sunday school teacher at one church. Mrs. Sebring began teaching Sunday school at Randall's Chapel United Methodist Church in 1938, meaning she has taught for a combined 78 years.

I believe the education of our young people is of the utmost importance. As a son, husband, and father of educators, I have seen

• 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.

firsthand the sacrifices they make to invest in the future of our children. I appreciate and commend the work Mrs. Sebring has done on behalf of the North Alabama community, and I am confident that her work to support the spiritual needs of countless children over the years has made a lasting, positive impact on numerous generations.

Mrs. Sebring was married to the late Bill Sebring of Scottsboro, and she has three children: Billie Ann Wallace of Northport, Nora Sebring of Scottsboro, and Robert Sebring of Scottsboro.

I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring and thanking Mrs. Sebring for her dedication and mentorship across North Alabama.

RECOGNIZING THE 5TH ANNUAL
TASTE OF ETHIOPIA

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 5th Annual Taste of Ethiopia. The Taste of Ethiopia promotes cultural immersion and provides community services for our extensive Ethiopian immigrant community in Colorado. The event is a unique showcase of music, food, art, crafts, culture, games, and Ethiopian dance.

Moreover, the festival is not only a great opportunity for family fun and bringing the Ethiopian community together, but it also serves to highlight the individual contributions of Ethiopian immigrants to our community. In this spirit, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the following organizers of the Taste of Ethiopia for their hard work and dedication to make this event for our community possible: Nebiyu Asfaw, Sosna Dagne, Elizabeth Moltot, Adanech Denbel, Fikru Ayele, Bizuye Sebsbe, Talahun Dessie, Aschalew Agonafer, Yalemwork Tekola, Girum Alemayehu, Sophia Belew, Senait Keteman, Selam Ayele, Helen Tekle, and Ayinalem Bayu.

Mr. Speaker, the 6th District of Colorado is home to the largest Ethiopian community in the State of Colorado and it continues to be an honor for me to represent so many Ethiopian immigrants. I had the privilege of attending last year's Taste of Ethiopia and it is a privilege for me to again be included in the Taste of Ethiopia annual celebration.

I again offer my sincere congratulations to the organizers of the Taste of Ethiopia for their tireless work to promote the Ethiopian culture in the State of Colorado.

MORRISTOWN MEDICAL CENTER'S
125TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Morristown Medical Center,

located in Morris County, New Jersey, on the occasion of its 125th Anniversary. From humble beginnings, the medical center has grown from a household hospital to a nationally renowned medical center with 6,565 employees, 1,704 physicians, and 526,946 outpatient visits in 2016.

Morristown Medical Center's history began in the late 1800s, when Myra M. B. Brookfield bequeathed her home property for the purpose of establishing a hospital, located on Morris Street in Morristown, New Jersey. Augusta Stone, a fellow colleague, joined her efforts and raised \$15,000 from the community, to equip and furnish the new hospital. The medical center was operated by professionals along with local volunteers, and no role was too small for townspeople. They sewed linens for the hospital bedding and picked vegetables to feed hungry patients. When hospital employees were sent overseas to serve in World War II, volunteers cooked and served meals, answered telephones, and drove the ambulances.

In 1952, the hospital was relocated to Madison Avenue in Morristown, which marked its turning point from a community hospital to a regional medical center. The medical center expanded throughout the next several decades with volunteers finding new methods of raising money. By 1991, the milestone was reached with more than 1,000 volunteers giving 100,000 hours annually.

Today, Morristown Medical Center is a leader in providing medical care and promoting innovation. Their Goryeb Children's Hospital, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center, and Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute, which has performed more heart surgeries than any other hospital in New Jersey, are all nationally recognized institutions.

Further, the Morristown Medical Center has built a strong relationship with its community. Along with aiding patients' medical needs, they also have forged partnerships with local schools and many local organizations to educate the residents of all ages about healthy eating and exercise. The Morristown Medical Center truly dedicates itself to serving the various needs of a diverse community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating the Trustees, administrators and staff, and Women's Auxiliary of Morristown Medical Center on the occasion of its 125th Anniversary.

COST ESTIMATE FOR H.R. 2825,
THE DHS AUTHORIZATION ACT
OF 2017

HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office regarding H.R. 2825. The cost estimate was not available at the time of the filing of the Committee report.

U.S. CONGRESS,

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,

Washington, DC, July 20, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2825, the DHS Authorization Act of 2017.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Mark Grabowicz.

Sincerely,

MARK P. HADLEY
(For Keith Hall, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 2825—DHS AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

As reported by the House Committee on
Homeland Security on June 28, 2017

SUMMARY

H.R. 2825 would authorize the appropriation of nearly \$11 billion over the 2018–2022 period for programs in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), mostly for activities carried out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), but also for programs of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the DHS Office of the Inspector General. In addition, CBO estimates that the bill would authorize the appropriation of \$154 million over the five-year period for other DHS activities, including programs to increase security at airports.

Assuming appropriation of the authorized and estimated amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2825 would cost \$5.6 billion over the 2018–2022 period and \$5.4 billion after 2022. In addition, because the legislation would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures apply; however, we estimate that the net effect would be negligible in every year. The bill would not affect revenues.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2825 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

H.R. 2825 would impose intergovernmental and private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) on airport operators and air carriers. Based on information from the TSA and airport officials, CBO estimates that the total costs of the mandates on public and private entities would fall well below the annual thresholds established in UMRA for intergovernmental and private-sector mandates (\$78 million and \$156 million in fiscal year 2017, respectively, adjusted annually for inflation).

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 2825 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget functions 400 (transportation), 450 (community and regional development), and 750 (administration of justice).

By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2017–2022
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INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION

FEMA Programs:						
Authorization Level	0	2,164	2,164	1,999	1,999	10,325
Estimated Outlays	0	240	606	922	1,327	4,800

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2017–2022
TSA Programs:							
Authorization Level	0	122	122	0	0	0	244
Estimated Outlays	0	92	116	28	6	2	244
DHS Inspector General and Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties:							
Authorization Level	0	198	198	0	0	0	395
Estimated Outlays	0	178	198	20	0	0	395
Other Programs:							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	53	18	24	23	31	154
Estimated Outlays	0	40	24	23	27	30	144
Total Changes:							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	2,537	2,502	2,023	2,027	2,030	11,118
Estimated Outlays	0	550	943	993	1,360	1,737	5,583

Notes: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding. FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency; TSA = Transportation Security Administration; DHS = Department of Homeland Security.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted near the end of 2017.

SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2825 would cost \$5.6 billion over the 2018–2022 period. For this estimate, CBO assumes that the authorized and estimated amounts will be provided each year and that spending will follow historical spending patterns for these activities.

Programs with Specified Authorizations. H.R. 2825 would authorize the appropriation of nearly \$11 billion over the 2018–2022 period for many programs in DHS, including activities carried out by FEMA, TSA, and other offices.

FEMA Programs. Title VI of H.R. 2825 would authorize the appropriation of \$10.3 billion over the 2018–2022 period for FEMA's domestic security programs. Specifically, the bill would authorize the annual appropriation of:

\$800 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative;

\$710 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program;

\$200 million for the Transit Security Grant Program;

\$200 million for the Port Security Grant Program;

\$50 million for grants to nonprofit organizations for security enhancements to protect against terrorism;

\$39 million for the Counterterrorism Training Program; and

About \$165 for the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium.

CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$4.8 billion over the 2018–2022 period.

TSA Programs. H.R. 2825 would authorize the annual appropriation (through 2019) of:

\$77 million for TSA to monitor exits used by passengers leaving service areas of airports; and

\$45 million for the cost of deploying law enforcement personnel to security checkpoints at airports.

CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$244 million over the 2018–2022 period.

DHS Inspector General and Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. H.R. 2825 would authorize, for each of 2018 and 2019, the appropriation of:

\$175 million for the DHS Office of the Inspector General; and

About \$23 million for the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$395 million over the 2018–2022 period.

Other Programs. CBO estimates that carrying out other activities (as described below) would require appropriations of \$154 million over the 2018–2022 period.

TSA Activities. CBO estimates that implementing certain provisions of title V of the bill would require appropriations totaling \$144 million over the 2018–2022 period. That amount includes:

\$56 million for a gradual expansion in the number of canine teams used to detect explosives within surface and maritime transportation systems;

\$43 million for a variety of activities aimed at improving security at airports by enhancing the vetting and screening of aviation workers and controlling their access to secure areas of airports;

\$25 million for increased administrative costs related to a significant expansion in the number of personnel-related policies that could be included in negotiations over collective bargaining agreements; and

\$20 million for the cost of implementing an automated system to verify the identity and travel documents of air passengers.

CBO estimates that implementing these activities would cost \$134 million over the 2018–2022 period (and \$10 million after 2022).

Reports and Audits. H.R. 2825 would require DHS and the Government Accountability Office to prepare about 30 audits and reports (some annually) on various topics within the department's purview. Based on the cost of similar activities, CBO estimates that it would cost about \$10 million over the 2018–2022 period for those reports and audits.

Direct Spending

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Travel Cards Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–54) authorized DHS to issue special cards to eligible U.S. citizens to facilitate international travel to participating countries (mostly in Asia). Under that act, DHS may not issue the cards after September 30, 2018. H.R. 2825 would extend that program permanently.

DHS collects a fee of \$70 from applicants for the APEC card. Those fees are classified in the budget as offsetting receipts (a reduction in direct spending) and are available to DRS to spend without further appropriation. In fiscal year 2016 DHS collected a total of about \$1 million in fees. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2825 would have no significant net effect on DHS spending because we expect the department would continue to collect and spend roughly the same amount in future years.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2825 would have no significant net effect on direct spending in any year. The bill would not affect revenues.

INCREASE IN LONG-TERM DIRECT SPENDING AND DEFICITS

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2825 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 2825 would impose intergovernmental and private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA by requiring airport operators and air carriers to provide information to TSA about

individuals who have had their security credentials revoked. Additionally, the bill would require airport operators to notify applicants for security credentials about screening procedures and to submit applicants' social security numbers to the TSA. Those provisions would impose both intergovernmental and private-sector mandates on airport operators and a private-sector mandate on air carriers. Based on information from the TSA and airport officials, CBO expects that affected entities would probably report information to the TSA electronically and estimates that the costs to submit that information would be small. The bill also would require airport operators to include specific information, such as evacuation and communication strategies, in emergency response plans. Because most airport operators already include such information in their response plans under current law, CBO estimates that the costs to comply with the mandate would be small. In total, CBO estimates that the costs on public and private entities would fall well below the annual thresholds established in UMRA for intergovernmental and private-sector mandates (\$78 million and \$156 million in fiscal year 2017, respectively, adjusted annually for inflation).

PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATES

CBO has prepared cost estimates in 2017 for many other bills with provisions that are similar to provisions of H.R. 2825. For each of the bills listed below, our estimates of the costs of the similar provisions are the same as in H.R. 2825:

H.R. 876, the Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017 (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on March 8, 2017);

S. 763, the Surface and Maritime Transportation Security Act (as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on April 5, 2017);

H.R. 2188, the Community Counterterrorism Preparedness Act (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on May 3, 2017);

H.R. 1372, the Homeland Security of Children Act (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on March 8, 2017);

H.R. 2169, the Improving Fusion Centers' Access to Information Act (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on May 3, 2017);

H.R. 1249, the DHS Multiyear Acquisition Strategy Act of 2017 (as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 20, 2017);

H.R. 1294, the Reducing DHS Acquisition Cost Growth Act (as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 20, 2017);

H.R. 1252, the DRS Acquisition Authorities Act of 2017 (as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 20, 2017);

H.R. 1282, the DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017 (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on March 8, 2017);

H.R. 1297, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Technical Corrections Act of

2017 (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on March 8, 2017); and

S. 504, the APEC Business Travel Cards Reauthorization Act of 2017 (as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on May 17, 2017).

In addition, on June 27, 2017, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 2548, the FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2017 (as ordered reported by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on May 24, 2017) provisions of that legislation are similar to section 615 of H.R. 2825. However, CBO's estimates of the costs of those similar provisions are different because different amounts are authorized to be appropriated in each piece of legislation.

ESTIMATE PREPARED BY

Federal Costs: Megan Carroll (TSA), Robert Reese (FEMA), Mark Grabowicz (all other DHS); Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Rachel Austin; Impact on the Private Sector: Paige Piper/Bach.

ESTIMATE APPROVED BY

Theresa Gullo, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

RECOGNIZING BRIGHTON MAYOR
RICHARD MCLEAN

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brighton Mayor Richard McLean, a dedicated public servant who has devoted himself to his community as a City Council member and Mayor for over a decade. Mayor McLean has been involved in numerous boards and commissions in his community, including service as the Chair of the E-470 Board, and as a member of the Adams County Economic Development Board, Airport Coordinating Committee, and the Brighton Economic Development Corporation Board.

As Chair of the E-470 Board, Mayor McLean proved himself to be a stellar steward of taxpayer dollars overseeing the opening of the Quebec interchange six months ahead of schedule. Mr. Speaker, I think Washington could learn a thing or two from this kind of leadership.

Under Mayor McLean's leadership in office, the city of Brighton has received extensive recognition for excellence in city planning, including just last April the Denver Regional Council of Governments' award for Brighton's District Comprehensive Master Plan. It is clear Mayor McLean's tireless service to the people of Brighton has made their community a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my sincere congratulations to Mayor Richard McLean for his over a decade of accomplished public service and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING RANDY SMITH
ON HIS RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT
OF UAW LOCAL 974

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Randy Smith on his retirement

from serving as President of United Auto Workers Local 974 in Peoria, Illinois and thank him for his many years of service.

Randy Smith has been a loyal member of the UAW for decades. His dedication and outstanding service to Local 974 led to his election as Vice President in 2010 and his success in this role has allowed him to serve as President since 2013. In addition to his leadership role, Randy has also showed his commitment to the community with his service on the Local 974 Heather Henninger Scholarship Committee, which gives over \$10,000 in scholarship money each year to the children and grandchildren of active, retired, and deceased UAW members to help fund their college education. His service in this role has made a difference in the lives of countless children by expanding their access to educational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker I am proud to recognize Randy's achievements and the incredible support he has provided to the Peoria community. I wish him the best in his retirement and thank him for the invaluable service he has provided to our region.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on July 14, 2017, I mistakenly voted "no" on Roll Call 375, the Hunter-Wilson amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018. I cosponsored this amendment and intended to vote "yes."

HONORING MR. SAM OTIS SMITH
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 85TH
BIRTHDAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Sam Otis Smith, on the occasion of his 85th birthday, which will be celebrated on July 25, 2017. Sam is an outstanding individual and I am truly blessed to be able to count him among one of my dearest friends.

Sam was born July 25, 1932 in Charles City County, Virginia. He graduated in 1955 with a B.A. in Agriculture from Virginia State College and was Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. During the course of his career he was awarded three Army Commendation Medals; two Bronze Star Medals; and the Legion of Merit Medal. After 20 years of service to his country, he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1975. That year, Sam began his tenure as the Director of the Physical Plant at Virginia State University, until his retirement in 1989. Sam spent the latter years of his career as a Realtor.

The tenth of eleven children born to Elizabeth Bassett Smith and Charles Smith, Sam has always been devoted to his family and friends. He remains an active member of numerous professional, charitable, and sport organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the great privilege of knowing Sam for many years, and it gives me great pride to honor him on the occasion of his 85th birthday. I wish him many more years of happiness and success.

HONORING COMMISSIONER CARL
SHECHTER

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I honor Pembroke Pines City Commissioner Carl Shechter.

In recognition of Mr. Shechter's tremendous work on behalf of Pembroke Pines residents, the city has dedicated its Southwest Focal Point Community Center Campus in his name.

The Carl Shechter Southwest Focal Point Community Center provides services and programming that promote the wellbeing of Pembroke Pines residents. Whether it is Adult Day Care services for seniors or educational and recreational programs for families, the Center unites a broad array of individuals from across Southwest Broward County.

It is fitting that the center be named for Commissioner Shechter as he has always been devoted to enriching the lives of others. He is an extraordinary public servant, and all who walk through the doors of the Carl Shechter Southwest Focal Point Community Center shall now be reminded of his compassionate leadership.

I am proud to call Carl my friend and recognize him today for his selfless contribution to our community. I wish Commissioner Shechter and his family a heartfelt congratulations on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, on July 18, 2017, I missed Roll Call votes 386 and 387. Had I been present, I would have voted Yes on both the Tonko Amendment (Roll Call vote 386), and the Beyer Amendment (Roll Call vote 387).

RECOGNIZING SUMMER INTERNS

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Harrison Finch, Lauren Healy, Reagan Miller, and Katie Russ for their hard work and dedication to the people of Colorado's Sixth District as interns in my Washington, D.C. office for the summer of the 115th Congress, First Session.

During their time in my office, Harrison, Lauren, Reagan, and Katie served as tour guides, interacted with constituents, conducted legislative research and learned a great deal

about the United States Congress. The work of these young Coloradoans has been exemplary and I know they all have bright futures ahead of them. I was glad to be able to offer this educational opportunity to these four, and look forward to seeing them build their prospective careers.

Harrison, Lauren, Reagan, and Katie have all made plans to continue their educational careers back in Colorado and throughout the United States. I am certain they will continue in their great success and wish them all the best in their future endeavors. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Harrison Finch, Lauren Healy, Reagan Miller, and Katie Russ for their service this summer.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AMEND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STADIUM ACT OF 1957 TO EXTEND FOR AN ADDITIONAL 50 YEARS THE LEASE UNDER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA USES THE GROUND UNDER AND THE PARKING FACILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ROBERT F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL STADIUM

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill to extend the District of Columbia's lease with the National Park Service to use the land under Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium (RFK) by 50 years, for a total period of 100 years.

RFK Stadium—a memorial to a great civil rights champion, a former United States Senator and U.S. Attorney General—has seen better days. The District has put together a comprehensive plan to rehabilitate not just the stadium, but the surrounding area to include more green space for public use, sports fields, pedestrian bridges to connect the area to Wards 7 and 8, and a memorial more fitting to the legacy of Robert F. Kennedy. In order to get started on these improvements, a lease extension is required to ensure that the city is able to secure financing.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

RECOGNIZING THE DUNDEE TOWNSHIP LIONS CLUB

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Dundee Township Lions Club from the Sixth Congressional District of Illinois. In June, the club celebrated its 80th Anniversary.

In the years since its humble founding in 1937, the Dundee Township Lions Club has become a champion of civic service, serving as a home to members who strive to create a vibrant and thriving community in West Dundee and the greater Kane County area. Over the years, the Club has contributed finances, time and talent to hundreds of community

projects including the creation of pavilions at Randall Oaks Park, the first washrooms at South End Park, the Dundee Township Library room, and many, many more.

From its early origins in the Township, the Lions Club has been a leader in community outreach and service, as well as an organization for other service organizations and community outreach organizations to follow. Through its continued dedication to building a friendly and welcoming environment, the Dundee Township Lions Club has built a reputation as an organization where all walks of life can come together to serve the less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing the occasion of this 80th Anniversary. We join together to honor the Club's legacy of growth and prosperity, and to look ahead to the opportunities the future hold for the Dundee Township Lions Club.

IN HONOR OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ANNISTON ROTARY CLUB

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention to recognize 100th Anniversary of the Anniston Rotary Club.

The Anniston Rotary Club in Anniston, Alabama, was chartered on September 7th, 1917 with 45 charter members including the President, Dr. George Lang. The first meeting was held at the Riser Café at 10th and Noble Streets in downtown Anniston. The club has met in various locations since that first meeting.

The Anniston Rotary Club has had many projects over its 100 years. The first was a wood yard in West Anniston that furnished work for the unemployed. Later projects included sponsoring the organization of the Choccolocco Council of the Boy Scouts of America in 1919 through 20. The Anniston Rotary Club has also sponsored school programs for purchasing text books, 4-H Clubs and Boys Clubs. They have also helped the Salvation Army, United Way and the Y.M.C.A. Today, the Anniston Rotary Club works to help many local nonprofits and continues to support the Rotary Foundation that guides the international effort to eliminate polio.

The Anniston Rotary Club has sponsored at least two other Rotary Clubs including the Anniston Morning Rotary Club and the Oxford Rotary Club.

Today, the Anniston Rotary Club meets on Tuesdays at noon at the Anniston Country Club. Recently, 100 percent of the club's members became Paul Harris Fellows in honor of contributions made to significantly better relationships with people around the world, a noteworthy distinction on the club's 100th Anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Anniston Rotary Club.

CONGRATULATING WAYNE ON BEING NAMED ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES TO LIVE

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Village of Wayne on being named one of the safest places to live in Illinois. The village of Wayne was named the seventh safest place on Niche's 2017 Safest Places to Live in Illinois.

Working together, law enforcement, local officials, and the community have made Wayne a safer place to live, work, and raise a family. The residents of Wayne should never underestimate the impact that each citizen's positive actions can have. Everyday there are members of the community helping to change lives, while also inspiring their peers to do the same.

I would be remiss to not also mention the wonderful job of the Wayne Police and volunteer Fire Departments. Day in and day out, the men and women of the Wayne Police and Fire Departments risk their lives to protect their community. Their bravery and courage are very deserving of our recognition and admiration and I am happy to see their service has led to Wayne being named one of the safest cities in Illinois.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing the village of Wayne and congratulating them on being named one of the safest places in Illinois.

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOGAN DAILY NEWS

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District to recognize the 175th Anniversary of the Logan Daily News. Nearly as old as the City of Logan itself, the Logan Daily News has been dutifully and continuously informing its readership since June of 1842.

Under the leadership of S.W. Tucker and Robert Wright, the Hocking Sentinel was born. The paper saw success that its controversial predecessor had not experienced, and continued to grow. In 1960, 30 paperboys dispersed the news of the day; today, 12 delivery routes are still covered as the publication successfully adapts to the digital age of media. While its name, publishers, and mediums have changed over the years, the Logan Daily News' commitment to producing timely and factual reports for the people of Logan and Hocking Valley has been steadfast.

The Logan Daily News influence extends well past its pages. It is a true partner in the community, sponsoring events like Backyard BBQ and Rib Ruckus, the Washboard Music Festival, and the Hocking Valley Community Hospital Golf Tournament. Additionally, the Logan Daily News encourages youth through partnerships with 4-H and the County Fair Board. It supports the local economy through involvement with the Hocking Hills Chamber of Commerce, Hocking Hills Tourism Association,

Logan Town Center, and the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce.

I am honored to recognize the Logan Daily News, its reporters, editors, and publishers on this momentous occasion, and I wish them many more successful years and editions.

CONGRATULATING BARTLETT

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bartlett on being named one of the safest cities in the United States. The village of Bartlett was named the ninth safest city on Neighborhood Scout's list of America's 100 Safest Cities.

Working together, law enforcement, local officials, and the community have made Bartlett a safer place to live, work, and raise a family. The residents of Bartlett should never underestimate the impact that each citizen's positive actions can have. Everyday there are members of the community helping to change lives, while also inspiring their peers to do the same.

I would be remiss to not also mention the wonderful job of the Bartlett Police and Fire Departments. Day in and day out the men and women of the Bartlett Police and Fire Departments risk their lives to protect their community. Their bravery and courage are very deserving of our recognition and admiration and I am happy to see their service has led to Bartlett being named one of the safest cities in America.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing the village of Bartlett, Illinois and congratulating them on being named one of the safest cities in America.

RECOGNIZING ANNA CIAMARRA FOR HER COURAGE AND GENEROSITY

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize Anna Ciamarra, a brave, strong, and exceptional young lady from Lombard, Illinois. Anna recently raised over \$6,000 for childhood cancers.

After visiting the doctor when she was 5 years old for a sore throat, Anna found out she had T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Since that time, Anna has had continuous treatment, including a minimum of two years of inpatient and outpatient therapies that include chemotherapy, lumbar punctures, transfusions and constant diagnostic testing. In spite of all these obstacles, Anna wanted to help others and bring awareness to childhood cancer.

Last year, Anna and her family hosted lemonade stands for Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a national childhood cancer foundation dedicated to funding research into new

treatments and cures for all children battling cancer, and raised over \$2,000. This year they were chosen as one of the foundation's National Lemonade Days Hero Ambassadors and thus far raised \$6,900. This amazing figure is not only a credit to Anna's strength and resilience, but also the entire family's compassion and determination to help others. Anna is an inspiration to all and I am sure she will continue to be an advocate for those facing the challenges of cancer.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in honoring and celebrating Anna Ciamarra's generosity and strength. Her advocacy on behalf of childhood cancer is commendable.

HONORING THE DEAF NATIONAL HOCKEY TEAM

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in recognition of the Illinois members of the men's and women's U.S. National Deaf Ice Hockey Team. Both teams competed in the 2017 World Deaf Ice Hockey Championships in April.

Members of the women's team from Illinois, Maddie Gagliano and Hannah Garcia, tried out for the U.S. National Women's Deaf Ice Hockey team in March and were selected along with 15 other girls to play against Team Canada. The U.S. team ended up losing two hard fought games to Team Canada and although the team has disbanded for now, head coach Jackie McMullin believes Maddie and Hannah have plenty of opportunities to play the game they love.

Max Finley, Ryne Kruger, and Derek Struwing are all Illinois residents who participated for team U.S. in this year's championships. The tournament was held April 19–29, with teams from Canada, Finland, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan and the United States participating. The U.S. men's team finished first in the competition and won the gold medal in a thrilling 6–3 win against Team Canada. This important victory marked the first time the United States has won gold at the World Deaf Hockey Championships.

Maddie, Hannah, Max, Ryne and Derek's participation in the U.S. National Deaf Ice Hockey Championships is truly inspirational. I know I speak for the entire state of Illinois and the country when I say congratulations and that we are all proud of them.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in honoring the Men's and Women's U.S. National Deaf Ice Hockey teams.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF LAZARUS HOUSE

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th anniversary of Lazarus

House, a charitable organization serving the homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness. Their services in providing hospitality, shelter, and education have made them a great contributor to our community.

Since opening its doors on June 6, 1997, Lazarus House has continued to uphold its mission as a transitional living center through the hard work and timeless dedication of its original founder Darlene Marcusson, as well as its current Executive Director, Liz Eakins. Working together with various social service agencies, a large network of volunteers, and a generous family of donors, this organization has faithfully served those who are searching for a sense of hope and a future of opportunities.

Treating their guests as gifts from God, Lazarus House has brought the Gospel to the forefront of their work. Its emergency shelter and outreach programs provide rent, mortgage and utility assistance, and most importantly, a support system for the homeless to call home. In helping their guests transition to independent living with the necessary skills for eventual success, Lazarus House has been a tremendous source of care and a ray of light for the future.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in honoring and celebrating the remarkable achievements of Lazarus House. Their advocacy on behalf of the homeless is commendable.

CONGRATULATING LAKE IN THE HILLS

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lake in the Hills on being named one of the safest cities in the United States. The village of Lake in the Hills was named the seventh safest city on Neighborhood Scout's list of America's 100 Safest Cities.

Working together, law enforcement, local officials, and the community have made Lake in the Hills a safer place to live, work, and raise a family. The residents of Lake in the Hills should never underestimate the impact that each citizen's positive actions can have. Everyday there are members of the community helping to change lives, while also inspiring their peers to do the same.

I would be remiss to not also mention the wonderful job of the Lake in the Hills Police Department and Fire Department. Day in and day out the men and women of the Lake in the Hills Police and Fire Departments risk their lives to protect their community. Their bravery and courage are very deserving of our recognition and admiration and I am happy to see their service has led to Lake in the Hills being named one of the safest cities in America.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing the village of Lake in the Hills, Illinois and congratulating them on being named one of the safest cities in America.

HONORING JEFF TURNER FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE AND OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY OF ELGIN

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a distinguished public servant from the Sixth District of Illinois. Jeff Turner has dedicated his life to the Elgin community and his incredible service is a truly impressive feat which may not be replicated. As the recipient of the 75th Elgin Cosmopolitan Club Distinguished Service Award, he serves as a role model for us all and as proof that one dedicated individual can change the lives of many.

As an active participant within his village serving on multiple boards and committees, Jeff still finds time to successfully manage in the Neighborhood Deli. As the owner of this award-winning deli, he has been instrumental in starting a community dinner program that serves all. Hosting a total of four dinners per year, he has provided a meal to more than 800 residents within the surrounding neighborhoods. With his passion for people and commitment to the well-being of others, Jeff has devoted countless hours serving those around him. Nonetheless, his work does not stop there.

He has previously partnered with the Community Garden Network of Elgin and volunteered as an honorary chef for both the Larkin Center Children's Brunch back in 2010 and the Ecker Center's Wishes for Wellness Brunch this past year. Additionally, he has served as a co-chair for both Elgin's Green Expo and their Climate Change Organization Board. In 2016, Jeff was honored with the Harold T. Seigle Community Service Award, Elgin Junior Women's Club Outstanding Man of the Year, and the D. Ray Wilson Volunteer Service Award.

Through hard work and no small amount of perseverance, Jeff Turner has helped countless people and tremendously improved his community. Distinguished Members, please join me in congratulating Jeff for his years of service and many more to come.

RECOGNIZING LAURA WHIPPLE

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Laura Whipple, an exceptional and accomplished young woman from the Sixth District of Illinois. Laura, a senior at Barrington High School has received the Girl Scout Gold Award. This achievement represents many years of diligence and personal accomplishment in supporting the ideals of Scouting.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest and most prestigious award in Girl Scouting and it is no easy feat. The award is presented to girls who aspire to transform a vision into an actionable plan with real results. Laura did just that.

Laura's project was named "Native Bird Houses". This project addressed the inad-

equately number of shelters for native bird species in her local community. She worked tirelessly, with help from several volunteers, to create different types of bird houses, while educating members of the public on how habitat destruction and invasive species can severely impact the ecosystem. At last count, Laura built 38 birdhouses that will help maintain the avian community at Crabtree Nature Center in Barrington, Illinois.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing Laura for her remarkable achievement and wishing her well as she continues to make an impact with the Girl Scouts.

CONGRATULATING WHEATON

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Wheaton on being named one of the safest cities in the United States. The city of Wheaton was named the thirty-second safest city on Neighborhood Scout's list of America's 100 Safest Cities. In fact, Wheaton has a long-held reputation as one of the top 100 safest cities. It was ranked 51 in 2014, 31 in 2015, and 21 last year.

Working together, law enforcement, local officials, and the community have made Wheaton a safer place to live, work, and raise a family. The residents of Wheaton should never underestimate the impact that each citizen's positive actions can have. Everyday there are members of the community helping to change lives, while also inspiring their peers to do the same.

I would be remiss to not also mention the wonderful job of the Wheaton Police and Fire Departments. Day in and day out the men and women of the Wheaton Police and Fire Departments risk their lives to protect their community. Their bravery and courage are very deserving of our recognition and admiration, and I am happy to see their service has led to Wheaton being named one of the safest cities in America.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing the city of Wheaton, Illinois and congratulating them on being named one of the safest cities in America.

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 committees, 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, July 25, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JULY 26

Time to be announced

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 1598, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

TBA

9:30 a.m.

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine progress toward a cure for Type I Diabetes, focusing on research and the artificial pancreas.

SD-106

9:45 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

To hold hearings to examine S. 32, to provide for conservation, enhanced recreation opportunities, and development of renewable energy in the California Desert Conservation Area, S. 90, to survey the gradient boundary along the Red River in the States of Oklahoma and Texas, S. 357, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain public lands in San Bernardino County, California, to the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, and to accept in return certain exchanged non-public lands, S. 436, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, to substitute certain land selections of the Navajo Nation, to designate certain wilderness areas, S. 467, to provide for the disposal of certain Bureau of Land Management land in Mohave County, Arizona, S. 468, to establish a procedure for resolving claims to certain rights-of-way, S. 614, to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a pilot program for commercial recreation concessions on certain land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, S. 785, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans, S. 837, to provide for the conveyance of certain land to Washington County, Utah, to authorize the exchange of Federal land and non-Federal land in the State of Utah, S. 884, to amend the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 to require the Bureau of Land Management to provide a claimant of a small miner waiver from claim maintenance fees with a period of 60 days after written receipt of 1 or more defects is provided to the claimant by registered mail to cure the 1 or more defects or pay the claim maintenance fee, S. 941, to withdraw certain National Forest System land in the Emigrant Crevice area located in the Custer Gallatin National Forest, Park County, Montana, from the mining and mineral leasing laws of the United States, S. 1149, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of

timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation under that Act, S. 1230, to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, S. 1271, to designate certain mountain peaks in the State of Colorado as “Fowler Peak” and “Boskoff Peak”, and S. 1548, to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas and to make additional wild and scenic river designations in the State of Oregon.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Treasury.

SD-138

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Karen Dunn Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, and Peter B. Davidson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, both of the Department of Commerce, and Mark H. Buzby, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration, and Ronald L. Batory, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, both of the Department of Transportation.

SR-253

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Business meeting to consider S. 1514, to amend certain Acts to reauthorize those Acts and to increase protections for wildlife.

SD-406

Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy

To hold hearings to examine South Sudan's conflict and famine; to be immediately followed by a full committee hearing to examine the nominations of Michael Arthur Raynor, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Maria E. Brewer, of Indiana, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone, and John P. Desrocher, of New York, to be Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, all of the Department of State.

SD-419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 873, to amend section 8433 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for flexibility in making withdrawals from the Thrift Savings Fund, S. 288, to require notice and comment for certain interpretative rules, S. 886, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish an Acquisition Review Board in the Department of Homeland Security, S. 906, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for congressional notification regarding major acquisition program breaches, S. 1199, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reau-

thorize the Border Enforcement Security Task Force program within the Department of Homeland Security, S. 938, to require notice of cost-free Federal procurement technical assistance in connection with registration of small business concerns in procurement systems, S. 1208, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect to have the United States Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document, S. Con. Res. 15, expressing support for the designation of October 28, 2017, as “Honoring the Nation's First Responders Day”, H.R. 1293, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees, H.R. 1117, to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit a report regarding certain plans regarding assistance to applicants and grantees during the response to an emergency or disaster, H.R. 1679, to ensure that the Federal Emergency Management Agency's current efforts to modernize its grant management system includes applicant accessibility and transparency, H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, H.R. 194, to ensure the effective processing of mail by Federal agencies, and an original bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to reauthorize the Judicial Conference of the United States to redact sensitive information contained in financial disclosure reports of judicial officers and employees.

SD-342

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Foreign Agents Registration Act and attempts to influence United States elections, focusing on lessons learned from current and prior administrations.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Federal infrastructure permitting and the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council.

SD-342

Committee on Indian Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 1285, to allow the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians to lease or transfer certain lands, and H.R. 984, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Mona-

can Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office reports on human trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States.

SD-628

JULY 27

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Rostin Behnam, of New Jersey, Brian D. Quintenz, of Ohio, and Dawn DeBerry Stump, of Texas, each to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

SR-328A

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Brenda Burman, of Arizona, to be Commissioner of Reclamation, and Susan Combs, of Texas, and Douglas W. Domenech, of Virginia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of the Interior, and Paul Dabbar, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Science, David S. Jonas, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, and Mark Wesley Menezes, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary, all of the Department of Energy.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, and Randal Quarles, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Reappointment), and to be Vice Chairman for Supervision of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

SD-538

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, “Department of State Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2018”.

S-116

Select Committee on Intelligence

Closed business meeting to markup pending intelligence matters.

SH-219

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, “Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018”, an original bill entitled, “Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018”, and an original bill entitled, “Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2018”.

SD-106

AUGUST 2

2 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing on the Authorizations for the Use of Military Force, focusing on Administration perspectives.

SVC-217

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S4123–S4163

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1616–1623, and S. Res. 229–230. **Pages S4135–36**

Measures Reported:

S. 595, to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection with additional flexibility to expedite the hiring process for applicants for law enforcement positions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–133)

S. 760, to expand the Government's use and administration of data to facilitate transparency, effective governance, and innovation, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 115–134)

S. 756, to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris. (S. Rept. No. 115–135)

S. 1096, to amend and enhance certain maritime programs of the Department of Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–136) **Page S4135**

Measures Considered:

National Defense Authorization Act: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and

for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. **Pages S4130–34, S4139–63**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 53 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. EX. 166), David Bernhardt, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior. **Pages S4124–30, S4163**

Messages from the House: **Page S4135**

Measures Referred: **Page S4135**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S4136–37**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S4137–39**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S4139**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—166) **Page S4130**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 4 p.m. and adjourned at 11:19 p.m., until 12 noon on Tuesday, July 25, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S4139.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 19 public bills, H.R. 3356–3357, 3359–3361, 3363–3376; and 5 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 72; and H. Res. 469–472, were introduced. **Pages H6212–13**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H6214–15**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed on July 21, 2017 as follows:

H.R. 3353, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–237);

H.R. 3354, making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–238);

H.R. 3355, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–239); and

H. Con. Res. 71, establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2018 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2019 through 2027 (H. Rept. 115–240).

Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1927, to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–241);

S. 249, to provide that the pueblo of Santa Clara may lease for 99 years certain restricted land, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–242);

H.R. 2749, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the oversight of contracts awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–243);

H.R. 3358, making appropriations for the Departments of labor, health, and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–244);

H.R. 282, to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers to elect to use the same residences as the servicemembers (H. Rept. 115–245);

H.R. 2006, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the procurement practices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–246);

H.R. 3218, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–247, Part 1);

H.R. 2772, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees (H. Rept. 115–248);

H.R. 1690, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–249);

H.R. 2781, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the sufficient participation of small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and small business concerns owned by veterans with service-connected disabilities in contracts under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–250);

H.R. 3180, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–251);

H. Res. 468, providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 111) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to “Arbitration Agreements” (H. Rept. 115–252); and

H.R. 3362, making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–253).

Pages H6211–12

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Comer to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Page H6149

Recess: The House recessed at 12:06 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m.

Page H6150

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017: H.R. 3218, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 405 yeas with none voting “nay”, Roll No. 409;

Pages H6158–70, H6197–98

Military Residency Choice Act: H.R. 282, to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers to elect to use the same residences as the servicemembers;

Pages H6170–71, H6198

Veterans Affairs Provider Equity Act: H.R. 1058, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Pages H6171–72, H6198

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”

Page H6198

Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act: H.R. 1690, amended, to amend title

38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; **Pages H6172–73, H6198**

Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017: H.R. 1848, amended, 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; **Pages H6173–74, H6198–99**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “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, and for other purposes.” **Pages H6198–99**

Veterans Affairs Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act: H.R. 2006, to amend title 38, United States Code, and to improve the procurement practices of the Department of Veterans Affairs; **Pages H6174–75, H6199**

Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017: H.R. 2749, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the oversight of contracts awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans; **Pages H6175–76, H6199**

Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act: H.R. 2781, amended, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the sufficient participation of small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and small business concerns owned by veterans with service-connected disabilities in contracts under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative; **Pages H6176–78, H6199**

Small Business Investment Opportunity Act of 2017: H.R. 2333, amended, to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the amount of leverage made available to small business investment companies; **Pages H6178–79**

Microloan Modernization Act of 2017: H.R. 2056, amended, to amend the Small Business Act to provide for expanded participation in the microloan program; **Pages H6179–81**

Investing in Main Street Act of 2017: H.R. 2364, to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the amount that certain banks and savings associations may invest in small business investment companies, subject to the approval of the appropriate Federal banking agency; and **Pages H6181–83**

Authorizing the Capitol Police Board to make payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund to employees of the United States

Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries: H.R. 3298, amended, to authorize the Capitol Police Board to make payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund to employees of the United States Capitol Police who have sustained serious line-of-duty injuries. **Pages H6183–87**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:43 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H6195**

Requesting the Senate return to the House H.J. Res. 76: The House agreed to H. Res. 469, that the Clerk of the House of Representatives request the Senate to return to the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 76) granting the consent and approval of Congress for the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia to enter into a compact relating to the establishment of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission. **Page H6196**

Suspensions: The House failed to agree to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018: H.R. 3180, amended, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 241 yeas to 163 nays, Roll No. 407; and **Pages H6187–95, H6196**

Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act: S. 114, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 219 yeas to 186 nays, Roll No. 408. **Pages H6151–58, H6196–97**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations is to continue in effect beyond July 24, 2017—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 115–57). **Page H6150**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H6150.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yeas-and-nays votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H6196, H6197, and H6197–98. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Committee Meetings

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION RELATING TO “ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS”; DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.J. Res. 111, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to “Arbitration Agreements”; and H.R. 3219, the “Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2018” [Make America Secure Appropriations Act, 2018]. The Committee granted, by record vote of 9–4, a closed rule for H.J. Res. 111. 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 joint resolution. The rule provides that the joint resolution shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the joint resolution. The rule provides one motion to recommit. Testimony on H.J. Res 111 was heard from Chairman Hensarling and Representative Waters. Testimony on H.R. 3219 was heard from Chairman Frelinghuysen, Chairman Brooks of Indiana, and Representatives Lamborn, Lowey, Yoder, Ryan of Ohio, Dent, Wasserman Schultz, Simpson, Kaptur, Granger, Visclosky, Carter of Texas, Roybal-Allard, Slaughter, McGovern, Polis, Barr, Courtney, Garamendi, Davidson, Gomez, Dunn, Langevin, Lee, Gohmert, Panetta, Graves of Louisiana, Suozzi, Hurd, Titus, Mast, Perry, and Young of Alaska.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine commodities, credit, and crop insurance, focusing on perspectives on risk management tools and trends for the 2018 Farm Bill, 8:30 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, business meeting to mark up an original bill entitled, “Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018”, 11 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, business meeting to mark up an original bill entitled, “Commerce, Justice, Science and Related

Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018.”, 2:30 p.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower, to hold hearings to receive testimony on options and considerations for achieving a 355-ship Navy from naval analysts, 2:30 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine efforts on marine debris in the oceans and Great Lakes, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety, to hold hearings to examine developing and deploying advanced clean energy technologies, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, to hold hearings to examine assessing the maximum pressure and engagement policy toward North Korea, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of California, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, Stephen S. Schwartz, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, and Brian Allen Benczkowski, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled “Evaluating DOD Equipment and Uniform Procurement in Iraq and Afghanistan”, 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled “Oversight and Reauthorization of the Federal Communications Commission”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1624, the “Municipal Finance Support Act of 2017”; H.R. 2864, the “Improving Access to Capital Act”; H.R. 3110, the “Financial Stability Oversight Council Insurance Member Continuity Act”; H.R. 3321, the “National Strategy for Combating Terrorist, Underground, and Other Illicit Financing Act”; H.R. 3326, the “World Bank Accountability Act of 2017”; and H. Res. 442, of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to provide certain documents in the Secretary’s possession to the House of Representatives relating to President Trump’s financial connections to Russia, certain illegal financial schemes, and related information, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Authorization for the Use of Military Force and Current Terrorist Threats”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, hearing entitled “Examining the President’s FY 2018 Budget Proposal for Europe and Eurasia”, 2 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled “Held for Ransom: The Families of Iran’s Hostages Speak Out”, 3 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, hearing entitled “Deter, Detect and Interdict: Technology’s Role in Securing the Border”, 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security, hearing entitled “Securing Air Cargo: Industry Perspectives”, 2 p.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, hearing entitled “No Regulation Without Representation: H.R. 2887 and the Growing Problem of States Regulating Beyond Their Borders”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing entitled “Assessing Current Conditions and Challenges at the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center in American Samoa”, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Full Committee, begin markup on H.R. 825, the “Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act”; H.R. 873, the “Global War on Terrorism War Memorial Act”; H.R. 965, the “Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park Redesignation Act”; H.R. 1074, to repeal the Act entitled “An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation”; H.R. 1418, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Alexander Creek, Alaska, is and shall be recognized as an eligible Native village under that Act, and for other purposes; H.R. 1491, the “Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Land Affirmation Act of 2017”; H.R. 1547, the “Udall Park Land Exchange Completion Act”; H.R. 2075, the “Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act”; H.R. 2083, the “Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act”; H.R. 2199, the “Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform Act of 2017”; H.R. 2316, the “Cooperative Management of Mineral Rights Act of 2017”; H.R. 2371, the “Western Area Power Administration Transparency Act”; H.R. 2374, the “Eastern Nevada Economic Development and Land Management Improvement Act”; H.R. 2423, the “Washington County, Utah, Public Lands Management Implementation Act”; H.R. 2582, the “Confirming State Land Grants for Education Act”; H.R. 2611, the “Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Boundary Modification Act”; H.R. 2615, the “Gulf Islands National Seashore Land Exchange Act of 2017”; H.R. 2768, the “Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act”; H.R. 3115, the “Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017”; H.R. 3279, the “Helium Extraction Act of 2017”; and H.R. 3281, the “Reclamation Title Transfer and Non-Federal Infrastructure Incentivization Act”, 4 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs; and Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and Environment, joint hearing entitled “Examining ‘Sue and Settle’ Agreements: Part II”, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 3219, the “Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2018” {Make America Secure Appropriations Act, 2018} {Meeting II}, 2 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment; and Subcommittee on Energy, joint hearing entitled “Examining Advancements in Biofuels: Balancing Federal Research and Market Innovation”, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing entitled “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Coast Guard Sea, Land, and Air Capabilities, Part II”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing entitled “PTSD Claims: Assessing Whether VBA is Effectively Serving Veterans”, 10:30 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight, hearing entitled “Internal Revenue Service’s Electronic Record Retention Policies: Improving Compliance”, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of July 25 through July 28, 2017

Senate Chamber

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 Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: July 25, to hold hearings to examine commodities, credit, and crop insurance, focusing on perspectives on risk management tools and trends for the 2018 Farm Bill, 8:30 a.m., SD–106.

July 27, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Rostin Behnam, of New Jersey, Brian D. Quintenz, of Ohio, and Dawn DeBerry Stump, of Texas, each to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, 9:30 a.m., SR–328A.

Committee on Appropriations: July 25, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, “Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018”, 11 a.m., SD–192.

July 25, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, “Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018”, 2:30 p.m., SD–192.

July 26, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Treasury, 10 a.m., SD–138.

July 27, Full Committee, business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, “Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018”, an original bill entitled, “Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act,

2018”, and an original bill entitled, “Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2018”, 10:30 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Armed Services: July 25, Subcommittee on SeaPower, to hold hearings to receive testimony on options and considerations for achieving a 355-ship Navy from naval analysts, 2:30 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: July 27, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, and Randal Quarles, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Reappointment), and to be Vice Chairman for Supervision of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: July 25, Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine efforts on marine debris in the oceans and Great Lakes, 10 a.m., SR–253.

July 26, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Karen Dunn Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, and Peter B. Davidson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, both of the Department of Commerce, and Mark H. Buzby, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration, and Ronald L. Batory, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, both of the Department of Transportation, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: July 26, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, to hold hearings to examine S. 32, to provide for conservation, enhanced recreation opportunities, and development of renewable energy in the California Desert Conservation Area, S. 90, to survey the gradient boundary along the Red River in the States of Oklahoma and Texas, S. 357, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain public lands in San Bernardino County, California, to the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, and to accept in return certain exchanged non-public lands, S. 436, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, to substitute certain land selections of the Navajo Nation, to designate certain wilderness areas, S. 467, to provide for the disposal of certain Bureau of Land Management land in Mohave County, Arizona, S. 468, to establish a procedure for resolving claims to certain rights-of-way, S. 614, to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a pilot program for commercial recreation concessions on certain land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, S. 785, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans, S. 837, to provide for the conveyance of certain land to Washington County, Utah, to authorize the exchange of Federal land and non-Federal land in the State of Utah, S. 884, to amend the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 to require the Bureau of Land Management to provide a claimant of a small miner waiver from claim maintenance fees with

a period of 60 days after written receipt of 1 or more defects is provided to the claimant by registered mail to cure the 1 or more defects or pay the claim maintenance fee, S. 941, to withdraw certain National Forest System land in the Emigrant Crevice area located in the Custer Gallatin National Forest, Park County, Montana, from the mining and mineral leasing laws of the United States, S. 1149, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation under that Act, S. 1230, to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, S. 1271, to designate certain mountain peaks in the State of Colorado as “Fowler Peak” and “Boskoff Peak”, and S. 1548, to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas and to make additional wild and scenic river designations in the State of Oregon, 9:45 a.m., SD–366.

July 27, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nominations of Brenda Burman, of Arizona, to be Commissioner of Reclamation, and Susan Combs, of Texas, and Douglas W. Domenech, of Virginia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of the Interior, and Paul Dabbar, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Science, David S. Jonas, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, and Mark Wesley Menezes, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary, all of the Department of Energy, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: July 25, Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety, to hold hearings to examine developing and deploying advanced clean energy technologies, 10 a.m., SD–406.

July 26, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 1514, to amend certain Acts to reauthorize those Acts and to increase protections for wildlife, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: July 25, Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, to hold hearings to examine assessing the maximum pressure and engagement policy toward North Korea, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

July 26, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, to hold hearings to examine South Sudan’s conflict and famine; to be immediately followed by a full committee hearing to examine the nominations of Michael Arthur Raynor, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Maria E. Brewer, of Indiana, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone, and John P. Desrocher, of New York, to be Ambassador to the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, all of the Department of State, 10 a.m., SD–419.

July 27, Full Committee, business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, “Department of State Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2018”, 10 a.m., S–116, Capitol.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: July 26, business meeting to consider S. 873, to amend section 8433 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for flexibility in making withdrawals from the Thrift Savings Fund, S. 288, to require notice and comment for

certain interpretative rules, S. 886, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish an Acquisition Review Board in the Department of Homeland Security, S. 906, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for congressional notification regarding major acquisition program breaches, S. 1199, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reauthorize the Border Enforcement Security Task Force program within the Department of Homeland Security, S. 938, to require notice of cost-free Federal procurement technical assistance in connection with registration of small business concerns in procurement systems, S. 1208, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect to have the United States Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document, S. Con. Res. 15, expressing support for the designation of October 28, 2017, as “Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day”, H.R. 1293, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees, H.R. 1117, to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit a report regarding certain plans regarding assistance to applicants and grantees during the response to an emergency or disaster, H.R. 1679, to ensure that the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s current efforts to modernize its grant management system includes applicant accessibility and transparency, H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, H.R. 194, to ensure the effective processing of mail by Federal agencies, and an original bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to reauthorize the Judicial Conference of the United States to redact sensitive information contained in financial disclosure reports of judicial officers and employees, 10 a.m., SD–342.

July 26, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to hold an oversight hearing to examine Federal infrastructure permitting and the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council, 2:30 p.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: July 26, business meeting to consider S. 1285, to allow the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians to lease or transfer certain lands, and H.R. 984, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office reports on human trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: July 25, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of California, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, Stephen S. Schwartz, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, and Brian Allen Benczkowski, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

July 26, Full Committee, to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Foreign Agents Registration Act and attempts to influence United States elections, focusing on lessons learned from current and prior administrations, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: July 26, business meeting to consider S. 1598, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Select Committee on Intelligence: July 25, closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

July 27, Full Committee, closed business meeting to markup pending intelligence matters, 10 a.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: July 26, to hold hearings to examine progress toward a cure for Type I Diabetes, focusing on research and the artificial pancreas, 9:30 a.m., SD–106.

House Committees

Committee on Agriculture, July 26, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Renegotiating NAFTA: Opportunities for Agriculture”, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Armed Services, July 27, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled “Continued Oversight of the Transfer of Excess Military Equipment to Civilian Law Enforcement Agencies”, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, July 26, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development, hearing entitled “Expanding Options for Employers and Workers Through Earn-and-Learn Opportunities”, 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, July 26, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled “Powering America: A Review of the Operation and Effectiveness of the Nation’s Wholesale Electricity Markets”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

July 26, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Examining the Extension of Special Needs Plans”, 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, July 27, Full Committee, hearing entitled “The Annual Testimony of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the International Financial System”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, July 26, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled “Assessing the U.S.-Qatar Relationship”, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

July 27, Full Committee, markup on H. Res. 259, expressing concern and condemnation over the political,

economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela; H. Res. 311, recognizing that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia; H.R. 2061, the “North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2017”; and H.R. 2408, the “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

July 27, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, markup on H. Res. 422, urging adherence to the “one country, two systems” policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong; H. Res. 445, honoring the life and legacy of Liu Xiaobo for his steadfast commitment to the protection of human rights, political freedoms, free markets, democratic elections, government accountability, and peaceful change in the People’s Republic of China; H.R. 2732, the “North Korea Travel Control Act”; and H.R. 3320, to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes, 2:15 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

July 27, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled “U.S. Interests in the Asia-Pacific: FY 2018 Budget Hearing”, 2:30 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, July 26, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2626, the “Strong Visa Integrity Secures America Act”; H.R. 2805, to permanently authorize the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Travel Card Program; H.R. 3202, the “Cyber Vulnerability Disclosure Reporting Act”; H.R. 3284, the “Joint Counterterrorism Awareness Workshop Series Act of 2017”; H.R. 3328, the “Cuban Airport Security Act of 2017”; legislation to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; and H. Res. 447, directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to Department of Homeland Security policies and activities relating to businesses owned or controlled by President Donald J. Trump, 11:30 a.m., HVC–210.

July 27, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, hearing entitled “Employee Misconduct: How Can FEMA Improve the Integrity of its Workforce”, 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on House Administration, July 26, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Library of Congress’ Strategic Plan”, 11 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, July 26, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 391, the “Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2017”; and H. Res. 446, resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the removal of former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

July 27, Full Committee, hearing entitled “The Need for the Balanced Budget Amendment”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

July 27, Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, hearing entitled “Antitrust Concerns and the FDA Approval Process”, 1 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, July 26, Full Committee, continue markup on H.R. 825, the “Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act”; H.R. 873, the “Global War on Terrorism War Memorial Act”; H.R. 965, the “Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park Redesignation Act”; H.R. 1074, to repeal the Act entitled “An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation”; H.R. 1418, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Alexander Creek, Alaska, is and shall be recognized as an eligible Native village under that Act, and for other purposes; H.R. 1491, the “Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Land Affirmation Act of 2017”; H.R. 1547, the “Udall Park Land Exchange Completion Act”; H.R. 2075, the “Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act”; H.R. 2083, the “Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act”; H.R. 2199, the “Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform Act of 2017”; H.R. 2316, the “Cooperative Management of Mineral Rights Act of 2017”; H.R. 2371, the “Western Area Power Administration Transparency Act”; H.R. 2374, the “Eastern Nevada Economic Development and Land Management Improvement Act”; H.R. 2423, the “Washington County, Utah, Public Lands Management Implementation Act”; H.R. 2582, the “Confirming State Land Grants for Education Act”; H.R. 2611, the “Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Boundary Modification Act”; H.R. 2615, the “Gulf Islands National Seashore Land Exchange Act of 2017”; H.R. 2768, the “Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act”; H.R. 3115, the “Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017”; H.R. 3279, the “Helium Extraction Act of 2017”; and H.R. 3281, the “Reclamation Title Transfer and Non-Federal Infrastructure Incentivization Act”, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

July 27, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on H.R. 1778, to provide that an order by the Secretary of the Interior imposing a moratorium on Federal coal leasing shall not take effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted, and for other purposes; H.R. 3117, the “Transparency and Honesty in Energy Regulations Act of 2017”; and legislation to require congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving the National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota, to provide for the renewal of certain mineral leases in such lands, and for other purposes, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, July 26, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Office of National Drug Control Policy: Reauthorization in the 115th Congress”, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

July 27, Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits, and Administrative Rules; and Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs, joint hearing entitled “Challenges to the Freedom of Speech on College Campuses”, 9 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

July 27, Subcommittee on National Security, hearing entitled “Combatting Homegrown Terrorism”, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, July 26, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, hearing entitled

“STEM and Computer Science Education: Preparing the 21st Century Workforce”, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, July 26, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Protecting Small Businesses from Cyber Attacks: the Cybersecurity Insurance Option”, 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

12 noon, Tuesday, July 25

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, July 25

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H.J. Res. 111—Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to “Arbitration Agreements” (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of the following measures under suspension of the Rules: 1) H.R. 3178—Medicare Part B Improvement Act of 2017; 2) H.R. 2182—Plum Island Preservation Act; and 3) H.R. 3364—Russia, Iran, and North Korea Sanctions Act.

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