



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2017

No. 37

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day. We ask Your blessing upon our Nation. Bless the work of the Members of the people's House. May they toil diligently to bring about solutions to the pressing issues of these times.

Bless all men and women across our country, especially those who work in service to others: police, firefighters, healthcare providers, teachers, those who work in local, State, and national government, and those men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RASKIN 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

EQUALITY FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS LIVING IN PUERTO RICO

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, I was elected to seek equality for 3.4 million American citizens living in Puerto Rico. I am the sole Representative for the island, and I represent more constituents in my sole district than anyone in this House.

I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Jones Act, which conferred American citizenship on Puerto Ricans on this day in 1917. Since then, more than 200,000 veterans have served proudly in the U.S. military, where they are equal in war but not in peace.

That is why I stand with the will of the people of Puerto Rico to incorporate to the United States as the 51st State of the Union, as requested in the 2012 plebiscite by 61 percent of the votes.

Let this House fulfill the promise that the United States of America is a nation of liberty and justice for all of us.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO FIX THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I welcomed Emily Carlson to the Capitol as my guest at President Trump's address to Congress.

Emily comes from a rural town called Abingdon, Illinois. She is the co-owner of a small family-owned business, and her husband, Kevin, is a farmer. Like a lot of hardworking Midwesterners, they don't want a handout; they just want a fair shot at success.

But 17 years ago, all of that was put at risk when Emily was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which is a chronic

and expensive disease to treat, and she will have this the rest of her life. They could barely afford the most basic care for Emily because she was in the high-risk pool in the State of Illinois.

Too often the Carlsons literally had to vacillate between affording Emily's medication or going deeper into debt. However, since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, life has been much better for the Carlsons. Today their family of four has much better coverage, and it costs much less.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump's repeal wouldn't just undermine Emily's health; it would devastate their family's economic security, along with those of many families throughout our Nation. Instead, let's work together to keep what is working and fix what is not.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF ARMY SERGEANT ROBERT SHANE PUGH

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

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled today to rise in memory of Army Sergeant Robert Shane Pugh. He made the ultimate sacrifice while defending our Nation on March 2, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, headquartered in McComb, Mississippi. Sergeant Pugh, a combat medic, was mortally wounded when an IED detonated near his vehicle near Iskandariya, Iraq, also wounding Sergeant First Class Ellis Martin.

Sergeant Pugh posthumously received the Silver Star, the third highest award for valor, as well as the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Mississippi Medal of Valor.

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H1467

Sergeant Pugh's Silver Star citation reads: "Although in extreme pain, Sergeant Pugh directed treatment instructions to the members of his platoon for both himself and Sergeant First Class Martin. Sergeant Pugh passed away en route to the hospital; however, his courage and disregard for his own welfare resulted in saving the life of a fellow comrade who was severely wounded."

Sergeant Pugh's mother, Ms. Wilma Allen, said her son was her pride and joy, that he was happy, outstanding, and outgoing. Ms. Wilma said Sergeant Pugh would do anything for anyone.

In a fitting tribute to this brave and caring soldier, the National Guard Readiness Center in Morton, Mississippi, has been named in his honor.

Sergeant Pugh is survived by his parents, Glen and Wilma Pugh; his stepfather, Gary Allen; and his siblings, Tiffany Johnson, April Pearson, Jennifer Reed, Brad Allen, and Dale Allen.

Stand fast, Mississippi. Stand fast, Sergeant Pugh. Stand fast.

I have also honored fallen Mississippi soldiers Private Barry Wayne Mayo, Sergeant William Seth Ricketts, and Corporal Robert Taylor McDavid III this week.

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP FOR THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, a century ago today, a Federal law granted U.S. citizenship to individuals born in Puerto Rico. Island residents have made countless contributions to this country in times of peace and war, serving with exceptional valor in our Armed Forces. The bonds between Puerto Rico and Florida are unbreakable. The State is home to over 1 million Puerto Ricans, with most living in central Florida.

Puerto Rico is going through difficult times, and I am determined to help the Island get back on its feet. The main reason Puerto Rico is struggling is because, as a territory, it is treated unequally under Federal law. I support equal treatment for Puerto Rico because I oppose second class citizenship.

Ultimately, I believe Puerto Rico should discard its territory status and become a State or a sovereign nation. The choice lies with the people of Puerto Rico. However, my personal hope is that they will choose statehood so that they have full voting rights and full equality.

Puerto Ricans have earned the right to become first class citizens of the Nation they have served with honor.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF PLACER COUNTY SHERIFF ED BONNER

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize the service, and now the retirement, of our good friend from Placer County, Sheriff Ed Bonner, after 42 years of dedicated service to northern California and Placer County and its sheriff's department.

Many would talk about creating a family atmosphere at work, but few truly achieve it. Ed Bonner made the families of his officers and his staff a priority. He is with them in the best of times and in the worst, from the joy of the births of their children, or marriages, to the family tragedies, which indeed have been felt by the deputies and the brothers and the sisters of Placer County.

In his 22-year career as a sheriff, he has earned the respect and admiration of Placer County and many others throughout the State of California.

He graduated from Cal Berkeley, and has earned the respect of so many. He had a bachelor of arts in criminology, and earned a master's degree in management science at Cal Poly, Pomona.

Before his law enforcement days, Ed Bonner was a gifted athlete who excelled at track and field, where he still holds multiple State high school records. At the University of California, he became the first 4-year letterman for track and field in the school's history.

After a distinguished career, which included serving as president of the California State Sheriffs' Association, Sheriff Bonner's skills as a law enforcement administrator will be greatly missed by all of us in the community.

Now is time, though, for a much-deserved retirement which he can spend with his loving wife, Jeannie, his family, and his friends.

It has been such a pleasure to work with him. Indeed, the rigors of travel from the East Coast to the West Coast don't allow me to spend the kind of time I would like to with a good friend like Ed Bonner, but I wish him the best. I know he will have a good time in retirement, and I will see him around.

WE NEED A BUDGET THAT SERVES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as we begin the process that comes as a responsibility of this House, and that is, overseeing the President's budget and designing a budget to serve the American people, I am raising the question of the baffling budget that seems to be emerging from the White House.

The plus-up and elimination of sequester on the defense spending may be worth considering. I, frankly, believe we should remove the sequester on discretionary spending. But what is being

proposed is that the plus-up of \$54 billion will be taken out of the needs, the hearts, and minds of the American people.

The EPA will be gutted, so there will be no staff to oversee clean water and clean air, of which so many counties and cities, like Flint and my own community of Harris County, are in desperate need of.

What will happen to housing for senior citizens and young families?

Gutted because the Department of Housing and Urban Development will see a drastic cut. Or Health and Human Services that helps to sponsor federally qualified health clinics and the complete elimination of the Affordable Care Act, which will bust the budget. Medicaid, civil rights, and the prevention of hate crimes; the Justice Department gutted and, as well, as Attorney General Sessions has already done, not preventing voter fraud or voter discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, we need a budget that serves the American people. That is the kind of budget that I will be looking to support.

HONORING CARL LAMM ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a North Carolina legend as he celebrates his 90th birthday this week. Mr. Carl Lamm, who many know as "the Voice of Johnston County," has been a pioneer of the country music radio scene since 1946.

"Mr. Carl," as he is known, has been a disc jockey and co-owner of WMPM-AM in Smithfield, North Carolina, since 1958, where he plays a lively mix of bluegrass, Southern gospel, and old-time country. His daily programming is revered by tens of thousands throughout Johnston County, North Carolina, and all across the Nation.

In the seven decades Carl has been on the air, he has brought some of the greatest musicians, top athletes, and national political figures into our homes and businesses through radio to discuss current events, politics, our Creator, and much more.

Mr. Carl has witnessed the evolution of radio from the glory days of the Grand Ole Opry to the digital age of the 21st century. To say that Mr. Carl Lamm is a radio legend is an understatement.

Carl Lamm, thank you for everything you have done for our State and for our country. Again, happy birthday.

EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, March 3, is Employee Appreciation Day; and since we

won't be in session, I rise today to register my appreciation for the staff members who allow me to serve the people of the Fourth District of North Carolina.

The current political and media environment is not always an easy one for congressional staff to operate in, yet, every year, the staffers working in my North Carolina district offices help thousands of constituents navigate Federal agencies. They reach out to local businesses, governments, and other organizations, and help constituents access needed support.

In Washington, D.C., our office staff researches thousands of pieces of legislation. They help me communicate with hundreds of thousands of constituent communications, and help welcome constituents to Washington. And they join me in meetings with constituent groups and local and State representatives and universities and businesses—every imaginable group.

So the list of tasks is long, but all of them help ensure that the people of the Fourth District of North Carolina have a voice in the people's House. Simply put, these staff members that serve all of us represent the very best of public service. I and the people of North Carolina are grateful for their service.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of their dedication and diligence, I would like to include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the names of each of my staff currently employed in my office:

Nadia Alston, Katelynn Anderson, Sonia Barnes, Nora Blalock, Bayly Hassell, Asher Hildebrand, James Hunter, Lawrence Kluttz, Tracy Lovett, Sean Maxwell, Neel Mandavilli, Dave Russell, Samantha Schiffrin, Anna Tilghman, Justin Wein, Leigh Whitaker, and Robyn Winneberger.

I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, for the effort that these staff members continue to put forth and for the opportunity that Employee Appreciation Day gives me and others to honor their service.

HONORING THE 23RD ANNUAL VERA HOUSE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against domestic violence and sexual abuse. As a former Federal prosecutor for 20 years, I have seen firsthand how domestic violence affects people of all ages, races, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner. We must work together to end this abuse.

Central New York is home to Vera House, an organization that works to prevent and respond to domestic and sexual abuse. Yesterday, Vera House kicked off its 23rd Annual White Ribbon Campaign in central New York.

This campaign raises awareness for the need to put an end to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

This month, thousands of central New Yorkers will be wearing a white ribbon like I have on today, or a white wristband, to stand in solidarity against domestic and sexual violence.

I urge my House colleagues to join me in wearing a white ribbon to demonstrate a personal pledge to work towards preventing violence against men, women, and children.

□ 0915

REGULATORY INTEGRITY ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1004.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KATKO). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 156 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1004.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 0916

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1004) to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of information relating to pending agency regulatory actions, and for other purposes, with Mr. SIMPSON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1004 is sponsored by Representative TIM WALBERG, my colleague from Michigan. Cosponsors include Representative FARENTHOLD, Representative MEADOWS, Representative GOSAR, and myself.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017.

Every year, agencies promulgate thousands of new regulations and impose billions of dollars in regulatory costs on the American public. Those rules are conceived of, developed, written, and imposed by unelected agency officials—bureaucrats.

In return for the authority to issue regulations, Congress and the American people require two simple things from agencies. First, agencies must inform the public about their intended regulatory actions—early and accurately—to provide ample time for thoughtful feedback and consideration from the public. Second, we want the agencies to listen to what the public has to say about the proposed regulatory action.

Making sure the public has an opportunity to participate in this process is key. The public comment period is an essential part of upholding our democratic values. It ensures Americans have a voice heard in the Federal Government's regulatory process.

H.R. 1004 helps preserve and strengthen the integrity of the public comment process in several ways. First, the bill defines the parameters of how an agency should communicate when asking for and offering a proposal and asking for public feedback. H.R. 1004 requires the agency to identify itself in communications on the proposal. Imagine that. We ask them to identify themselves. The agency must clearly state whether it is accepting comments or considering alternatives.

Most importantly, agency communications during this process must use a neutral, unbiased tone. This bill requires agencies to do only what you would expect them to do if the request for feedback was genuine and sincere. This bill will uphold the purpose and value of the notice and comment process enshrined in the Administrative Procedures Act.

When issuing new regulations, agencies must provide notice of the regulation and accept comments from the public before finalizing the regulation. Often, regulated entities, small businesses, and subject-matter experts can provide new insights and perspectives agency officials simply do not have and do not understand. The notice and comment period allows the public to provide valuable insight to the agencies to help them make better regulations, more effective regulations, and minimize the adverse impacts.

However, not every agency takes this opportunity to really listen to the public. Often, agencies develop a proposed regulation and assume it is the end of the story. In effect, agencies reduce the notice and comment process to checking the box.

A perfect example, unfortunately, is when EPA developed the waters of the United States rule, known as WOTUS. EPA's behavior during the notice and comment period indicated that the EPA had little interest in listening to the public. Quite the contrary.

EPA used Thunderclap, an online social media platform, to disseminate government-sourced messages through unaffiliated individuals to encourage the public to provide positive comments. They did not identify themselves and used a third party to source comments that would support their

perspective. The goal was clearly to pad the administrative record with positive feedback rather than soliciting genuine input in an effort to measure the rule's effect on the public.

In fact, the Government Accountability Office found the EPA undertook a covert propaganda campaign by soliciting social media comments in support of their proposed rule. Let me say that again: a covert propaganda campaign.

GAO also told EPA to report this violation to the President and Congress because the agency's appropriations were not available for those prohibited purposes. They spent taxpayer money—our money—on something that was prohibited.

H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017, seeks to shine a light on how agencies are communicating about pending regulatory actions. This bill simply tells agencies they need to keep to the facts and avoid soliciting support when they ought to be soliciting comments.

H.R. 1004 also establishes transparency requirements for the agency in how it communicates to the public. The bill requires agencies to post on their website some basic information about each communication about a pending regulatory action. For each communication, the public will be able to see a copy of the communication, the intended audience, the method of communication, and the date it was issued—simple transparency expectations. Additionally, H.R. 1004 requires agencies to post information online about each of their regulatory actions.

Mr. Chairman, the Regulatory Integrity Act will bring integrity back to the rulemaking process with transparency and simple guidelines for effective and appropriate communication.

The Regulatory Integrity Act is a good, bipartisan bill. This bill received support in the previous Congress, and the House of Representatives passed the bill last Congress.

On February 14, 2017, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved this bill without amendment.

I thank Congressman WALBERG for his leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to be with my distinguished colleague from Michigan on this legislation, which is part of a package of bills brought forward by the majority, which we believe undermine the ability of Federal agencies to effectively promote the public interest.

To begin with, it is quite clear that this legislation is unnecessary. Current law already bans the use of agency funds for “publicity or propaganda purposes.” Current law also currently bars agency employees from grassroots lobbying campaign designed to pressure Members of Congress to support or to oppose agency proposals.

So, at the very least, all of this is duplicative, which wouldn't be so bad just to add another level of red tape and legislation, except for this: If you look at the legislation, under Restriction, part 2, it says:

“Any public communication issued by an Executive agency that refers to a pending agency regulatory action, other than an impartial communication that requests comment on or provides information regarding the pending agency regulatory action, may not—

“(A) directly advocate, in support of or against the pending agency regulatory action, for the submission of information to form part of the record of review for the pending agency regulatory action. . . .”

So let's parse that for a moment. What they are saying is that the agency may not directly advocate to the public: Please tell us whether you are for or against this regulation and why.

They are not trying to prevent a viewpoint-specific propaganda intervention by the agency. This would actually stifle the ability of the agency to solicit anybody's point of view to go out on Facebook and ask, “What is your position about this,” and to use social media to solicit the public's input.

So although the legislation masquerades as an attempt to promote government transparency, it actually radically undercuts government transparency and the ability of the agencies to solicit the widest possible input.

It also says that the agency may not appeal to the public or solicit a third party to undertake advocacy in support of or against the pending agency regulatory action.

Now, I would have no problem if what they were trying to do is simply restate the current ban on one-sided propaganda inquiries by an agency to get one side to come out and support or oppose an agency rulemaking, but that is already against the law.

What they are trying to do is to cut off the ability of the agency to solicit any public input on all sides of the issue.

Why would we place that kind of duct tape over the Administrative Procedure Act?

Well, one thought, if you look at this proposal in the context of everything else they have brought forward this week, they want to try to reduce everything to a cost-benefit analysis. That is, what would the cost to polluters be? What would the cost to the violators of the public interest be?

They never look at what the benefit to the public is of the regulations, and they want to do it behind closed doors and then prevent the agencies from going out and aggressively soliciting the input of the public on all sides of the issue.

So we don't see what the need for this proposal is. We believe that it will have a severely chilling effect on the ability of agencies to do their job. They

continually talk about one case, the WOTUS case, the waters of the United States case, where I cheerfully and readily admit that the agency went too far in terms of campaigning for its proposal. But they were called on that. The GAO already determined that they ran afoul of the prohibitions.

So they have one case which was dealt with completely legitimately within the law, and they have not cited another case.

I would gladly yield my time to my distinguished colleague from Michigan if he can invoke one other case where there was a problem or explain why the resolution of this problem was not sufficient in this case, because I think everybody understood that the agency had gone too far. It was dealt with. The problem is over.

So now we have a so-called cure, which is far worse than the underlying disease because the so-called cure is going to stifle and chill the ability of every Federal agency in the United States Government to go out and aggressively solicit public input. That is what we want in the agency process.

Now, yesterday, they just voted to create a new roving supercommission that would pore through the rules of all the different Federal agencies and bring back a package and then ask us to give a thumbs up or a thumbs down so they can just more readily dismantle public regulation.

Let's be very clear about it. We're talking about regulation that protects clean air. They rejected an amendment that would carve out the Clean Air Act from that bill. We're talking about regulation that protects clean water. We're talking about regulation that protects the purity of our food and our drugs. We're talking about regulations that advance our interests in a clean environment and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

So it seems like they want to put the whole Federal regulatory process into a straitjacket, prevent the public from being involved, and prevent the agencies from going out and soliciting public input. That doesn't sound like giving government back to the people. That sounds like giving government over to billionaires, special interests, and big corporate powers that have all the lobbyists in Washington and know how to get things done behind closed doors.

Mr. Chair, I invite my distinguished colleague from Michigan to address any of the questions I have if there are any examples that he can provide of problems that would yield the need for such a dramatic shutdown on the ability of agencies to solicit public input.

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), who is my colleague and good friend.

□ 0930

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for leading this floor debate today.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017.

Regardless of the chatter that I believe simply confuses what we want to do in good government, this bill, H.R. 1004, is a good government transparency bill that is simple in nature and seeks to preserve the integrity of the regulatory process; specifically, the public comment period.

Whether it is EPA or the Department of Labor or any other agencies or departments, they have their purpose, but they have to follow the law. The public comment period is an essential part of upholding our democratic values because it ensures that Americans will have their voices heard in the Federal Government's regulatory process.

Agencies must take the comment period seriously. Unfortunately, we have seen instances where agencies seem to believe that the regulatory process is simply a perfunctory act that the agency must undertake in order to reach a prearranged outcome.

This became abundantly clear during the EPA's Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS, rulemaking process. During that process, Mr. Chairman, the EPA undertook a campaign to solicit support and artificially inflate the positive reaction to the WOTUS rule. The EPA used the skewed results as evidence of public support.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD two letters coming from the National Association of Home Builders and the Michigan Farm Bureau to attest to this problem.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
HOME BUILDERS,
Washington, DC, February 14, 2017.

Hon. TIMOTHY WALBERG,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WALBERG: On behalf of the 140,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to express NAHB's strong support for H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017. This legislation would force agencies to follow an open and transparent federal regulatory rulemaking process by making all aspects of a rulemaking publicly available and preventing federal agencies from illegally influencing the public in order to generate support for a rulemaking.

Federal agencies are prohibited, by law, from engaging in lobbying, grassroots, and propaganda activities designed to advance a policy agenda. However, in recent rulemakings, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has ignored these restrictions and used social media platforms to perpetuate propaganda campaigns that advance their rulemakings. These actions only support the notion that the agency is not interested in a transparent and fair rulemaking process.

An excellent example of this is when the EPA created a social media campaign on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to counter opposition to its "Waters of the US" rulemaking. The agency concealed the fact that its social media messages were coming from

within the EPA and deceptively engaged in lobbying efforts designed to kill legislation that was not favorable to their proposed rulemaking. In December 2015, the Government Accountability Office released a report outlining how the EPA participated in covert propaganda and grassroots lobbying and condemned the agency for violating federal law. Federal agencies must respect and uphold the law, and the passage of H.R. 1004 will help to ensure that federal agencies are not lobbying against America's small businesses.

For these reasons, NAHB urges the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee to support H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017, in order to bring transparency and neutrality to the regulatory process.

Thank you for giving consideration to our views.

Sincerely,

JAMES W. TOBIN III.

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU,

Lansing, Michigan, February 13, 2017.

Hon. JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ELIJAH CUMMINGS,
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CHAFFETZ AND RANKING MEMBER CUMMINGS: Michigan Farm Bureau strongly supports the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017. The bill is a step in the right direction to hold government agencies accountable and for citizens to maintain trust in the government that serves them. Introduced by Rep. Tim Walberg, the bill is scheduled to come before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee later this week.

Last year, we heard about an EPA grant being used to fund whatsupstream.com in the state of Washington. This initiative used the following billboard message: "Unregulated agriculture is putting our waterways at risk" to urge the public to contact state elected officials. In a similar campaign, GAO issued a legal opinion that EPA violated federal lobbying laws by funding advocacy efforts on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. Michigan farmers are frustrated when they read about federal agencies trying to sway the public in a way that promotes their own proposed rule before all stakeholders have had a chance to weigh in the rule's merits. These examples only undermine the trust our members place in the agencies meant to serve and protect our citizens.

We believe it is critical that Congress pass the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017. We urge all members of the Committee to support this bill.

Sincerely,

JOHN KRAN,

Associate National Legislative Counsel.

Mr. WALBERG. The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office concluded the EPA overstepped and issued a report saying the EPA violated the law and undertook "covert propaganda" and grassroots lobbying during the process.

My bill simply seeks to preserve the spirit and purpose of the regulatory process by simply telling agencies that they need to keep to the facts and not solicit support when they ought to be soliciting constructive comments.

H.R. 1004 simply requires an agency to; one, identify itself as the source of

information; two, clearly state whether the agency is accepting public comments or considering alternatives; and, three, and most importantly, speak about the regulations in a neutral, unbiased tone.

People need to have the confidence that the Federal agencies, regardless of whether it is a Republican or Democrat administration, are open to their insights in a constructive criticism.

H.R. 1004 will restore the integrity to our regulatory process by ensuring agencies are honestly asking for feedback, constructive criticism, and dialogue about how to improve upon the agency's existing thoughts, not advocating for a predetermined outcome.

Mr. Chairman, this is a bipartisan issue. This bill passed the House last Congress with bipartisan support. In fact, a similar version was offered by my colleague, Representative PETERSON from Minnesota, as an amendment to H.R. 5 earlier this year. That amendment was approved with strong bipartisan support.

So, once again, I urge my colleagues to support the Regulatory Integrity Act.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, the advocates for the legislation returned to this one single case, which we all agree about. The GAO ruled that the EPA ran afoul of the prohibition on propaganda and on campaigning.

So the law worked there. The GAO blew the whistle on that. They shouldn't be coming out on one side of an issue and running a propaganda campaign. The government should not be engaged in propaganda. We all agree to that.

This legislation does something completely different. This legislation, rather than just saying a good day's work to the GAO for blowing the whistle, it says: Now we are going to tell all the Federal agencies and departments that have been out soliciting public input on all sides of issues, saying there is a regulation that has come up about clean air, about clean water, about food, about drugs, about the disposal of nuclear waste, about radioactive materials, and it tells them you can't do that anymore. You can't go out and solicit public input.

It places a complete chill on the ability of the government to go out and invite public participation in our government. Why? They keep returning to one case where the GAO blew the whistle where everybody agrees they were out of bounds.

A flag was thrown on the play, but now they want to use that in order to essentially impose a gag rule on Federal agencies across the land who are doing our work. The much reviled regulation that the agencies are engaged in is an attempt to flesh out the laws that we pass in this body because we don't want to be setting all of the particular rules about exactly how many pollutants can be in this water, in this

stream, in this river, in this creek, and so on, because we are not scientific experts on how many pollutants can be put into the air here and there. So it is delegated to government agencies.

But when they go through the Administrative Procedure Act and they have a rule and comment process, they should be able to go out and invite the public to participate.

Again, I invite my distinguished and thoughtful colleagues on the other side to cite one other case. Can they cite one case where the GAO did not blow the whistle? Can they cite some other litany of examples where there has been a real problem with government agencies being overzealous where it has not been corrected by the GAO?

The silence is deafening.

They have used the example of one problem that was caught, that was corrected, in order to try to demolish the ability of Federal agencies to go out and solicit the public's input.

To me, that is a familiar experience now, because I have been in the House of Representatives for just 2 months, and, in the committees I serve on, we continue to vote on bills where we have not had a single public hearing. We are not hearing from any of the groups.

I have a letter here objecting to this legislation that has been signed by the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, American Association for Justice, American Association of University Women, Americans for Financial Reform, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, BlueGreen Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Water Action, Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, Demand Progress, Earthjustice, Economic Policy Institute, Environment America, Environmental Working Group, Food & Water Watch, Greenpeace, Homeowners Against Deficient Dwellings, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, International Union of United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers, League of Conservation Voters, National Association of Consumer Advocates, and on and on and on.

I would like to have heard from these people in this process, but it seems like all we are getting from the other side is an attempt to have a curtain of darkness fall over all public process. We would like to have hearings. We want groups to be involved. But these people were not invited to testify. They didn't have a chance to opine on this.

Mr. Chair, in general, the problem here is that, rather than making government more transparent, we are making government more opaque. Rather than making government more open, we are making government more closed. Rather than reaching out to the public and inviting it into the rule-making process, we are shutting the door and closing the blinds on it.

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, one thing is clear to me, even as a freshman: we need to correct the record here.

My colleague from the minority suggests that somehow, magically, the GAO just determined they were the police officer, they cried foul, they stopped them.

Let's be clear about this. First, the GAO intervened because they were asked to do so by Chairman INHOFE. They investigated after the chairman asked them to look into it because of the concerns; not in advance, not because they found it independently, but because it was such a significant and egregious action that the chairman of the committee said: We need to look at this. And they did so.

Second, it was after the fact. What they found was that it was so extraordinarily egregious, they actually cited them for inappropriately spending taxpayer money.

Now, let's talk about what they did. We talk about chilling communication. Knowingly, why would you put out something on a social media site such as Thunderclap sourcing messages, not identifying yourself, if for any other purpose but to create propaganda? Why would you do that?

H.R. 1004 simply requires—and I will repeat them, because the minority seems to have a problem understanding this—the agency identified itself in its communication on a proposal: hello, this is the EPA. We are talking about this problem.

They make clear they are accepting public comments for and against: What do you think about it; what are the problems; will this work? Imagine that concept.

They require that agencies provide feedback on the comments that is genuine and sincere and not have already written the final bill—as my colleagues says, the perfunctory process.

That is what it requires. I have a difficult time understanding how that chills input from the public. And to be absolutely blunt with you, if it chills a few bureaucrats from deciding what they think is best rather than what this body believes is best, or, frankly, what the courts believe is best, then we have achieved our objective here today.

So, again, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I think we are finally having some light here on the subject.

My distinguished colleague and fellow freshman from Michigan is most concerned about what did take place in the Waters of the United States case. He praises the GAO for responding to Senator INHOFE's inquiry.

We all agree that the GAO determined that the EPA ran afoul of existing prohibitions in law on propaganda,

on taking a side in an issue. A flag was called on the play and the problem was dealt with.

If you find a kid shoplifting a candy bar, and you catch him, you remove him from the store, you tell him not to do it again. You don't then go pass a law saying that anybody under 18 cannot enter any commercial establishment in the country. The law worked in that specific case.

But, you see, they have taken a sledgehammer to a mosquito, and the mosquito was already killed. So now what they are busting up is the ability of agencies across the country simply to use the social media to go out and to solicit and invite public input into the rulemaking process. What are we afraid of?

Justice Brandeis said that sunshine is the great disinfectant. We want the public involved. We want the public's engagement.

So, again, I invite my thoughtful colleagues on the other side to cite one case of an agency doing this that was not dealt with by the GAO. I can cite you countless examples of cases where Federal agencies have gone online to invite public input in a completely objective and neutral way. Now we are creating a chill over that process because of this ban on soliciting advocacy from the public on either side of the issue.

So I simply don't get it, and I am puzzled why they continually talk about one case which was happily resolved under existing law.

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

□ 0945

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I have no further speakers on the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD several letters opposing the bill.

COALITION FOR
SENSIBLE SAFEGUARDS,
February 28, 2017.

Re House floor vote of H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards (CSS), an alliance of over 150 labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, strongly oppose H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act.

The bill is a brazen attack on the public's right to know by micro-managing the type of information that agencies are allowed to communicate to all of us when taking actions to protect the public, our economy, and the environment. An open government that prioritizes democratic public participation requires agencies to be able to effectively convey information to the public and make agency policy positions clear to the public. This bill will make our government less open and less democratic and should therefore be rejected.

H.R. 1004 will significantly inhibit federal agencies' ability to engage and inform the public in a meaningful and transparent way regarding its work on important science-based rulemakings that will greatly benefit the public. As a result, the bill will lead to

decreased public awareness and participation in the rulemaking process in direct contradiction of the Administrative Procedure Act and agencies' authorizing statutes, which specifically provide for broad stakeholder engagement.

Substantial ambiguities in the bill threaten to create uncertainty and confusion among agencies about what public communications are permissible, and thus risks discouraging them from keeping the public apprised of the important work that they do on its behalf. In an era when agencies should be increasingly embracing innovative 21st century communications technologies needed to reach the public, including social media, H.R. 1004 sends exactly the wrong message.

The legislation strictly prohibits agencies from issuing "public communications" that "emphasize the importance" of a particular agency action unless the communication has the "clear purpose of informing the public of the substance or status" of the particular action. The legislation applies to a wide swath of regulatory actions including rulemakings, guidance, policy statements, directives and adjudications.

While H.R. 1004 assumes that the distinction between informing the public of an agency action and emphasizing the importance of that action is self-evident, in practice the distinction is anything but clear. As a result, agencies are likely to avoid any public communications that risk running afoul of this ambiguous prohibition, no matter how informative the communication might be for the public.

For example, various executive orders and statutes compel agencies to conduct cost-benefit analysis on their pending rulemakings, and thus to determine whether the rule's benefits outweigh its costs. As currently written, the Regulatory Integrity Act could potentially prohibit an agency from communicating the results of such an analysis when it concludes that a particular rule generates net benefits. After all, that conclusion is tantamount to declaring that the rule makes society better off on balance. Instead, the agency would likely be forced to simply share the basic information that they had conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the regulation without being able to share the further crucial information that the regulation's benefits exceeded the costs. Given that many of the bill's sponsors enthusiastically endorse the expanded use of cost-benefit analysis in the rulemaking process, these kinds of arbitrary prohibitions on communications concerning cost-benefit analysis seem especially peculiar.

Agencies would encounter this problematic scenario when deciding to share vital information, such as:

How many lives would be saved by a regulation;

How much property damage would be averted;

How much money consumers would save; and

Any of the other myriad public benefits that regulations are designed to provide.

The stark absence of any clear bright-lines in the legislation delineating what is and what is not prohibited public communications is sure to have a chilling effect on agencies, with the predictable result that agencies will be less willing to share crucial information with the public and that the public will be less informed about government activities.

H.R. 1004 also will severely impede, rather than enable, agency use of new communication technologies, most notably social media platforms, to reach the public. Regulatory experts and scholars agree that agencies should be using social media forums and platforms.

Agencies will find it difficult, if not impossible, to communicate with the public through social media under H.R. 1004 since the bill prevents any usage of social media that both conveys information about a regulatory action but also promotes the importance of that action.

For example, the U.S. Department of Interior operates a Twitter and Instagram account that is very popular with the public because it regularly features photos of beautiful landscapes and wildlife from national parks across the United States. Under the Regulatory Integrity Act, the Department might be prohibited from posting such photos on Twitter and Instagram because they are not solely informational in nature and could be interpreted as promoting the importance of the department's work in environmental and wildlife preservation.

Enactment of H.R. 1004 will lead to less transparency in the government, make it more difficult for agencies to use new communication technologies popular with the public, and generally chill agency communications with the public on important matters due to the lack of any bright-line standards for agencies to follow.

We strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act.

Sincerely,

ROBERT WEISSMAN,
President,
Public Citizen Chair.

LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2017.

Re Oppose H.R. 998, 1004, & 1009—Assaults on Environmental Safeguards in the Guise of "Regulatory Reform."

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of our millions of members, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) works to turn environmental values into national, state, and local priorities. Each year, LCV publishes the National Environmental Scorecard, which details the voting records of members of Congress on environmental legislation. The Scorecard is distributed to LCV members, concerned voters nationwide, and the media.

LCV urges you to vote NO on H.R. 998, the SCRUB Act, H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act, and H.R. 1009, the OIRA Insight, Reform, and Accountability Act. LCV joins our partners in the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards—an alliance of consumer, public health, labor, good government, environmental, and scientific groups—in strongly opposing this trio of extreme bills that have far-reaching and damaging consequences for vital public health and environmental safeguards.

H.R. 998, the SCRUB Act, would jeopardize critical environmental safeguards that have been in place for decades and would make it extremely difficult to develop new standards in response to threats to public health and the environment. This legislation creates a regulatory review commission that would disregard the public benefits of environmental safeguards and only consider the costs to industries. By creating a misguided "cut-go" system for safeguards, this bill would result in key public health protections being eliminated.

H.R. 1004, the Regulatory Integrity Act, would significantly hinder communications between federal agencies and the public and would discourage agencies from using social media platforms. This legislation would reduce government transparency and would leave the public less informed about government activities. The vague guidelines about what public communications are allowed would result in agencies being less willing to share key information with the public.

H.R. 1009, the OIRA Insight, Reform, and Accountability Act, would endanger clean air and clean water protections by opening them up to more litigation. The bill would effectively rewrite dozens of laws in which Congress mandated that agencies prioritize public health, safety and the preservation of clean air and water over concerns about industry profits.

LCV urges you to REJECT H.R. 998, 1004, & 1009 and will strongly consider including votes on these bills in the 2017 Scorecard.

Sincerely,

GENE KARPINSKI,
President.

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE: I am writing to express the opposition of the American Association for Justice (AAJ) to the three anti regulation bills that will be voted on on the House floor this week. The Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act of 2017 (SCRUB Act); The Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017; and the OIRA Insight, Reform, and Accountability Act all impede the ability of federal agencies to appropriately protect the health, safety and well-being of the American public. As a result, we urge your boss to vote NO on all three bills. See below and attached for additional information on each bill. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

SARAH ROONEY,
Director of Regulatory Affairs,
American Association for Justice.

H.R. 998, THE SCRUB ACT

The SCRUB Act would establish a new regulatory review commission charged with identifying duplicative and/or redundant regulations to repeal. In addition, the bill provides for a blanket percentage reduction in the cumulative regulatory cost to industry without adequately considering the benefits bestowed upon the public by these same regulations. Under the severe SCRUB Act regulatory cost considerations, targeted regulations could be repealed even when the benefits of these rules are significant, appreciated by the public, and far outweigh the costs.

The SCRUB Act also contains entirely ineffective cut-go provisions. Under the bill's cut-go provisions, an agency would be required to remove an existing regulation of equal or greater cost from its cut-go list before it can issue a new regulation. As a result of these provisions, agencies will be unable to respond to any emerging hazard with any new public regulatory protections or guidance.

H.R. 1004, THE REGULATORY INTEGRITY ACT OF 2017

The Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017 significantly limits the types of communications federal agencies can have with the public regarding pending regulatory actions and prohibits agencies from soliciting support for its regulatory actions. These inappropriately restrictive provisions have two goals: stymieing important public protections and preventing the public from knowing about the positive impact pending regulations may provide.

H.R. 1009, THE OIRA INSIGHT, REFORM, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Lastly, the OIRA Insight, Reform, and Accountability Act creates yet another duplicative and unnecessary commission to provide for the repeal of regulations, while also providing for numerous additional hurdles in the regulatory review process. It would codify the numerous burdensome regulatory review requirements and make them subject to judicial review which would provide for extensive challenge and delay of important protections. More concerning, this bill would

severely damage the impact of dozens of Congressionally passed public interest laws that require agencies to prioritize public health and safety and protecting the environment and instead focus on cost to industry. It also would make federal agency science much more vulnerable to judicial review. Lastly, the bill would effectively undermine Congressionally chartered independent agencies by putting them under the influence of the Office of the President.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for his thoughtful presentation and thank the Chair for his indulgence.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I will make my statement brief. As you know, I believe in a little bit of brevity around here. Let me suggest that we have talked at length on the content of the bill and the intent of the bill. Let me suggest that my colleague may have used the wrong example or analogy because we all know, where there is one mosquito, there is more. Where there is one, there is more. At this point in time, this bill says we are going to take care of his mosquitoes. With all due respect, I ask my colleagues to support the bill, as I believe it puts the transparency required in rulemaking that will require agencies to disclose they are asking for comments and who is making the comment. It is one more step in getting the government accountable to the people rather than accountable to itself.

Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1004

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 “Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO PENDING REGULATORY ACTIONS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 306 the following new section:

“§ 307. Information regarding pending agency regulatory action

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) AGENCY REGULATORY ACTION.—The term ‘agency regulatory action’ means guidance, policy statement, directive, rule making, or adjudication issued by an Executive agency.

“(2) PUBLIC COMMUNICATION.—The term ‘public communication’—

“(A) means any method (including written, oral, or electronic) of disseminating information to the public, including an agency statement (written or verbal), blog, video, audio recording, or other social media message; and

“(B) does not include a notice published in the Federal Register pursuant to section 553 or any requirement to publish pursuant to this section.

“(3) RULE MAKING.—The term ‘rule making’ has the meaning given that term under section 551.

“(b) INFORMATION TO BE POSTED ONLINE.—

“(1) REQUIREMENT.—The head of each Executive agency shall make publicly available in a searchable format in a prominent location either on the website of the Executive agency or in the rule making docket on Regulations.gov the following information:

“(A) PENDING AGENCY REGULATORY ACTION.—A list of each pending agency regulatory action and with regard to each such action—

“(i) the date on which the Executive agency first began to develop or consider the agency regulatory action;

“(ii) the status of the agency regulatory action;

“(iii) an estimate of the date of upon which the agency regulatory action will be final and in effect; and

“(iv) a brief description of the agency regulatory action.

“(B) PUBLIC COMMUNICATION.—For each pending agency regulatory action, a list of each public communication about the pending agency regulatory action issued by the Executive agency and with regard to each such communication—

“(i) the date of the communication;

“(ii) the intended audience of the communication;

“(iii) the method of communication; and

“(iv) a copy of the original communication.

“(2) PERIOD.—The head of each Executive agency shall publish the information required under paragraph (1)(A) not later than 24 hours after a public communication relating to a pending agency regulatory action is issued and shall maintain the public availability of such information not less than 5 years after the date on which the pending agency regulatory action is finalized.

“(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Any public communication issued by an Executive agency that refers to a pending agency regulatory action—

“(A) shall specify whether the Executive agency is considering alternatives;

“(B) shall specify whether the Executive agency is accepting or will be accepting comments; and

“(C) shall expressly disclose that the Executive agency is the source of the information to the intended recipients.

“(2) RESTRICTION.—Any public communication issued by an Executive agency that refers to a pending agency regulatory action, other than an impartial communication that requests comment on or provides information regarding the pending agency regulatory action, may not—

“(A) directly advocate, in support of or against the pending agency regulatory action, for the submission of information to form part of the record of review for the pending agency regulatory action;

“(B) appeal to the public, or solicit a third party, to undertake advocacy in support of or against the pending agency regulatory action; or

“(C) be directly or indirectly for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States unless otherwise authorized by law.

“(d) REPORTING.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 15 of each year, the head of an Executive agency that communicated about a pending agency regulatory action during the previous fiscal year shall submit to each committee of Congress with jurisdiction over the activities of the Executive agency a report indicating—

“(A) the number pending agency regulatory actions the Executive agency issued public communications about during that fiscal year;

“(B) the average number of public communications issued by the Executive agency for each pending agency regulatory action during that fiscal year;

“(C) the 5 pending agency regulatory actions with the highest number of public communications issued by the Executive agency in that fiscal year; and

“(D) a copy of each public communication for the pending agency regulatory actions identified in subparagraph (C).

“(2) AVAILABILITY OF REPORTS.—The head of an Executive agency that is required to submit a report under paragraph (1) shall make the report publicly available in a searchable format in a prominent location on the website of the Executive agency.”.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item relating to section 306 the following new item:

“307. Information regarding pending agency regulatory action.”.

The CHAIR. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in part A of House Report 115-21. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON

LEE

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part A of House Report 115-21.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, after line 17, insert the following new paragraph (and redesignate subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

“(2) PROPAGANDA; PUBLICITY; ADVOCACY.—The terms ‘propaganda’, ‘publicity’, and ‘advocacy’ mean information, statements, or claims (or using such information, statement, or claim, as applicable) that—

“(A) are not widely accepted in the scientific community; or

“(B) are beliefs or assertions that are unsupported by science or empirical data.”.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 156, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the Chair and the managers of the bill, in this instance Mr. RASKIN and his collaborator, the Republican manager as well. I thank them for their very thoughtful discussion. I also want to indicate that this regulation does have a perspective of excessiveness on a matter that can be confined to instructions to the agencies that have the responsibility of implementing the laws that we pass here in the United States Congress.

My amendment improves the present underlying bill by making clear that

communication of information statements or claims that are generally accepted by the scientific community or supported by empirical data is not restricted by this bill.

H.R. 1004 directs each Federal agency to make information regarding their regulatory actions publicly available in a searchable format on a prominent website. That information would have to include the date a regulation was considered, its current status, an estimate of when the regulation will be final, and a brief description of the regulation. In addition, agencies will be required to track the details of all public communications about pending regulatory actions.

But it further provides that:

“Any public communication issued by an Executive agency that refers to a pending agency regulatory action, other than an impartial communication that requests comment on or provides information regarding the pending agency regulatory action,” among other things, “may not—be directly or indirectly for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States.”

I want to make sure that if an agency is telling the truth, then that agency is not going to be charged, as was said by Mr. RASKIN, using a sledgehammer, that they can't make those communications. Take, for example, someone claiming that global warming is a hoax, but, if you read the facts, you will find out that a landmark 2013 study assessed 4,000 peer-reviewed papers by 10,000 climate scientists that gave an opinion on the cause of climate change. It showed 97 percent of the authors attributed climate change to manmade causes. That may be a simple statement made by an agency based on science and empirical study. That should not be prohibited.

The Jackson Lee amendment will protect Federal agency employees who might otherwise be ostracized, marginalized, discriminated against, wrongfully terminated or mistreated, or the whole regulation process imploded for statements made even though the statement is externally valid, logical, rooted in fact, or supported by empirical data, although contrary to an administration's political agenda. I want this to be straight up. I want these agency representatives to do what is right, so I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment.

Mr. Chair, I wish to thank the Chair and Ranking Member of the Rules Committee for making the Jackson Lee Amendment in order.

I also wish to thank Chairman CHAFFETZ and Ranking Member CUMMINGS for their work in bringing the legislation before us to the floor.

Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to explain the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 1004.

The Jackson Lee Amendment improves H.R. 1004 by making clear that Communication of information, statements or claims that are generally accepted by the scientific com-

munity or supported by empirical data is not restricted by the bill.

H.R. 1004 directs each federal agency to make information regarding their regulatory actions publicly available in a searchable format on a prominent website.

That information would have to include the date a regulation was considered, its current status, an estimate of when the regulation would be final, and a brief description of the regulation.

In addition, agencies would be required to track the details of all public communications about pending regulatory actions.

H.R. 1004 further provides that “any public communication issued by an Executive agency that refers to a pending agency regulatory action, other than an impartial communication that requests comment on or provides information regarding the pending agency regulatory action, among other things, may not “be directly or indirectly used for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States unless otherwise authorized by law.”

Thus, in addition to requiring each federal agency to make information regarding regulatory action publicly available and accessible online, H.R. 1004 places restrictions on the type and quality of communications agencies may make.

This vague phrase—“publicity or propaganda purposes”—creates substantial uncertainty and confusion as to what public communications are permissible, and risks discouraging agencies from keeping the public apprised of the important work they do on its behalf.

The Jackson Lee Amendment will protect federal agency employees who might otherwise be ostracized, marginalized, discriminated against, wrongfully terminated, or mistreated for statements made even though the statement is externally valid, logical, rooted in fact, or supported by empirical data, although contrary to an administration's political agenda.

Under the Jackson Lee Amendment, for example, a communication that human activity is a major contributor to climate change is not propaganda because it is an assertion supported by an overwhelming consensus of the scientific community.

On the other hand, a claim that there is ‘widespread voter fraud’ in presidential elections could be considered propaganda, because there is no reliable and statistically significant empirical data to support such a claim.

Federal agencies’ ability to engage and inform the public in a meaningful and transparent way regarding their work on important science-based rulemakings that will greatly benefit the public is a public good that we must nurture and protect.

While propaganda may corrupt information or ideas by an interested party in a tendentious way in order to encourage particular attitudes and responses, information, supported by facts or empirical evidence, on the other hand, does not.

The Jackson Lee Amendment safeguards the legitimacy and transparency of communications issued by federal agencies, ensuring that the information disseminated to the public is accurate and reliable.

I urge my colleagues to preserve the bedrock principles of empirical research, scientific method, and free inquiry that are indispensable to free societies by voting for the Jackson Lee Amendment.

[From cnbc.com, February 17, 2017]

MURRAY ENERGY CEO CLAIMS GLOBAL WARMING IS A HOAX, SAYS 4,000 SCIENTISTS TELL HIM SO

(By Tom DiChristopher)

Murray Energy Chairman and CEO Robert Murray on Friday claimed global warming is a hoax and repeated a debunked claim that the phenomenon cannot exist because the Earth's surface is cooling.

Murray appeared on CNBC's “Squawk Box” to discuss Republicans’ rollback of an Obama-era rule that would have restricted coal mining near waterways. President Donald Trump signed the measure on Thursday in front of Murray and a group of Murray Energy workers.

Murray Energy is the country's largest coal miner. Many of its mines are in Appalachia, a region that would suffer some of the biggest impacts of the rule. Murray also successfully sued to delay implementation of the Clean Power Plan, which would regulate planet-warming carbon emissions from power plants.

Asked about the economic analysis behind President Barack Obama's energy regulations, Murray said, “There's no scientific analysis either. I have 4,000 scientists that tell me global warming is a hoax. The Earth has cooled for 20 years.”

It was not immediately clear who the 4,000 scientists Murray referenced are.

Asked for clarification, a spokesperson for Murray Energy sent links to the Manhattan Declaration on Climate Change, which says “human-caused climate change is not a global crisis,” and the Global Warming Petition Project, a list of science degree holders who don't think humans cause climate change.

Murray's claim that there is no scientific analysis behind climate change is not true.

A landmark 2013 study assessed 4,000 peer-reviewed papers by 10,000 climate scientists that gave an opinion on the cause of climate change. It showed 97 percent of the authors attributed climate change to manmade causes.

His second claim that Earth is cooling is also false.

Temperatures were the warmest on record last year, according to NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It was the third year in a row global average temperatures set a record.

“The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 2.0 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 degrees Celsius) since the late 19th century,” a change driven largely by increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere,” NASA and NOAA said.

Climate change skeptics sometimes point to cool land temperatures to dispute global warming. Scientists have repeatedly noted that water covers 70 percent of the Earth's surface, so it is highly misleading to cast temperatures on land as a representation of global-scale temperatures.

Land also heats and cools more quickly than the ocean. The Weather Channel noted while debunking a recent Breitbart News article that was widely found to have cherry-picked data to cast doubt on climate change.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my colleague from Texas seeking to make this better, but I am going to have to oppose this amendment. It is confusing, unnecessary, and

overly restrictive on agencies. This amendment would create a single definition of three different words: propaganda, publicity, and advocacy. Those are different words. Under this amendment, publicity, advocacy, and propaganda would mean making a statement not widely accepted by the scientific community. Are we going to create a test of two out of three dentists agree? It is going to be difficult to do. I mean, it could be anything. Is it propaganda for me to say I love my wife? I only know a couple of scientists, there is not going to be a broad, general consensus in the scientific community about that, but it is certainly not propaganda. It is a statement of my feeling.

Publicity and propaganda and advocacy are different words. They don't mean the same thing, and they certainly don't have the definition my friend from Texas is suggesting. Check out the dictionary. You can do it on your smartphone. These definitions that are proposed in this amendment are unworkable. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that my good friend from Texas loves his wife. I would also suggest to him that there might be a number of individuals who are experts that would be able to confirm that, certainly those who are around him, and they might be able to say that that is not propaganda or publicity, and, therefore, his statement stands.

But when you are talking about thousands upon thousands of executive agency staff, servants of the United States Government wanting to do what is right, and you come down with this massive, oppressive document that says here is what you have to do, but don't do propaganda and don't do publicity, there should be a determination or a standard that says if it is based in fact, you have no problem, that is information that you can disseminate in order to edify those who may be wanting to comment by edifying the particular regulatory scheme or structure that you are putting forward for comment.

Why should my friends on the other side be afraid of good, strong information to make the input valuable so that if I am dealing with a clean air regulation that I am able to hear from those who are for and against, but I can provide documentation, scientific documentation about the quality of air pollution, why this regulatory scheme is appropriate. I ask my colleagues, again, to support the Jackson Lee amendment.

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, I come back to the purpose of this bill: we want our regulatory agencies to be neutral. They propose a rule, they have done the research, and they have done the science. They wouldn't be proposing it if they didn't believe that it

needed to be done. Where they crossed the line is using taxpayer money to go out and promote and advocate for it. The idea behind public comments, the whole thought behind public input is to get a diversity of ideas, but, if the solicitations seeking that comment are biased, or if the agency is advocating it, it potentially suppresses the other side. We want to get both sides of the matter.

Let's look at the actual definition of propaganda. I googled it while Ms. JACKSON LEE was just speaking. Propaganda is information, especially of a biased or misleading nature used to promote a particular cause or point of view. Advocacy is another one that has a definition. It is public statements for or a recommendation of a particular cause or policy. So those definitions basically say you are pushing a point of view. We don't want to limit those.

The definition and the purpose behind this legislation is to make our agencies fair about seeking comment and fair about listening to those comments. We don't want the agencies going into this with preconceived notions and advocating it. We want the public comment to work the way the public comment is supposed to work. The scientific community, whether they are for it or against it, can weigh in in those public comments, and the public and the agency will know what their consensus is based on the fair comments fairly solicited. So again, I urge opposition to this amendment.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. How much time is remaining on both sides?

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Texas has 30 seconds remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 1½ minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, let me say to the gentleman that what we are suggesting is that propaganda can be confusing. I want truth and honesty, and I want our agencies to be able to reach out and to help the American people. Therefore, my amendment says that if by chance they say something but it has facts or empirical evidence, it is not propaganda, it is not publicity, they can go forward and protect our water, they can protect our health, they can protect our air. Why are we hiding on this floor?

I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment. It only makes this bill more refined as to how we can help the American people pass a regulatory scheme that enhances local communities and cities. That is why we need the Jackson Lee amendment.

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, in closing, the purpose of the underlying legislation here is to make sure we have a fair process and the Federal Government isn't pushing a point of view, it is listening to all sides. This amendment takes that away. For that reason, I urge opposition.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR.

FARENTHOLD

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. HULTGREN). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part A of House Report 115-21.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, as the designee of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER), I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 4, line 24, strike “; and” and insert a semicolon.

Page 5, line 2, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 5, after line 2, insert the following new clause:

“(v) if applicable, a list of agency regulatory actions issued by the Executive agency, or any other Executive agency, that duplicate or overlap with the agency regulatory action.”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 156, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, this is a simple transparency measure that adds a disclosure requirement under the underlying bill. Understanding which regulations are duplicative or overlapping allows the public to be better informed as they participate in the rulemaking process. We want to know what is going on as members of the public. Too many times agencies develop regulations without consideration or coordination with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, or, in some cases, even the public. They issue proposed rules that are unnecessary, duplicative, or overcomplicated.

This simple amendment helps draw the public's attention to potential areas of concern while the rule is still in the proposed phase of rulemaking. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I do want to express my opposition to this amendment because it is perfectly duplicative, and it does nothing to cure

the very serious deficiencies in the underlying bill. Executive Order 13563, which was issued by President Obama, requires each agency to “periodically review existing significant regulations to determine whether any such regulations should be modified, streamlined, expanded, or repealed, so as to make the agency’s regulatory program more effective or less burdensome in achieving the regulatory objectives.”

Because there is little doubt that this executive order covers the review and elimination of duplicative and overlapping regulatory actions, there is no need for the additional reporting requirements that this amendment would redundantly impose. More importantly, this amendment simply fails to address the profound flaws in the underlying bill. It fails to provide the bright lines for what an agency can communicate to the public safely within the stringent new guidelines. It fails to eliminate the unnecessarily burdensome and onerous requirements in the bill that seem to have no purpose but to reduce the amount of information agencies would be able to release to the public and invite from the public.

□ 1000

The amendment fails to eliminate the prohibition against agencies making public communications that directly advocate for or oppose the submission of public comments or expert analysis of a pending rule. The amendment fails to remove the serious impediments this bill places in the way of agency use of social media platforms. Most importantly, the amendment does nothing to cure the serious chilling effect that the bill would have on agency communications and the negative effects that this imposition would have on the ability of agencies to educate millions of Americans about the costs and benefits of a particular regulation and to invite their input into the rule-making process.

Because the amendment does nothing to improve the flaws of this bill and is duplicative of work that agencies are already required to do, I urge all Members to oppose this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, I think my colleague across the aisle actually makes the case for me. The executive branch already requires that this work be done by the agencies.

Leaving behind the constitutional authority of this body to direct that happen in the nature of executive orders that can be changed by the next executive, this actually codifies a good part of the executive order that is already in place, so the agencies wouldn’t have to do any work.

What this does add, however, to that executive order and why it is so important is it adds a transparency requirement. An agency is required to look to see what regulations are out there that may be duplicative under the executive order. This requires them to tell us about it. Why would they want to hide

from the American people that they are creating a duplicative regulation?

This is a simple transparency amendment that improves the quality of the underlying bill, improves the amount of information accessible to the public, and holds executive branch agencies accountable to make sure they are not putting unnecessary and duplicative burdens on the American people.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise only to note the remarkable irony of the gentleman making an argument for the reduction of duplicative regulations by adding another duplicative regulation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, we are simply codifying an executive order here, as the gentleman pointed out, but we are adding one more thing. We are adding transparency to it so the American people know what these alphabet soups of government agencies are up to and give us, as watchdogs in Congress, or private organizations or a member of the public with internet access the ability to see how the CFR is expanding and expanding with more and more duplicative Federal rules.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, this redundant and duplicative and, again, chilling amendment will only add more red tape, divert the time of agency officials to produce more paperwork that is unnecessary, and point us right back to the central flaw of the legislation.

My distinguished opponents have mobilized all of one case to demonstrate the necessity of this legislation, and it was a case which was properly resolved by the GAO, and everybody agrees to it. So I understand the urge to get up and say we need more legislation to do what we have already been able to accomplish under existing law, I understand that everybody wants to make a point about the righteousness of legislative change, but sometimes we just don’t need another law. The law works as it was. We don’t need another law.

And again, I am just impressed by the irony of saying we need another law to eliminate excessive and redundant regulation when the current law already does it. It is almost like a caricature of what we do here in Congress.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Chair, my amendment is simple.

It would require an executive agency to report any new rule or regulatory action that would duplicate or otherwise overlap with existing agency rules and regulations.

So much of government’s excess is created by unelected officials who wield enormous influence over our everyday lives.

Last year, Federal agencies issued 18 rules and regulations for every one law that passed Congress.

That is a grand total of 3,853 regulations in 2016 alone. In 2015, Federal regulations cost the American economy nearly \$1.9 trillion—T, trillion dollars—in lost growth and productivity.

Think about that for a second. A \$1.9 trillion tax, a government burden on the American people. That means lost jobs, stagnant wages, and decreasing benefits for workers.

When the House passed the REINS Act in January, I offered an amendment to require at least 1 rule be overturned for every new rule finalized by the executive branch.

President Trump recently took that one step further by issuing an executive order which required at least 2 rules be overturned for every new rule.

My amendment builds on those initiatives by requiring any agency issuing a duplicative regulation to indicate as much when making the online disclosure required by the underlying bill.

The truth is, the federal government is all too often a fountain of unnecessary regulations.

And while some may debate the merits of any given regulation, few would agree the federal government should issue identical iterations of the same regulation multiple times over.

Mr. Speaker, it is past time we stop bureaucratic abuse and shift the balance of power from government back to the people, where it belongs.

That can start today by passing the Regulatory Integrity Act and putting our government on a path to reduce the amount of red tape that our businesses and the American people deal with every day.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Michigan for his hard work on this commonsense legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and the underlying bill.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part A of House Report 115–21.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 8, after line 12, insert the following new subsection:

(c) APPLICABILITY.—Section 307 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), does not apply to any communication that is protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 156, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, with all good intentions of the underlying bill, the Regulatory Integrity Act

of 2017, which has a very distinguished name, I am really concerned, and my colleague should be concerned, of the chilling effect of this particular legislation. Let me tell you what the problem is.

My good friend from Texas Mr. FARENTHOLD, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, and Professor RASKIN will not be bending over the shoulder of some hardworking public servant for the Federal Government trying to interpret what this new law means. Can I speak? Can I send information out? What a chilling effect. What a First Amendment violation this legislation might entail.

Take, for example, Chairman Pai of the FCC. He decided to publish the full text of proposals and regulations that the public would otherwise never see until after they had been finalized and approved. Suppose he was then charged with a violation of this bill? Chilling effect, undermining the public's ability to even understand what a very important agency such as the FCC is doing.

My amendment simply states that nothing in this bill shall be interpreted to prohibit any communication that is protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. For those of us who love the Constitution, that is the First Amendment, and it is a simple, simple statement. Your freedom of speech is protected because it enables people to obtain information from a diversity of sources, makes decisions, and communicates those decisions to the government.

Let me recite a 1927 case from Justice Louis Brandeis, *Whitney v. California*. There is a joy in reading it because he wrote and said: "Freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth."

The Framers of the Constitution knew, to quote Justice Brandeis: "that order cannot be secured merely through fear of punishment for its infraction; that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope and imagination; that fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate."

The question is: Some worker who is responsible for this, what will they think?

I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment that indicates the First Amendment will not be chilled.

Mr. Chair, I wish to thank the Chair and Ranking Member of the Rules Committee for making the Jackson Lee Amendment in order.

I also wish to thank Chairman CHAFFETZ and Ranking Member CUMMINGS for their work in bringing the legislation before us to the floor.

Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to explain this Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 1004.

The Jackson Lee Amendment is simple and straightforward.

It simply states that "nothing in the bill shall be interpreted to prohibit any communication that is protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution."

The amendment is necessary because not only does H.R. 1004 direct that certain information be made publicly available by agencies regarding their regulatory actions, the legislation also imposes restrictions on the type and quality of communications that can be made by agencies and agency personnel.

Mr. Chair, it is useful to explain briefly why the First Amendment's protection of speech is central to the effective functioning of the American political system.

Freedom of speech and a vibrant and robust democracy are inextricably intertwined.

Freedom of speech enables people to obtain information from a diversity of sources, make decisions, and communicate those decisions to the government.

The First Amendment also provides American people with a "marketplace of ideas."

Rather than having the government establish and dictate the truth, freedom of speech enables the truth to emerge from diverse opinions.

In *Whitney v. California* (1927), Justice Louis Brandeis wrote that "freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth."

Free speech facilitates democratic governance because it is only through talking that we encourage consensus and form a collective will.

Over the long run, free speech improves our public decision-making because just as we Americans generally believe in free markets in economic matters, we also generally believe in free markets when it comes to ideas, and this includes governmental affairs.

Freedom of speech strengthens public confidence in the American governmental system of checks and balances.

Speech is thus a means of empowering people, through which they learn, grow, and share; correct errors; and remedy violations of the public trust.

Mr. Chair, the framers of the Constitution knew, to quote Justice Brandeis again in *Whitney v. California*:

that order cannot be secured merely through fear of punishment for its infraction;

that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope and imagination;

that fear breeds repression;

that repression breeds hate;

that hate menaces stable government[.]

Free societies like the United States accept that openness fosters resiliency and that free debate dissipates more hate than it stirs.

Not only does freedom of speech serve the ends of democracy, it is also an indelible part of human personality and human dignity.

In the words of Justice Thurgood Marshall in the 1974 case *Procunier v. Martinez*:

The First Amendment serves not only the needs of the polity but also those of the human spirit—a spirit that demands self-expression.

Freedom of speech is intimately connected to the human desire to think, imagine, create, wonder, inquire, and believe.

While freedom of speech is not unlimited, the American tradition is to view such limits with caution and skepticism and to embrace freedom of speech as a transcendent constitutional value.

In *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665 (1972), Justice Douglas reminded us that:

effective self-government cannot succeed unless the people are immersed in a steady, robust, unimpeded, and uncensored flow of opinion and reporting which are continuously subjected to critique, rebuttal, and re-examination.

In other words, Mr. Chair, freedom of speech is fundamental to the American identity and psyche.

And that is why I have proposed the Jackson Lee Amendment to ensure that nothing in H.R. 1004 shall be interpreted to prohibit any communication that is protected under the precious First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

I urge my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is unnecessary and confusing. As I am sure my colleague from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) knows, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

The First Amendment applies to everybody in this country. We couldn't write a law that infringes upon the First Amendment and have it withstand scrutiny by the Supreme Court or under the Constitution, and I certainly wouldn't support a law that did this.

The underlying legislation is designed to stop public agencies from using your taxpayer dollars and my taxpayer dollars for promoting one side of an issue. It is not designed to chill any Federal employees of First Amendment rights.

In fact, the Supreme Court, in 1994, in *Waters v. Churchill*, held that public employees do have a right to free speech. We are not going to be leaning over people's necks seeing what they are putting on their personal Twitter accounts, but we are going to say that, if you are a government agency spending taxpayer dollars to promote a point of view on something before your agency, that is a no-no. That is what this underlying legislation does.

Ms. JACKSON LEE's amendment is simply unnecessary because we can't suppress the First Amendment rights even if we want to. And we do not—I say do not—ever want to violate the Constitution and interfere with people's First Amendment rights. And, listen, I agree with the underlying intent of my colleague's amendment. Simply, we can't do it.

Unfortunately, this amendment is not only unnecessary, it could be harmful. If we say First Amendment protections apply in this law, are we going to have to go out and in every law we pass, put in something that says the First Amendment applies? Come on. We already know the First Amendment applies because the Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

So it creates unnecessary confusion that could ultimately harm people's

First Amendment rights. Can you see the lawsuits? Well, Congress didn't say in there it protected my First Amendment right. So we would have to go and rewrite every law on the books.

The Constitution is there and it works. It is an unnecessary amendment. So I hope my clarification that the First Amendment applies assuages the concerns of the gentlewoman from Texas and she withdraws the amendment. If she doesn't, however, I am going to have to oppose it as unnecessary and potentially confusing to the entire body of law of this country.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, how much time is remaining?

The ACTING CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Texas has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 2½ minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, let me say this.

Mr. Chair, first of all, before I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Maryland, the reason why we need my amendment is because this deals with speech. This regulatory bill deals with speech, what you can say and what you cannot say.

So this is not a reflection that we need this in every legislative initiative. I would love for it to be there. But this is a bill that deals with what our agencies can say. And if the Chairman of the FCC put out all of these proposals specifically so that the public could see, just think if this bill unclarified what the protection of the First Amendment reiterated, his speech would be chilled.

I am delighted to yield 30 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair, a regime of fear has descended on the Federal workforce, and I have got 88,000 Federal employees in my district.

If they insist on this legislation—unnecessary, redundant, confusing, and chilling—at the very least, we must pass the gentlewoman's amendment to say that it does not trench on the First Amendment rights of our citizens who are simply exercising in a viewpoint-neutral, in a content-neutral way the determination of the agencies to solicit public input.

You say you support on your side the input of the public. You say you support the intent of the amendment. Let's accept the amendment, and let's all embrace the First Amendment together.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. I would just like to point out that Commissioner Pai's release of that information would not be prohibited under this bill. It is not advocacy. It is releasing facts. So it would not be prohibited.

Again, the First Amendment already applies to every law that we make in this body and every law we have made. The Constitution trumps what we do here.

So, with that, I continue to argue that this amendment is unnecessary

and potentially confusing, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Again, Mr. Chair, can the Chair tell us the time remaining.

The ACTING CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Texas has 1¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 2 minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, let me indicate that the gentleman just argued my point. Clarity is what we need. My amendment provides clarity.

Again, what does this bill do? This bill tells Federal employees about their speech: what level of speech, containing speech, how much speech, what they can say, what is propaganda, what is publicity. Therefore, I think it is important to avoid the chilling effect on public servants who are doing the task on behalf of the American people.

Being the American people's defendant, I believe that we should, in fact, have this language. In *Branzburg v. Hayes*, Justice Douglas reminded us that an effective self-government cannot succeed unless the people are immersed in a steady, robust, unimpeded, and uncensored flow of opinion and reporting which are continuously subjected to critique, rebuttal, and reexamination. That is the protection of the First Amendment.

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chair, I think the utmost clarity is in the First Amendment. I am going to read it here.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

□ 1015

That applies to everything we do, every law we make. This amendment is unnecessary, and I urge opposition.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Let me reemphasize: Clarity in the First Amendment cannot be a bad thing. This bill kills speech. Let's clarify that that speech is protected by the First Amendment to not chill the hard work of our hardworking Federal employees trying to provide for the safety and security of the American people.

I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chair, at the risk of sounding repetitious, the First Amendment applies to all we do in this body. This amendment is unnecessary.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in part A of House Report 115-21 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 1 by Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas.

Amendment No. 2 by Mr. FARENTHOLD of Texas.

Amendment No. 3 by Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 180, noes 234, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 122]

AYES—180

Adams	Cummings	Himes
Aguilar	Davis (CA)	Hoyer
Barragán	Davis, Danny	Huffman
Bass	DeFazio	Jackson Lee
Beatty	DeGette	Jayapal
Bera	Delaney	Jeffries
Beyer	DeLauro	Kaptur
Bishop (GA)	DelBene	Keating
Blumenauer	Demings	Kelly (IL)
Blunt Rochester	DeSaulnier	Kennedy
Bonamici	Deutch	Khanna
Brady (PA)	Dingell	Kihuen
Brownley (CA)	Doggett	Kildee
Bustos	Doyle, Michael	Kilmer
Butterfield	F.	Kind
Capuano	Ellison	Krishnamoorthi
Carbajal	Engel	Kuster (NH)
Cárdenas	Eshoo	Langevin
Carson (IN)	Españillat	Larsen (WA)
Cartwright	Esty	Larson (CT)
Castor (FL)	Evans	Lawrence
Castro (TX)	Foster	Lawson (FL)
Ciilline	Frankel (FL)	Lee
Clark (MA)	Fudge	Levin
Clarke (NY)	Gabbard	Lewis (GA)
Clay	Garamendi	Lieu, Ted
Cleaver	Gonzalez (TX)	Lipinski
Clyburn	Gottheimer	Loebsack
Cohen	Green, Al	Lofgren
Connolly	Green, Gene	Lowenthal
Conyers	Grijalva	Lowe
Correa	Gutiérrez	Lujan Grisham,
Courtney	Hanabusa	M.
Crist	Hastings	Lujan, Ben Ray
Crowley	Heck	Lynch
Cuellar	Higgins (NY)	

Lowey
Lujan Grisham,
M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
Pallone
Panetta
Pascarell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Serrano

Sewell (AL) Takano Velázquez
Shea-Porter Thompson (CA) Visclosky
Sherman Thompson (MS) Wasserman
Sires Titus Schultz
Slaughter Tonko Watson Coleman
Smith (WA) Torres Welch
Soto Tsongas Wilson (FL)
Speier Vargas Yarmuth
Swalwell (CA) Veasey

NOT VOTING—21

Bass Jordan Rush
Boyle, Brendan Keating Scott, David
F. Marchant Taylor
Brooks (AL) McGovern Waters, Maxine
Comstock Nadler Wittman
Fitzpatrick Poe (TX) Young (AK)
Hudson Rice (NY)
Johnson, E. B. Rogers (KY)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote).
There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1043

Mr. HIMES changed his vote from
“no” to “aye.”

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced
as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I was un-
avoidably detained. Had I been present, I
would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 123.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON
LEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished
business is the demand for a recorded
vote on the amendment offered by the
gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON
LEE) on which further proceedings were
postponed and on which the noes pre-
vailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the
amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amend-
ment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote
has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-
minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic de-
vice, and there were—ayes 189, noes 232,
not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 124]

AYES—189

Adams Clyburn Evans
Aguilar Cohen Foster
Barragán Connolly Frankel (FL)
Beatty Conyers Fudge
Bera Correa Gabbard
Beyer Costa Gallego
Bishop (GA) Courtney Garamendi
Blumenauer Crist Gonzalez (TX)
Blunt Rochester Crowley Gottheimer
Bonamici Cuellar Green, Al
Boyle, Brendan Cummings Green, Gene
F. Davis (CA) Grijalva
Brady (PA) Davis, Danny Gutiérrez
Brown (MD) DeFazio Hanabusa
Brownley (CA) DeGette Hastings
Bustos Delaney Heck
Butterfield DeLauro Higgins (NY)
Capuano DelBene Himes
Carbajal Demings Hollingsworth
Cárdenas DeSaulnier Hoyer
Carson (IN) Deuth Huffman
Cartwright Dingell Jackson Lee
Castor (FL) Doggett Jayapal
Castro (TX) Doyle, Michael Jeffries
Chu, Judy F. Johnson (GA)
Cicilline Duncan (TN) Jones
Clark (MA) Engel Kaptur
Clarke (NY) Eshoo Keating
Clay Espallat Kelly (IL)
Cleaver Esty Kennedy

Khanna Napolitano
Kihuen Neal
Kildee Nolan
Kilmer Norcross
Krishnamoorthi O'Halleran
Kuster (NH) O'Rourke
Langevin Pallone
Larsen (WA) Panetta
Larson (CT) Pascarell
Lawrence Payne
Lawson (FL) Pelosi
Lee Perlmutter
Levin Peters
Lewis (GA) Pingree
Lieu, Ted Pocan
Lipinski Polis
Loeb sack Price (NC)
Lofgren Quigley
Lowenthal Raskin
Lowe Rice (NY)
Lujan Grisham, Richmond
M. Rosen
Luján, Ben Ray Roybal-Allard
Lynch Ruiz
Maloney, Sean Ruppersberger
Matsui Ryan (OH)
McCollum Sánchez
McEachin Sarbanes
McGovern Schakowsky
McNerney Schiff
Meeks Schneider
Meng Schrader
Moore Scott (VA)
Moulton Scott, David
Murphy (FL) Serrano

NOES—232

Abraham Dunn
Aderholt Ellison
Allen Emmer
Amash Farenthold
Amodei Faso
Arrington Ferguson
Babin Fitzpatrick
Bacon Fleischmann
Banks (IN) Flores
Barletta Portenberry
Barr Foss
Barton Franks (AZ)
Bergman Frelinghuysen
Biggs Gaetz
Bilirakis Gallagher
Bishop (MI) Garrett
Bishop (UT) Gibbs
Black Gohmert
Blackburn Goodlatte
Blum Gosar
Bost Gowdy
Brady (TX) Granger
Brat Graves (GA)
Bridenstine Graves (LA)
Brooks (AL) Graves (MO)
Brooks (IN) Griffith
Buchanan Grothman
Buck Guthrie
Bucshon Harper
Budd Harris
Burgess Hartzler
Byrne Hensarling
Calvert Herrera Beutler
Carter (GA) Hice, Jody B.
Carter (TX) Higgins (LA)
Chabot Hill
Chaffetz Holding
Cheney Huizenga
Coffman Hultgren
Cole Hunter
Collins (GA) Hurd
Collins (NY) Issa
Comer Jenkins (KS)
Comstock Jenkins (WV)
Conaway Johnson (LA)
Cook Johnson (OH)
Cooper Johnson, Sam
Costello (PA) Joyce (OH)
Cramer Katko
Crawford Kelly (MS)
Culberson Kelly (PA)
Curbelo (FL) Kind
Davidson King (IA)
Davis, Rodney King (NY)
Denham Kinzinger
Dent Knight
DeSantis Kustoff (TN)
DesJarlais Labrador
Diaz-Balart LaHood
Donovan LaMalfa
Duffy Lamborn
Duncan (SC) Lance

Ross Smith (NJ)
Rothfus Smith (TX)
Rouzer Smucker
Royce (CA) Stefanik
Russell Stewart
Rutherford Stivers
Sanford Tenney
Scalise Thompson (PA)
Schweikert Thornberry
Scott, Austin Tipton
Sensenbrenner Trott
Sessions Turner
Shimkus Valadao
Shuster Wagner
Simpson Walberg
Smith (MO) Walden
Smith (NE) Walker

NOT VOTING—8

Bass Jordan Taylor
Hudson Nadler Wittman
Johnson, E. B. Rush

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote).
There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1050

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced
as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 124, on
H.R. 1004, I mistakenly recorded my vote as
“no” when I should have voted “yes.”

The Acting CHAIR (Mr.
FLEISCHMANN). There being no further
amendments, under the rule, the Com-
mittee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose;
and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr.
HULTGREN) having assumed the chair,
Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Acting Chair of the
Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union, reported that that
Committee, having had under consider-
ation the bill (H.R. 1004) to amend
chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code,
to require the publication of informa-
tion relating to pending agency regu-
latory actions, and for other purposes,
and, pursuant to House Resolution 156,
he reported the bill back to the House
with an amendment adopted in the
Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under
the rule, the previous question is or-
dered.

The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The
question is on the engrossment and
third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed
and read a third time, and was read the
third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I have a
motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the
gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I am op-
posed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The
Clerk will report the motion to recom-
mit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Jayapal moves to recommit the bill
H.R. 1004 to the Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform with instructions to re-
port the same back to the House forthwith
with the following amendments:

Page 6, line 13, after “Executive agency”
insert the following: “or the President of the
United States”.

Page 6, line 17, after “regulatory action,” insert the following: “or that refers to a business in which the President has an equity interest.”

Page 7, line 1, after “regulatory action” insert the following: “or business”.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order against the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

The gentlewoman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, this amendment restricts the President from making public statements to promote his own business interests in the same way that the bill restricts statements by agencies on pending rules. If we intend to hold agencies accountable for their statements, we should certainly be willing to hold the President of the United States to those same standards. Donald Trump’s enormous web of business interests and conflicts of interest make it clear that it is necessary to explicitly expand this restriction to the President.

It is deeply disturbing, Mr. Speaker, that the President has refused to release his tax returns or create a blind trust for the proceeds of his assets. Numerous U.S. Presidents have placed their financial holdings into a blind trust that is managed by a trustee without any input from the President. This allows for the President to minimize any conflicts of interest and any suggestion that the Presidency of the United States is being used for his own personal profits.

This President, however, has avoided those calls for him to sell his assets or place them into a blind trust. Instead, documents obtained through public records requests show that President Trump has moved the assets over, just in name, to his son and a longtime employee, but that Trump himself, the President of the United States, is the sole beneficiary of all of those trusts.

In other words, there is no wall erected between his businesses and his Presidency, and anyone who wants to buy influence can simply do so openly. His entire Presidency can be seen as a promotion of his business interests and be used by domestic and foreign governments to curry favor and produce benefit to his personal empire.

Trump Tower in D.C. is one example of this. The building, which is leased to him by the Federal Government, stipulates in its lease that “any elected official of the Government of the United States” may not derive any benefit from that agreement. At 12:01 p.m. on Inauguration Day, Trump was in violation of this clause. That lease should be terminated effective immediately.

Just last week, the Kuwaiti Embassy held its annual event to celebrate the country’s national day at the President’s D.C. hotel. The event was initially scheduled to take place at the

Four Seasons, and, in fact, a “save the date” went out with the Four Seasons location. But Kuwait canceled that reservation just a few days after the election, and moved the event to the President’s hotel after that happened.

These are not isolated instances. They constitute a pattern of conflicts of interest every time a foreign government holds a reception or rents a room at a Trump property, a problem so important to this country that it was put into the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution of the United States of America.

The American people should also be deeply concerned about conflicts of interest at the President’s Mar-a-Lago resort. On January 1, 2017, just 2 months after the election of Donald Trump, the exclusive resort doubled its membership initiation fee from \$100,000 to \$200,000. When Trump took Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe there, it created even more free publicity for the resort as several social media posts were made throughout the weekend.

Conducting government affairs in public settings not only has serious national security concerns, but indicates that anyone who wants to be a member of the club will have access to the President of the United States, and the President will personally profit off of their membership.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have a right to know what the entire web of conflicts of interest are, but we have yet to get this information because we have not received—we have yet to get any information from this President, his tax returns, or any of the documents that help us to ensure that he is complying with the Constitution of the United States of America, that document that he swore to uphold and protect, so that we can make sure that he is not using the highest office of this land to profit.

□ 1100

The American people have the right to demand that this President put their interests first rather than his own business interests.

I urge all of my colleagues to pass this motion to recommitment and demand that we uphold our Constitution, protect this democracy and the duty of this President to work not for the business interests, but for we the people.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order is withdrawn.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, as a great supporter of transparency, this bill is designed to promote transparency in executive branch agencies.

Unfortunately, I think the motion to recommit would actually be violative

of the Constitution. The President and the executive branch agencies we are seeking to regulate under this law are creations of Congress administered by the executive branch.

The Presidency is created by the Constitution, and it is my belief that it would be unconstitutional to pass this motion to recommit. For that reason alone, I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 189, noes 232, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 125]

AYES—189

Adams	Delaney	Kihuen
Aguilar	DeLauro	Kildee
Barragán	DelBene	Kilmer
Bass	Demings	Kind
Beatty	DeSaulnier	Krishnamoorthi
Bera	Deutch	Kuster (NH)
Beyer	Dingell	Langevin
Bishop (GA)	Doggett	Larsen (WA)
Blumenauer	Doyle, Michael	Larson (CT)
Blunt Rochester	F.	Lawrence
Bonamici	Ellison	Lawson (FL)
Boyle, Brendan	Engel	Lee
F.	Eshoo	Levin
Brady (PA)	Españillat	Lewis (GA)
Brown (MD)	Esty	Lieu, Ted
Brownley (CA)	Evans	Lipinski
Bustos	Foster	Loeb sack
Butterfield	Frankel (FL)	Lofgren
Capuano	Fudge	Lowenthal
Carbajal	Gabbard	Lowe y
Cárdenas	Gállego	Lujan Grisham,
Carson (IN)	Garamendi	M.
Cartwright	Gonzalez (TX)	Luján, Ben Ray
Castor (FL)	Gottheimer	Lynch
Castro (TX)	Green, Al	Maloney,
Chu, Judy	Green, Gene	Carolyn B.
Cicilline	Grijalva	Maloney, Sean
Clark (MA)	Gutiérrez	Matsui
Clarke (NY)	Hanabusa	McCollum
Clay	Hastings	McEachin
Cleaver	Heck	McGovern
Clyburn	Higgins (NY)	McNerney
Cohen	Himes	Meeks
Connolly	Hoyer	Meng
Conyers	Huffman	Moore
Cooper	Jackson Lee	Moulton
Correa	Jayapal	Murphy (FL)
Costa	Jeffries	Napolitano
Courtney	Johnson (GA)	Neal
Crowley	Johnson, E. B.	Nolan
Cuellar	Jones	Norcross
Cummings	Kaptur	O'Halleran
Davis (CA)	Keating	O'Rourke
Davis, Danny	Kelly (IL)	Pallone
DeFazio	Kennedy	Panetta
DeGette	Khanna	Pascrell

Payne
 Perlmutter
 Peters
 Pingree
 Pocan
 Polis
 Price (NC)
 Quigley
 Raskin
 Rice (NY)
 Richmond
 Rosen
 Roybal-Allard
 Ruiz
 Ruppersberger
 Ryan (OH)
 Sánchez
 Sarbanes
 Schakowsky

NOES—232

Abraham
 Aderholt
 Allen
 Amash
 Amodei
 Arrington
 Babin
 Bacon
 Banks (IN)
 Barletta
 Barr
 Barton
 Bergman
 Biggs
 Bilirakis
 Bishop (MI)
 Bishop (UT)
 Black
 Blackburn
 Blum
 Bost
 Brady (TX)
 Brat
 Bridenstine
 Brooks (AL)
 Brooks (IN)
 Buchanan
 Buck
 Bueshon
 Budd
 Burgess
 Byrne
 Calvert
 Carter (GA)
 Carter (TX)
 Chabot
 Chaffetz
 Cheney
 Coffman
 Cole
 Collins (GA)
 Collins (NY)
 Comer
 Comstock
 Conaway
 Cook
 Costello (PA)
 Cramer
 Crawford
 Culberson
 Curbelo (FL)
 Davidson
 Davis, Rodney
 Denham
 Dent
 DeSantis
 DesJarlais
 Diaz-Balart
 Donovan
 Duffy
 Duncan (SC)
 Duncan (TN)
 Dunn
 Emmer
 Farenthold
 Faso
 Ferguson
 Fitzpatrick
 Fleischmann
 Flores
 Fortenberry
 Fox
 Foxx
 Franks (AZ)
 Frelinghuysen
 Gaetz
 Gallagher
 Garrett
 Gibbs

Schiff
 Schneider
 Schrader
 Scott (VA)
 Scott, David
 Serrano
 Sewell (AL)
 Shea-Porter
 Sherman
 Sinema
 Sires
 Slaughter
 Smith (WA)
 Soto
 Speier
 Suozzi
 Swalwell (CA)
 Takano
 Thompson (CA)

Thompson (MS)
 Titus
 Tonko
 Torres
 Tsongas
 Vargas
 Veasey
 Vela
 Velázquez
 Visclosky
 Walz
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Waters, Maxine
 Watson Coleman
 Welch
 Wilson (FL)
 Yarmuth

Olson
 Palazzo
 Palmer
 Paulsen
 Pearce
 Perry
 Peterson
 Pittenger
 Poe (TX)
 Poliquin
 Posey
 Ratcliffe
 Reed
 Reichert
 Renacci
 Rice (SC)
 Roby
 Roe (TN)
 Rogers (AL)
 Rogers (KY)
 Rohrabacher
 Rokita
 Rooney, Francis
 Rooney, Thomas
 J.
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross
 Rothfus
 Rouzer
 Royce (CA)
 Russell
 Rutherford
 Sanford
 Scalise
 Schweikert
 Scott, Austin
 Sensenbrenner
 Sessions
 Shimkus
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smucker
 Stefanik
 Stewart
 Stivers
 Tenney
 Thompson (PA)
 Thornberry
 Tiberi
 Tipton
 Trott
 Turner
 Upton
 Valadao
 Wagner
 Walberg
 Walden
 Walker
 Walorski
 Walters, Mimi
 Weber (TX)
 Webster (FL)
 Wenstrup
 Westerman
 Williams
 Wilson (SC)
 Womack
 Woodall
 Yoder
 Yoho
 Young (AK)
 Young (IA)
 Zeldin

NOT VOTING—8

Crist
 Hudson
 Jordan
 Nadler
 Pelosi
 Rush
 Taylor
 Wittman

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1107

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 109 through 113, 118, 119, 122, 124, and 125, I was unable to cast my vote in person due to an unexpected illness. Had I been present, I would have voted “nay.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 246, noes 176, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 126]

AYES—246

Abraham
 Aderholt
 Allen
 Amash
 Amodei
 Arrington
 Babin
 Bacon
 Banks (IN)
 Barletta
 Barr
 Barton
 Bergman
 Biggs
 Bilirakis
 Bishop (GA)
 Bishop (MI)
 Bishop (UT)
 Black
 Blackburn
 Blum
 Bost
 Brady (TX)
 Brat
 Bridenstine
 Brooks (AL)
 Brooks (IN)
 Buchanan
 Buck
 Bueshon
 Budd
 Burgess
 Byrne
 Calvert
 Carter (GA)
 Carter (TX)
 Chabot
 Chaffetz
 Cheney
 Coffman
 Cole
 Collins (GA)
 Collins (NY)
 Comer
 Comstock
 Conaway
 Cook
 Costello (PA)
 Cramer
 Crawford
 Culberson
 Curbelo (FL)
 Davidson
 Davis, Rodney
 Denham
 Dent
 DeSantis
 DesJarlais
 Diaz-Balart
 Donovan
 Duffy
 Duncan (SC)
 Duncan (TN)
 Dunn
 Emmer
 Farenthold
 Faso
 Ferguson
 Fitzpatrick
 Fleischmann
 Flores
 Fortenberry
 Foxx
 Franks (AZ)
 Frelinghuysen
 Gaetz
 Gallagher
 Garrett
 Gibbs
 Gohmert
 Goodlatte
 Gosar
 Gottheimer
 Gowdy
 Granger
 Graves (GA)
 Graves (LA)
 Graves (MO)
 Griffith
 Grothman
 Guthrie
 Gutiérrez
 Harper
 Harris
 Hartzler
 Hensarling
 Herrera Beutler
 Hice, Jody B.
 Higgins (LA)
 Hill
 Holding
 Hollingsworth
 Huizenga
 Hultgren
 Hunter
 Hurd
 Issa
 Jenkins (KS)
 Jenkins (WV)
 Johnson (LA)
 Johnson (OH)
 Johnson, Sam
 Jones
 Joyce (OH)
 Katko
 Kelly (MS)
 Kelly (PA)
 King (IA)
 King (NY)
 King (NY)
 Kinzinger
 Knight
 Kustoff (TN)
 Labradon
 LaHood
 LaMalfa
 Lamborn
 Lance
 Latta
 Leavelle
 Leavitt
 Lewis (MN)
 Long
 Loudermilk
 Love
 Lucas
 Luetkemeyer
 MacArthur
 Marchant
 Marino
 Marshall
 Massie
 Mast
 McCarthy
 McCaul
 McClintock
 McHenry
 McKinley
 McMorris
 Rodgers
 McSally
 Meadows
 Meehan
 Messer
 Mitchell
 Moolenaar
 Mooney (WV)
 Mullin
 Murphy (PA)
 Newhouse
 Noem
 Nunes

Messer
 Mitchell
 Moolenaar
 Mooney (WV)
 Mullin
 Murphy (FL)
 Murphy (PA)
 Newhouse
 Noem
 Nunes
 O'Halleran
 Olson
 Royce (CA)
 Russell
 Rutherford
 Sanford
 Scalise
 Schrader
 Schweikert
 Scott, Austin
 Sensenbrenner
 Sessions
 Shimkus
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Sinema
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smucker
 Stefanik
 Rogers (AL)

Rogers (KY)
 Rokita
 Rooney, Francis
 Rooney, Thomas
 J.
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Rosen
 Roskam
 Ross
 Rothfus
 Rouzer
 Royce (CA)
 Russell
 Rutherford
 Sanford
 Scalise
 Schrader
 Schweikert
 Scott, Austin
 Sensenbrenner
 Sessions
 Shimkus
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Sinema
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smucker
 Stefanik

NOES—176

Adams
 Aguilar
 Barragán
 Bass
 Beatty
 Bera
 Beyer
 Blumenauer
 Blunt Rochester
 Bonamici
 Boyle, Brendan
 F.
 Brady (PA)
 Brown (MD)
 Brownley (CA)
 Bustos
 Butterfield
 Capuano
 Carbajal
 Cárdenas
 Carson (IN)
 Cartwright
 Castor (FL)
 Castro (TX)
 Chu, Judy
 Cicilline
 Clark (MA)
 Clarke (NY)
 Clay
 Cleaver
 Clyburn
 Cohen
 Connolly
 Conyers
 Courtney
 Crowley
 Cummings
 Davis (CA)
 Davis, Danny
 DeFazio
 DeGette
 Delaney
 DeLauro
 DelBene
 Demings
 DeSaulnier
 Deutch
 Dingell
 Doggett
 Doyle, Michael
 F.
 Ellison
 Engel
 Eshoo
 McGovern
 Espallat
 Esty
 Evans
 Foster
 Frankel (FL)
 Fudge
 Gabbard

Gallego
 Garamendi
 Gonzalez (TX)
 Green, Al
 Green, Gene
 Grijalva
 Hanabusa
 Hastings
 Heck
 Higgins (NY)
 Himes
 Hoyer
 Huffman
 Jackson Lee
 Jayapal
 Jeffries
 Johnson (GA)
 Johnson, E. B.
 Kaptur
 Keating
 Kelly (IL)
 Kennedy
 Khanna
 Kihuen
 Kildee
 Kilmer
 Kind
 Krishnamoorthi
 Kuster (NH)
 Langevin
 Larsen (WA)
 Larson (CT)
 Lawrence
 Lawson (FL)
 Lee
 Levin
 Lewis (GA)
 Lieu, Ted
 Lipinski
 Loebsack
 Lofgren
 Lowenthal
 Lowey
 Lujan Grisham,
 M.
 Luján, Ben Ray
 Lynch
 Maloney,
 Carolyn B.
 Maloney, Sean
 Matsui
 McCollum
 McEachin
 McGovern
 McNeerney
 Meeks
 Meng
 Moore
 Moulton
 Napolitano
 Neal

Nolan
 Norcross
 O'Rourke
 Pallone
 Pascarell
 Payne
 Perlmutter
 Peters
 Pingree
 Pocan
 Polis
 Price (NC)
 Quigley
 Raskin
 Rice (NY)
 Richmond
 Rohrabacher
 Roybal-Allard
 Ruiz
 Ruppersberger
 Ryan (OH)
 Sánchez
 Sarbanes
 Schakowsky
 Schiff
 Schneider
 Scott (VA)
 Scott, David
 Serrano
 Sewell (AL)
 Shea-Porter
 Sherman
 Sires
 Slaughter
 Smith (WA)
 Soto
 Speier
 Suozzi
 Swalwell (CA)
 Takano
 Thompson (CA)
 Thompson (MS)
 Titus
 Tonko
 Torres
 Tsongas
 Vargas
 Veasey
 Vela
 Velázquez
 Visclosky
 Walz
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Waters, Maxine
 Watson Coleman
 Welch
 Wilson (FL)
 Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—7

Hudson
 Jordan
 Nadler
 Pelosi
 Rush
 Taylor
 Wittman

□ 1114

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 114 through 117, 120, 121, 123, and 126, I was unable to cast my vote in person due to an unexpected illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea."

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes on Thursday, March 2, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on rollcall No. 122, "Yea" on rollcall No. 123, "nay" on rollcall No. 124, "nay" on rollcall No. 125 and "Yea" on rollcall 126.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the week to come, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader and my friend.

(Mr. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, no votes are expected in the House.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at noon for morning-hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour and noon for legislative business.

On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of suspensions next week, a complete list of which will be announced by close of business tomorrow.

In addition, the House will consider several reform bills straight from our Better Way agenda:

First, the Fairness in Class Action Litigation and Further Asbestos Claim Transparency Act, sponsored by Chairman BOB GOODLATTE, which ensures that only similarly injured parties can be in the same class for purposes of a class action suit, as well as requires public disclosure of reports on the receipt and disposition of claims for injuries based on exposure to asbestos.

Next, H.R. 725, the Innocent Party Protection Act, sponsored by Representative KEN BUCK, which establishes a uniform standard for determining whether a defendant has been fraudulently joined to a lawsuit.

And third, H.R. 720, the Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act, sponsored by Chairman LAMAR SMITH, which restores accountability to our legal system by penalizing lawyers for filing baseless lawsuits.

Our Federal litigation system is plagued with broken rules that unnecessarily harm American businesses and consumers. With these measures, we will follow through on our pledge to take on trial lawyers and crack down on lawsuit abuse through meaningful litigation reform.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider the Fiscal Year 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations bill, sponsored by Chairman RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information.

The gentleman mentions the Defense Appropriations bill is going to be brought forward. It is my understanding that the text was just introduced this morning. Is that accurate?

Mr. MCCARTHY. Yes.

Mr. HOYER. Do you know when it will be marked up?

I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

We passed this bill last year, working together with others. You will see the bill reposted, and we will vote on it next week.

Mr. HOYER. Is the majority leader not aware of whether there will be a markup on the bill or will it come directly to the floor through the Rules Committee?

Mr. MCCARTHY. It will come straight to the floor.

Mr. HOYER. The gentleman just indicated that this will be the bill that we passed last year.

Mr. MCCARTHY. This bill reflects the 2017 NDAA, which passed with 375 votes in the House and 92 votes in the Senate.

Mr. HOYER. So I am correct, then, that the bill will be the same bill that we passed last year? Is that accurate?

Mr. MCCARTHY. It is not the exact same, but it reflects the work of the NDAA. It is a bipartisan agreement. It is also—you will find as soon as it is posted to read all the way through it—a reflection of the 2017 NDAA bill.

Mr. HOYER. The majority leader may not know, and I certainly understand that. We will see what differences might exist. If there are any substantive changes in the bill, we would hope that it would be subjected to a hearing or at least a markup.

But the gentleman believes there is no substantive change. Is that accurate?

Mr. MCCARTHY. That is very accurate. This is a bipartisan, bicameral agreement based upon the 2017 NDAA bill, which, if you watched, had 375 votes in the House, 92 in the Senate.

As you know as well as I do, and we have talked many times together about this, we cannot continue to have our military continue further with just the CR. If you have a continuing resolution, you now are saying that you have to fund what was last year. You can't go through with what the future needs without putting together the appro-

priations process. And this is what we are going through right now.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the majority leader for that observation.

I agree with the majority leader that subjecting the Defense Appropriations or any other appropriation is not a tenable or appropriate policy to pursue.

The gentleman knows we were for an omnibus being passed in 2016, as an omnibus was passed in 2015, which, therefore, gives the administrators of any agency or Secretaries of any agency the opportunity to have the ability to plan over a period of time longer than months.

So I certainly agree. But very frankly, I want to tell the majority leader, on our side of the aisle we are very, very concerned that privilege will be accorded to the defense bill.

Can the majority leader tell me whether or not we intend to adopt and pass, in the regular order, individual bills—the Labor-Health bill, the Interior bill, the Agriculture bill, et cetera, et cetera—in a similar manner? That means considering them on their merits discretely, separately, individually.

I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The gentleman knows we are working, in part, under the continuing resolution short-term; but it is my intention, once we pass the FY 2017 defense bill, I will keep Members updated on the further floor schedule of appropriations bills. It would be my goal to continue to pass the rest of the appropriations bills.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate that, Mr. Leader, if that is your goal; and I hope that, in fact, we can pursue that goal. Very frankly, we believe that the scenario is being set up to take care of the defense bill.

I voted for the defense bill. I was one of those people. I intend to vote for the defense bill next week when it comes to the floor, if, in fact, as the gentleman represents, it is substantively the same as the bill that we have already adopted.

What I am concerned about and what Members on my side of the aisle are very concerned about is that the remaining nondefense discretionary spending bills will be substantially altered from that which we would have passed in December of last year in the 2017.

Of course, we were 4 months late doing that—or 3 months late, at least: October, November, and December. But I am hopeful, Mr. Leader, that those bills will, in fact, be considered discretely so that the American public can see us vote on those bills and on the priorities that are incorporated in those bills.

Mr. Leader, it appears that the majority has stalled somewhat in their efforts in a path forward on repeal of the ACA. President Trump's address on Tuesday, it seems to me, didn't offer many details. He does say, however, that everybody is going to be covered—everybody—with better health care,

cheaper. If that bill comes to the floor, I am going to vote for it, Mr. Leader. I want you to know that. Health care for everybody—quality, accessible, affordable, and cheaper.

Now, as the majority leader knows, the budget resolution that was passed this year set a deadline of January 27 for committees to report legislation repealing the law. It is now March 2, and there are reports, Mr. Leader, that Republicans have a draft bill that perhaps is located in H-157, that it is not being posted, and that Republicans have been told they can view it in H-157.

I don't know that I have the room number correct, and I am not sure that the information that I have is correct, but I will tell you that MICHAEL BURGESS, or Dr. BURGESS, on your side of the aisle said this. He said it yesterday: People need to have access to this document—apparently his presumption was he did not have access to the document or he believed others should; not only Members of our side of the aisle, but also the public—and if there are problems, let's talk through them. It's been a long time in the works. Most of the pieces that are in there, people have seen in the past, but it does need to be an open process.

Mr. Leader, let me repeat that. It does need to be an open process, according to Dr. BURGESS.

GUS BILIRAKIS says: We're not having a hearing or anything. We're not having a hearing or anything. But there'll be a place for us to view it, the draft.

PAUL RYAN, the Speaker, said, 3 days ago: We're going through the committee process. We're doing this step by step. We're having public hearings. We're having committee work on legislation. This is how the legislative process is supposed to be designed. We are not hatching some bill in a back room—perhaps H-157; he didn't say that, I said it—and plopping it on the American people's front door.

Mr. Leader, you and I both were here when the Affordable Care Act was passed. There was a lot of talk about the Affordable Care Act and how it was passed in the dark of night. That was baloney, of course. We had 79 bipartisan hearings and markups over the 2 years that we considered the Affordable Care Act. House Members spent nearly 100 hours in hearings, heard from 181 witnesses from both sides of the aisle, considered 239 amendments—both Democratic and Republican—and accepted 121 amendments.

The original House bill was posted online 30 days before the first committee began their markup and more than 100 days before the committee introduced their merged bill in the House. House Democrats posted the House bill—that was the final process—online 72 hours before the bill was brought to the floor, consistent with our rules.

Now, to my understanding, the Ways and Means Committee has been told this bill is going to be marked up on Wednesday. There will not have been a

single hearing, there will not have been a single witness, and Members cannot, on our side of the aisle—as I understand it—see the bill today.

I don't know where all my Tea Party friends are who demanded full consideration and that everybody read the bill. I don't see them out on the lawn. I don't see them out on the plaza. I don't see them out on the sidewalk as they were when we were considering the bill and we had those 181 witnesses, the 100 hours of hearings that they thought weren't sufficient.

□ 1130

I don't know whether they will think that having a markup next Wednesday when the bill has not even been made available to Democratic Members of the House. Apparently, Republican Members have to go to a room to see it, and the public clearly has no idea of what that bill is.

Mr. Leader, I hope you will tell me that I am wrong, that there will be hearings consistent with what Speaker RYAN said 3 days ago. I hope you will tell me, yes, we are going to honor what Speaker RYAN said, that we are going to have those hearings, we are going to have witnesses, and we are going to consider amendments.

All of us understand that this is one of the biggest issues confronting the American people. We have had hundreds of thousands of people showing up at town meetings saying how concerned they are, yet, if my information is correct, Mr. Leader, they will have no opportunity to talk to the Committee on Ways and Means.

I am further informed, and I hope the majority leader says this is wrong, that the markup will occur before the Congressional Budget Office has the opportunity to say how much it is going to cost. All this weeping and gnashing of teeth about balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility, a bill that affects 18 percent of the gross domestic product, and the critical need for people to have access to affordable, quality health care, not one of them will have an opportunity to know how much this repeal will cost.

Again, Mr. Leader, I hope you are going to be able to tell me, no, Mr. Whip, we are going to have hearings, we understand how important this issue is, how much interest there is in this country, and we are going to give time for serious consideration, and we are going to have witnesses come before those hearings; and then after the witnesses, we are going to have a markup after substantial debate and consideration is allowed on both sides of the aisle.

I now yield to the majority leader with the hopes that he will be able to give me some degree of confidence that PAUL RYAN, our Speaker, was correct, that we are going to follow regular order and make a transparent consideration of this piece of legislation.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I always look forward to your quotes.

Mr. HOYER. I have some more.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Now you have gone beyond. You now bring in rumors. I give you credit there. You have been here quite some time, much longer than I. I agree with you, this is a very big issue. That is why, for the last 6 years, we have had hearings because all those hearings you reported, I would have wished you would have listened during those hearings. I would have wished you would have been able to do a healthcare bill that actually works. The essence of what the ACA did, it was about exchanges and the expansion of Medicaid.

So my dear friend here tells me that was a big success. What do you tell all those people across this country? In fact, one-third of every county in this country now only has one health insurer. Humana just announced they are pulling out. Because you love quotes so much, let me read what the CEO of Aetna says: ObamaCare is failing. It has entered a "death spiral."

With Humana pulling out, that gives 16 counties in Tennessee that have no one to care for them. The expansion of Medicaid—I know you are concerned about the budget, as am I—says within this 10-year window, in the tenth year, it will cost us \$1 trillion. You know as well as I do that that is about the exact amount of money we spend for all discretionary spending in government today. We watched the ACA create 23 CO-OPs. They were provided more than \$2 billion. Eighteen of those 23 have collapsed.

So, yes, for the last 6 years, we have been holding hearings, we have been listening to the public, and we have been working on this bill. Yes, we will go regular order. We will have a markup in committee. When the bill comes out of committee, we will take that markup, we will go to the Committee on the Budget because it is reconciliation, and we will bring that bill to the floor, just as the rules state we will do that. We have waited 6 years to do this, just as we moved one last year to the President as well, and he vetoed it.

We cannot sit and wait for this failure to continue any longer. The health of this country deserves something much better. That is why we have been spending our time, that is why we have been working on it, and that is why we have been listening. We have had the wisdom to listen, but now I promise you we will have the courage to lead.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comment. It is, therefore, extraordinarily sad that we have spent 6 years with only one option that the majority would pursue: repeal. Not fix, not make it work better, not ensure that people can afford their care, not make sure that insurance companies had the competence to stay in the market because the market was destabilized for all of its lifetime to date by the Republicans saying all we are going to do is repeal.

The gentleman talks about the cost. The gentleman cannot tell me some 4

days before he suggests passing a piece of legislation that will affect 18 percent of our gross domestic product what it will cost. Why? Because he has no score from the CBO. He can tell me all he wants about 6 years of waiting and listening. He has no score on this bill. My judgment is he will have no score when he marks it up. By the way, he will give no access, contrary to Speaker RYAN saying that we are going to go regular order. I reject, with all due respect, Mr. Majority Leader, the fact that we had a hearing a year ago or 2 years ago or 3 years ago, that the opinion that was given at those times by various witnesses who differed on their conclusions, that we can apply that to the bill that you have introduced now.

I don't know what the bill you have introduced is. I don't know whether you have introduced it or somebody else has introduced it. I don't even know whether it exists. I told the gentleman what I am told. He has not disabused me of any of the assertions I made. He has not disabused me that it is not available publicly. He has not disabused me of the fact that we can't see it. He has not disabused me of Dr. BURGESS saying it ought to be seen by everybody and considered, it should not be in a secret room someplace that people have to go to, like it is a secret document. We have to go down to the Capitol Visitor Center in the secure facilities of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to see secret documents. Surely that is not the standard that we are giving to a bill that will have such, in my view, catastrophic effect on individuals, on jobs, and on businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the majority leader that I do not accept the proposition that a hearing over 6 years about repeal only—and I am not sure how many hearings there were. Maybe the majority leader knows. But I know for a fact that proponents of the bill were very difficult to get on the list of witnesses that we wanted to testify at some of those hearings. The American people, the Tea Party, all those people for and against who came to these town meetings should really lament. And, frankly, I think that the Speaker's representation is not being followed. The assertion that it was done last year, the year before, we have a lot of new Members in this Congress who weren't here. Frankly, when we have bills introduced in Congress, we usually have hearings on them. That is the regular order.

Now, we haven't been following regular order on all these congressional review acts, Mr. Leader, so maybe the precedent nowadays is forget about hearings because most of the bills that we have considered during this Congress have not had hearings. The ramifications of the repeal of these rules no one knows. There were no hearings on those. Frankly, we didn't have hearings on those year after year after year in the past. So, Mr. Leader, it appears that the representation you are mak-

ing is we know all about this, we don't need hearings, we have been talking about this stuff forever, we are just going to act. The courage, I would suggest to my friend, the courage would be to expose these to full and fair and open debate. That would be the courage.

Now, Mr. Leader, unless you want to respond to that, I will move on to a different subject.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Well, I would only like to end with this: I was here at the same time. I know you have your history, and I have the history that I remember. I remember seeing the Speaker at that time, now your leader, say we need to pass the bill to find out what is in it. I remember being here late that night. I remember a lot of people, citizens around this building complaining. You know what? The saddest part of all that, their fears became true. They didn't get to keep the doctor or the health plan that they were promised. The premiums they were told would go down \$2,500, that didn't happen. They now find that they don't have the care that they were promised. We have spent our time.

You did make a statement that there are a lot of new people in this building. I would argue that is a reason why there are a lot of new people in this building, the ACA and the way you carried it out. That is why we did not do that. You stipulated a little earlier, trying to state about a 3-day rule. That wasn't your rule. That is a rule we instituted and changed when we became the majority, Mr. Speaker.

So we will have regular order. We will have regular order. We will take it through committee, we will have it open for debate, and we will bring it to the floor because we promised the American people, and we will keep our promise, just as the President, as you heard just this week, talked about the reform. We will protect preexisting conditions. We will make sure those who are 26 or younger can stay on their parents' plan. The bans or lifetime limits, we will protect those like we have always said we would. We will create a healthcare bill that actually empowers the individual, not more government. We will actually lower the premiums. That is the difference between us. We can have those debates, and I welcome them, because I think history will show your hearings and our hearings. But, at the end of the day, I want the history to show who actually did a better job of providing health care to the American people at a lower cost.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Leader, you can be assured that history will show that. Can I see the bill today?

Mr. MCCARTHY. You are not on that committee, so you can look at it when we mark it up.

Mr. HOYER. In other words, they will mark it up before anybody in the public, including a Member of the House of Representatives—

Mr. MCCARTHY. No.

Mr. HOYER. Before then, we cannot see it.

Mr. MCCARTHY. If the gentleman yields, I will answer his question.

Mr. HOYER. Is that what the gentleman is telling me?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. It is similar to every other bill we move. They will post it before they mark it up so everybody can see it and debate it.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Leader, reclaiming my time, that is not regular order. I have been here a long time. You have been here a long time. That is not regular order. Regular order is you introduce a bill, you go up to this desk, and you put a bill in. We don't follow that very much, but that is regular order. It is then printed. It is referred to a committee. The public can see it as soon as it is printed. It goes to the committee. They establish a hearing. The witnesses then come before the committee and testify as to its positive and negative aspects. The committee then schedules a markup. It may even be the same day after the hearing, I get that. And then they mark it up. But the bill has been given to the public and to Members, invariably under regular order, substantially before that happens.

You are telling me, as I understand it, Mr. Leader, I cannot see the bill today, 5 days before it is scheduled to be marked up. Is that accurate?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Have you seen a scheduled markup? I didn't have it in my list. I don't announce markups, but apparently this is another rumor you may have heard.

Mr. HOYER. Is the leader telling me that he does not know personally whether a markup is scheduled on the Affordable Care Act repeal next week?

I yield to my friend.

□ 1145

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for asking. That is a question to the chairman. I simply provide you the schedule for next week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman, but that was not my question, whether the chairman of the committee knows. Maybe the gentleman does not know, in which case he can say no.

My question is: Does the gentleman know whether a markup is scheduled for next week in the Ways and Means Committee on the repeal of the Affordable Care Act?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

That is an action of the committees, and they will list as soon as they are prepared to do their markups.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether that is a "yes" or a "no" or "I don't intend to tell you," but it certainly does not tell me whether the majority leader knows that.

I would suggest to the chairman of the committee, though, Mr. Speaker, that the majority leader ought to be informed of what the committee is doing on such an important issue.

I am just informed that while the majority leader may not know, The Hill newspaper knows and says: ObamaCare reconciliation markup on track for next week.

They, perhaps, heard the same rumor I have heard, Mr. Leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Will the gentleman yield for one moment?

The gentleman understands that this is coming through reconciliation, and reconciliation is created through committee, not by submitting a bill. So this is regular order.

I thank the gentleman for his concern, and I thank the gentleman for the last 6 years that we have had concerns about this. I will provide the gentleman with a number of hearings. In Energy and Commerce this year alone, they have had hearings and they have had votes on markups on improvements and changes to our healthcare system. If the gentleman would like, I will provide those to him at a later date.

But when it comes to reconciliation, committees will move that. When it goes through the committees, it will then go to the Budget Committee, and then it will come to the floor. That is regular order, and that is what we are following.

Mr. HOYER. I ask you: Do you expect the Budget Committee to have a hearing on it?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I expect to follow regular order. When a bill goes through Energy and Commerce and a bill comes through Ways and Means, it will then go for markup inside the Budget Committee, and then come to the floor.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

I will close on this subject, unless the majority leader would like to make a comment. He does know I like quotes.

Mr. Leader, you said the following:

This bill is being pushed through because the majority in the Congress refuse to listen to the people.

You said that on March 2, 2010. You were referring, of course, to us Democrats who refused to listen to the American people, because your presumption was the American people was not for the proposition we were promoting.

There were two candidates for President who got major votes in this election. One was Hillary Clinton, who said: I want to keep the Affordable Care Act. And one was Donald Trump, who said: I want to get rid of the Affordable Care Act. Although, he has said then and now that he wants to have everybody covered at a cheaper price with assured benefits. As I said, we would support a bill like that.

Of those two candidates that were running, one got 65 million votes and one got 62 million votes. Now, the one who got 62 million votes won the election. Why? Because of the electoral college. He is the legitimate elected President of the United States. I do not question that at all. But it ought to give some degree of humility that he

got 3 million less votes than the person that espoused policies other than those espoused by President Trump. It ought to give some pause to let the American people into the process and testify.

I will tell the gentleman that what the Republican Party is recommending in repeal of the ACA will have very substantial consequences. You may think they are positive, I may think they are negative, but I hope neither one of us think that that won't have very substantial consequences for our country. In that context, we ought to have allowed, and we ought to allow, the people of this country to testify on those consequences.

Again, I will move on, unless the gentleman wants to make an additional comment.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I just didn't know that 4 months later we were still going to litigate who won the election. It has always been the electoral college.

I know the gentleman likes to make a lot of quotes, but I think if you take my quote and you look at the date and you want to go back in time and you look at the polling, I think my quote is right. I think the American people were at that exact same position.

You talk about consequences. The ACA has a tremendous amount of consequences on the American public, and, unfortunately, they haven't been positive. Some have, but the majority have not. That is why a number of people today, one-third of this Nation of the counties, 1,022, only have one healthcare provider.

I listened to our President just this week right down this well. I know you haven't commented about that or quoted anything he said there, but I listened to other people who commented about that, people who are on different sides of the aisle who I know did not vote for him.

Mr. Speaker, Van Jones, I know the man well. He and I philosophically disagree. But he said that night, listening to President Trump, that he became America's President.

So I just say to my friend across the aisle, Mr. Speaker, that I think 4 months is long enough to decide who won the race, and we don't have to come back to this. If we really want this country to come together, I don't think that type of questioning on this floor is productive. I think it is time to come together as one Nation and start solving these problems, but not try to bring back up and litigate who really won the election.

Mr. HOYER. There are so many comments I could make in response to that.

No one today on this floor is questioning the legitimacy of President Trump's Presidency—period. What I said was that more people voted for the candidate who wanted to keep the ACA than voted for the candidate who wanted to repeal the ACA.

Secondly, if the gentleman refers to the polls of his quote in 2010, then I can refer to the polls today, which show that the majority of respondents believe that the ACA should be retained until and unless an acceptable replacement is provided.

The gentleman talks about 6 years. Not once in those 6 years, not once, has the majority party offered a comprehensive replacement for the Affordable Care Act. They have talked about it.

By the way, on the 26-year-olds and on the preexisting conditions, the repeal bills didn't say we were going to keep the preexisting conditions or the 26 age or the lifetime limits or the annual limits or the drug discounts for senior citizens. It didn't say any of that. It said repeal the ACA.

So the polling data today, Mr. Speaker, is that more people want to keep the ACA prior to the consideration and adoption of a replacement than want to repeal it. I agree with you, that is a change from 2010. And the reason it is a change is because they are now looking at it very carefully. They are figuring out what, in fact, it has done for them and their families and for their children who had preexisting conditions and for their access to affordable health care, and they are saying: We are taking a second look.

They do not now reflect that poll to which the gentleman referred that is now 7 years old and, very frankly, last year's poll. Now they look at it differently.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, if I could just tell my friend, when I refer to a poll, I mean the main poll of election day. If I look at what happened on 2010 and I look at what took place in this last election, you are correct, one side campaigned on repealing and replacing ObamaCare. This is only the third time since World War II that the American public entrusted that to a Republican Party who have a majority in the House, a majority in the Senate, and the Presidency.

So, yes, that is the poll I was looking at; the same as what transpired in 2010. That was the cornerstone and the foundation of what people said in that last election.

We are moving forward on that our promise. We have been working on this for more than 6 years with hearings, townhalls, and listening. We are going through reconciliation, the regular order. So the committees will mark up, send it in to the Committee on Budget, where they will do a markup, and then it will come to the floor.

I thank the gentleman for his concern.

Mr. HOYER. Well, I think that is some degree of clarity in terms of the markup, and no hearing, no witnesses, and I presume no CBO score to tell us how much that legislation is going to cost.

Now, Mr. Leader, two things. One is certainly less global and impactful,

but, nevertheless, important. I am sure the gentleman met with the Governors when they were in town, as I did. They met on a bipartisan basis. I met with a lot of the Republican Governors and Democratic Governors together.

They are very concerned, as you know, not only about the ACA—which we talked about, which they have great concerns of the impact on their States, Republicans and Democrats, of the repeal of the Medicaid expansion, in particular, the impact it will have on them and their people—but they also are very concerned about the Marketplace Fairness Act.

That is simply, frankly, trying to protect small businesses so that they can compete, the local mom and pop store can compete with the online vendors so that everybody would have to pay the sales tax, whatever the State sales tax is. That bill, I believe, enjoys the majority support in this House. I think it has enjoyed the majority support since it passed the Senate pretty handily.

Does the gentleman know whether or not that bill is going to be considered at any point in time in the near term?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we did meet with a bipartisan group of Governors, and that was one of the discussions as well. It is not scheduled at this time, but we will continue to work on that in committee. Our hope is to be able to find a solution in committee and be able to move that forward.

Mr. HOYER. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my friend, the majority leader, that I look forward to working with him. I see that he recently observed that the attorney general ought to recuse himself in dealing with issues of the relationship between the administration during the course of the campaign and Russia, which the intelligence community has said interfered in America's election.

All of us ought to be concerned about that—a foreign government interfering in our democracy; particularly, a government that is hostile to our interests; particularly, a government led by Mr. Putin, who has committed international crimes, who, contrary to international law, invaded Crimea, still holds Crimea inconsistent with international law, and has been sanctioned. Hopefully, those sanctions will stay in place.

I agree with the gentleman that, at the very least, the attorney general ought to recuse himself. I have asked him to step down.

But we need to have, Mr. Speaker, an independent bipartisan commission with subpoena power, similar to the 9/11 Commission, for the security of our country and, yes, for the confidence building for our President to see what, in fact, were the relationships between his campaign and Russia and to what extent Russia involved itself in trying to impact on the elections of the United States.

I don't have anything further to say. Unless the gentleman wants to say something, I will yield back.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

This is a matter for investigation by the House Intelligence Committee. For years, we have investigated Putin's hostile international actions.

Just so the gentleman does know, Mr. Speaker, this week, Chairman NUNES and Ranking Member SCHIFF approved the scope of their committee's inquiry into Russia's measures of targeting in the 2016 election. I support this bipartisan investigation. I have great faith that the committee will fully investigate all of the evidence and follow the facts wherever they lead.

I know the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, made comments in regards to the attorney general. Attorney General Sessions stated this morning that whenever it is appropriate, he will recuse himself. I agree with those remarks.

As far as the ongoing investigation into Russia, I would, again, direct my friend to the bipartisan effort that is underway in the House Intelligence Committee.

□ 1200

Mr. HOYER. I thank the majority leader for his comments.

Let me say that I was very disappointed to learn that Mr. NUNES, at the request of the administration, talked to members of the press before the investigations have occurred, before they have heard a single witness, to say that he really thought this was not a matter that really needed careful consideration. That is not a quote. I characterized what I read his comment to mean to the press.

In addition, I understand the Department of Homeland Security was also requested, and the FBI, to talk to the press to tamp down interest in those. The American people need to be very concerned about these issues. Every Member of this Congress, a separate and coequal branch of the Government of the United States, ought to be very concerned about that.

The Bible says that the truth will set us free. And the truth will give us confidence. And the truth should be known by the American people.

The problem I have with the Intelligence Committee is that the Intelligence Committee—most of the information they gather is not available to the public. I don't know what they will do moving forward.

But we found in the 9/11 Commission a perfect example of a commission equally divided with two extraordinarily respected co-chairs that got to the bottom and made significant recommendations, most of which—almost all of which—were adopted in a bipartisan fashion by this Congress.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that we would pursue that not in lieu of the Intelligence Committee—not in lieu of

the Intelligence Committee—but in addition to.

Benghazi, we had seven committees, and you thought on your side of the aisle that wasn't enough, so you spent some \$4 million on an additional special committee to find exactly the same conclusion.

So, in this case I do not oppose the work of the Intelligence Committee, but I certainly believe the American people would expect and would want a similar bipartisan commission as they saw work on the 9/11 tragedy to give them the confidence that Russia is not in any way undermining the independence of our government or undermining the democracy that we hold so dear.

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

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2017, TO MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2017.

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

There was no objection.

CELEBRATING THE 105TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRAND CANYON STATE

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, on February 14, my home State of Arizona celebrated its 105th year as a member of the United States. The Grand Canyon State is an incredible State to raise a family in, to live in, and to play in.

There is so much to love about Arizona. We have over 300 days of sunshine. We enjoy the cool pines of Flagstaff; the rustic and historic towns of Prescott, Show Low, and Tombstone, which give perspective into Arizona's first days as a State; and we greatly benefit from the agricultural city and county of Yuma.

Arizona's lakes, mountains, forests, and skies provide countless activities throughout the year for natives and visitors alike. Arizona also enthusiastically hosts spring training, Super Bowls, college football playoff games, and the Waste Management Open, which many call "The Greatest Show on Grass."

Most of all, I love the people of Arizona. Arizonans are diverse, patriotic, and fiercely independent people. They bring so much talent and potential to our communities. I am deeply honored to serve my constituents in Chandler, Gilbert, Mesa, Sun Lakes, and Queen Creek.

After a long week in Washington, I cannot wait to step off the plane into

the fresh, free Arizona air. It is the greatest State in the Union, and I will always be proud to call Arizona my home.

Happy birthday, State 48.

ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF SESSIONS AND RUSSIA

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today after news that the Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, lied under oath about his multiple contacts with higher level officials from the Russian Government.

The American people deserve full answers from the FBI on the ever-growing list of Trump administration officials with reckless and dangerous ties to Russia. The 2016 attack by Russia on U.S. democratic institutions, election systems, and political parties represents an international crime against liberty.

We still don't know the full extent of Russia's attacks. Thus, it is essential that the FBI, which reports to the Attorney General, be absolutely free of any political pressure. Congress must empower an independent investigatory, bipartisan commission to discover the truth. And the administration must appoint a special prosecutor free of political influence by the executive branch.

Any investigation must be empowered to thoroughly probe Russia's actions against our Nation's elections and must unearth any individuals who aided and abetted Russia in furtherance of its nefarious objectives. Without question, it is essential that our FBI and Justice Department be absolutely free of any political influence by the Attorney General.

The American people are owed the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Toward restoring integrity, the Attorney General should resign in view of his misleading answers about Russia during his Senate confirmation hearing.

Truth will out.

COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of including Everglades restoration in the President's infrastructure plan for America.

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is the most ambitious ecosystem restoration ever attempted and represents the ultimate infrastructure package for Florida, but many critical projects designed to add harmful Lake Okeechobee discharges and algal blooms into my community are far behind where they should be and becoming far more costly by the delay in full funding.

The President has touted his record of building world-class projects ahead

of schedule and under budget; so I am calling on him to create an Everglades restoration infrastructure task force, secure the full funding, and accelerate the CERP projects to completion.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents have waited long enough to realize the massive benefits of Everglades restoration. Now let's seize this moment and put this President and this Congress to work to finish the job.

UNDERSTAND THE LEGAL MARIJUANA INDUSTRY

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Attorney General Sessions stated we won't be a better, healthier Nation if marijuana is sold at every corner grocery store. His Justice Department also signaled that it would raid a marijuana industry convention being held on tribal lands in my State of Nevada.

While it is pretty clear that the Attorney General has some other problems to worry about now, I would note that his statement and his department's actions demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of the legal marijuana industry.

The industry, which is highly regulated in States that have chosen to legalize marijuana, does, indeed, face challenges in banking, taxes, advertising, security, and working with veterans. These need to be addressed by Congress.

But in the meantime, I invite Mr. Sessions: Come to Nevada. Meet with members of the industry. Find out how it really works before you make rash decisions about enforcement that will counter the votes of many people across this country.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT AND MEGAN TRINKLEY AND MISSION FIRST HOUSING GROUP VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Robert and Megan Trinkley and the many supporters and volunteers of the Mission First Housing Group, which places homeless veterans in need in safe, affordable, and sustainable housing.

Last Friday evening, I had the great pleasure to be present at the third annual Homes for Heroes fundraising event in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. I joined the Trinkleys and iconic radio personality and Vietnam veteran John DeBella and hundreds of community supporters who were all committed to quality housing for our vets.

The Homes for Heroes event was founded in 2015 as a way for the Trinkleys to honor the memory of Megan's late father, a United States

Air Force veteran. Homes for Heroes raised more than \$40,000 last year and surpassed that number this year.

Mr. Speaker, on any given night, some 40,000 of our veterans are homeless, and that is too many. But thanks to the work of Robert and Megan Trinkley and all of those who have supported Homes for Heroes, some three dozen veterans right now in our region sleep in safe, affordable housing.

I am grateful for their efforts, and I applaud them for their service to the homeless veterans to assure that no hero he is left behind.

CELEBRATING WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, as we kick off Women's History Month, I want to recognize Women Helping Women, celebrating 40 years of service to the people in my district of Maui County.

Since its founding in 1977, Women Helping Women has been an indispensable source of strength and support for survivors of domestic violence in Maui County, many of whom have fled courageously away from life-threatening situations with nothing more than the clothes on their backs, a few dollars in their pockets, and the desire to live without fear. Many of these women flee with young children and have no one to turn to and nowhere to go.

Each year, this organization serves more than 1,500 women, men, and children on the Islands of Maui and Lanai through a variety of programs, projects, and activities focused on direct intervention, shelter, advocacy, education, empowerment, and prevention.

Mahalo to Women Helping Women, and congratulations on reaching this 40th anniversary year.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO SHERIFF'S DEPUTY WES HARPER

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

Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the actions of Clark County, Indiana, Sheriff's Deputy Wes Harper.

On the evening of February 21, Deputy Harper was dispatched to a call for an unconscious person. While en route, Deputy Harper's dispatcher advised him that this individual was, in fact, a 9-month-old child, and it was possible that the child had drowned.

Wasting no time, Deputy Harper arrived on scene, scooped the infant up into his arms, and dove back into the patrol vehicle with an ambulance still minutes away. As his fellow officer drove to Kosair Children's Hospital, Deputy Harper provided CPR to the unconscious infant. As they pulled into

the hospital, the infant regained consciousness and began to breathe on its own. The infant was released from the hospital the following day.

When asked about how this call had affected his mindset for the rest of his shift, Deputy Harper was, as he always is, humble and expressed how glad and thankful he was that the young child would be all right.

Deputy Wes Harper's quick thinking and selfless action speak volumes of the training of Clark County's first responders, as well as their devotion to Hoosiers all the way across Clark County. His actions are a prime example of the high standards and traditions of law enforcement officers everywhere across this country.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Indiana's Ninth District, I would like to express our gratitude to Clark County Sheriff's Deputy Wes Harper for his lifesaving actions.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize March 2017 as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

This month offers us an opportunity to raise awareness about colorectal cancer and to recommit to taking action against this disease. Colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer, yet it remains the second leading cause of cancer death among men and women, combined, in the United States.

This year, more than 130,000 individuals in the United States will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Approximately 50,000 more will die from it. Too often, individuals are forced to forego screening because of high insurance costs. In order to get more people screened and save lives, we need to break down the financial barriers to treatment.

Last month, I joined the Congressman CHARLIE DENT and LEONARD LANCE to introduce the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act. Our bill eliminates colonoscopy cost-sharing for Medicare patients so that every patient has access to this lifesaving treatment.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let cost stand in the way of care. I urge Congress to quickly advance this legislation. Patients are counting on it.

□ 1215

EMPLOYEES UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, something that has not gotten nearly

enough attention in the media concerns security. We know that there were people working—Imran Awan, Abid Awan, Jamal Awan, Hina Alvi, Natalia Sova—and I have heard that one of these has fled back to Pakistan since being investigated.

They worked on Democratic computer systems. And although we have been told, "Well, they couldn't get into the SCIF and get into the classified section," they had access to congressional computers. I am told that if you can get access to one Congress Member's Outlook program, you can easily hack into many others.

This has got to be investigated. It appears to be a major crime and a major breach of trust in the House.

I hope my friends across the aisle that use these people will step forward and help us plug the hole.

SMASH VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to help smash Zika and other vector-borne diseases.

It is my privilege to reintroduce the bipartisan Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act, or SMASH Act. H.R. 1310 has over 14 cosponsors already, both Democrats and Republicans, coming together to tackle this great challenge.

As we saw last year, in Florida, Puerto Rico, across Latin America, and beyond, mosquito-borne diseases are constantly evolving and can quickly have new and devastating consequences. We thought we knew Zika, but then it changed. So we have to stay a step ahead.

That is what the SMASH Act does. It keeps us ahead of perennial threats like Zika, West Nile, and other diseases by expanding programs for mosquito-borne and vector-borne disease surveillance and control.

Investing and fighting all these diseases together will protect the health of countless Americans and save us money down the road.

The scientists and public health experts at the Centers for Disease Control in my home State know the tools they need. Colleagues, let's get together and give it to them.

REFUGEES WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, it has been a little more than a day since our President addressed this body for the first time. Many of us hoped that President Trump would finally lay out a positive vision for America. Instead, the address flamed the fears about immigrants and refugees.

I invited Syrian refugee Bothina Matar as my guest to the joint session

to show our President that, despite false claims, refugees approved through our vigorous vetting program simply want to live in peace.

After speaking with Bothina about her family's experience in Syria and at a Jordanian refugee camp, it is clear that our refugee program is successfully completing its mission.

After Bothina and her family were first referred as potential candidates for resettlement, they endured a rigorous 18-month-long vetting process. Only then was the family offered the opportunity to seek refuge in Dallas and put on the path to self-sufficiency.

Our country is welcoming, and it is a place that, despite what the President and House Republicans claim, we can both protect the American people and extend our hand to the most vulnerable amongst us.

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIR OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; which was read and, without objection, referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, March 1, 2017.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: On February 28, 2017, pursuant to section 3307 of Title 40, United States Code, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met in open session to consider eight resolutions provided by the General Services Administration at the request of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Committee has authorized these leases to be executed pursuant to GSA's leasing authority in accordance with the provisions of the Public Buildings Act.

The Committee continues to work to reduce the cost of federal property and leases. The eight resolutions considered are part of the VA's Construction, Long Range Capital Plan and include consolidations and relocation of existing space to improve the VA's delivery of healthcare.

I have enclosed copies of the resolutions adopted by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on February 28, 2017.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

Enclosures.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 3307, a lease of up to 114,000 net usable square feet of space, and 770 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in New Port Richey, Florida to replace and consolidate five existing leases at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$3,876,000 for a lease term of up to 20 years, a prospectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except that*, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transpor-

tation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL**

Prospectus Number: PFL-01-VA17
Congressional District: 12

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes a consolidated outpatient clinic lease of approximately 114,000 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This action will consolidate five separate outpatient facilities in New Port Richey, Florida.

The lease will provide continued services for the New Port Richey veteran community and provide the necessary expansion services to meet current and projected health care service delivery gaps in the market.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	53,565
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	114,000
Expansion/Reduction NUSF:	60,435 (expansion)
Estimated Maximum RSF:	153,900
Expiration Dates of Current Lease(s):	9/30/2018, 12/31/2018, 11/18/2018, 4/7/2019, 6/30/2019.
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<u>North:</u> State Route 52 (starting at Highway 19 and extending east to Suncoast Parkway (Route 589)) <u>South:</u> Pasco County Line (starting at Suncoast Parkway (Route 589) and extending west to Highway 19) <u>East:</u> Suncoast Parkway (Route 589) (starting at State Route 52 and extending south to the Pasco County Line) <u>West:</u> Highway 19 (starting at the Pasco County Line and extending north to State Road 52)
Number of Official Parking Spaces:	770
Scoring:	Operating Lease
Current Total Annual Cost:	\$1,453,820 (leases effective 10/1/1998, 1/1/2009, 11/19/2008, 4/8/2009, 7/1/2016)

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL**

Prospectus Number: PFL-01-VA17

Congressional District: 12

Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$922,484
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$34.00 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$3,876,000

Justification

A new lease 114,000 NUSF lease in New Port Richey will replace and consolidate the five existing leases in the New Port Richey market including the 38,219 NUSF Port Richey Specialty Outpatient Clinic; the 792 NUSF Port Richey Eye Clinic; the 5,276 NUSF Port Richey Mental Health Clinic; the 6,078 NUSF Port Richey Home-Based Primary Care facility; and the 3,200 NUSF Port Richey Dental Clinic.

The current space in these facilities is insufficient to meet the projected needs of the veteran community. Space limitations and an increase in workload limit veterans' access to services in a timely manner. Additionally, the existing locations have safety and security deficiencies.

The new facility will enhance VA outpatient services by closing space and utilization gaps identified in the Strategic Capital Investment Planning process and will provide a single location in the New Port Richey area to serve the outpatient care needs of veterans and their families. The new lease will allow VA to expand its current Primary Care, Mental Health, Specialty Care, Eye Clinic, Home Based Primary Care, and Dental services to veterans in a right-sized, state-of-the-art, energy efficient health care facility.

The expansion of those services, particularly Mental Health services, would support VA's targeted goal of eliminating veteran homelessness. Compared to the current configuration of five existing clinics, the consolidation into a single facility would generate operational efficiencies and economies of scale and improve veteran satisfaction by offering needed clinical services at one centralized location. The consolidated lease will also provide economies of scale and overall operating efficiencies resulting in significant cost savings in utilities, transportation, general supply procurement and a reduction of outsourced staffing.

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL**

Prospectus Number: PFL-01-VA17
Congressional District: 12

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

Interim Leasing


The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____


Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: _____


Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, OAHU, HAWAII

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §3307, a lease of up to 66,000 net usable square feet of space, and 528 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Health Care Center in Oahu, Hawaii at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$3,392,400 for a lease term of up to 20 years, a prospectus for

which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except*

that, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OAHU, HI**

Prospectus Number: PHI-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1, 2

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes an outpatient clinic lease of approximately 66,000 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in Oahu, HI. The lease will enable the VA Pacific Island Health Care System to more efficiently provide services to veterans located on the island.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	0
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	66,000
Estimated Maximum RSF:	89,100
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<p><u>North:</u> Queen Liliuokalani Fwy (starting at Kalaeloa Blvd, extending northeast to Fort Weaver Rd)</p> <p><u>East:</u> Fort Weaver Rd (starting at Queen Liliuokalani Fwy and extending south to Geiger Rd)</p> <p><u>South:</u> Geiger Rd (starting at Fort Weaver Rd and extending to Roosevelt Ave); Roosevelt Ave (starting at Geiger Rd and extending west to Boxer Rd); Malakole St (starting near Saratoga St and extending west to Kalaeloa Blvd)</p> <p><u>West:</u> Kalaeloa Blvd (starting at Malakole St extending northeast to Queen Liliuokalani Fwy)</p>
Number of Official Parking Spaces:	528
Scoring:	Operating Lease
Current Total Annual Rent:	N/A
Current Total Unserviced Annual Rent:	N/A
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$51.40 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$3,392,400

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OAHU, HI**

Prospectus Number: PHI-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1, 2

Justification

Veterans currently access services at the VA operated Spark M. Matsunaga Medical Center (located at the Tripler Army Medical Center), which is an oversubscribed multi-specialty clinic treating over 25,000 Veterans annually. It is inconveniently located with regard to the Ewa Plain/Leeward, central, and north shore areas of Oahu and space constraints prevent the expansion of services. Further, services at the existing facility are compressed and utilization gaps continue to increase without additional clinical space.

The proposed lease will address utilization and space gaps at the current facility and will support major VA initiatives identified by the VA Secretary including: improve veterans' mental health, veterans' experience and veterans' access to health care; enable 21st century benefits; and establish strong VA management infrastructure and integrated operating model and health informatics. It will address the need to provide ongoing primary care, mental health and specialty care services to veterans residing on the island.

Consolidation of functions enables the VA Pacific Island Health Care System to more efficiently provide services to veterans and improves access to care for veterans by reducing wait and drive times and enables VA to meet all current and projected demand for services. Additionally, the proposed lease will facilitate the education and empowerment of minority and woman veterans through outreach, education, and monitoring of the provision of VA benefits and services. The Ewa Plain/Leeward, central, and north shore areas of Oahu contain many minority and woman veterans that will be served through specified and tailored programs.

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSAPBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OAHU, HI**

Prospectus Number: PHI-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1, 2

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____



Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: _____



Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §3307, a lease of up to 203,000 net usable square feet of space, and 1,370 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$6,353,900 for a lease term of up to 20 years,

a prospectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except*

that, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PHOENIX, AZ**

Prospectus Number: PAZ-01-VA17
Congressional District: 7, 9

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes an outpatient clinic lease of approximately 203,000 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), located in Phoenix, Arizona.

Veterans are currently serviced at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center (VAMC). The lease will provide continued services for the Phoenix veterans community as well as provide a critical expansion of services to meet current and projected health care service needs for the veteran community.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	0
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	203,000
Estimated Maximum RSF:	274,050
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<p><u>North:</u> Glendale Ave/ E Lincoln Drive (starting at N 35th Ave and extending east to N 32nd St)</p> <p><u>East:</u> 32nd St (starting at E Lincoln Drive and extending south to the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport)</p> <p><u>South:</u> Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport extending west along Buckeye Rd to S 35th Ave</p> <p><u>West:</u> 35th Ave (starting at W Buckeye Rd and extending north to W Glendale Ave)</p>
Number of Official Parking Spaces:	1,370
Scoring:	Operating Lease
Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$0
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$31.30 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$6,353,900

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PHOENIX, AZ**

Prospectus Number: PAZ-01-VA17
Congressional District: 7, 9

Justification

The 203,000 net usable square feet (NUSF) clinic will enhance VA outpatient services by closing wait times, workload, and space gaps as identified in the Strategic Capital Investment Planning process and providing primary care exam room configuration in accordance with the Patient Aligned Care Team model to meet projected demand for services.

Clinical services provided at this location include but are not limited to Primary Care, Mental Health, Medical and Surgical Specialties, and associated ancillary services. Veterans are currently treated at the VAMC. The VAMC lacks sufficient space to accommodate the functions critical to meeting the current and projected clinical workload demand. The new location will provide state-of-the-art clinical space and a more functional and effective health care environment for veterans, veterans' families and medical staff.

Furthermore, close proximity to the VAMC and the university affiliate may allow for efficiencies in education, recruitment, and research.

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PHOENIX, AZ**

Prospectus Number: PAZ-01-VA17
Congressional District: 7, 9

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____



Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: _____



Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, PONCE, PUERTO RICO

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 3307, a lease of up to 114,300 net usable square feet of space, and 915 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico to replace the existing Ponce Outpatient Clinic at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$5,436,108 for a lease term of up

to 20 years, a prospectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except*

that, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PONCE, PR**

Prospectus Number: PPR-01-VA17

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes an outpatient clinic lease of approximately 114,300 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to replace the clinic currently located in a 56,550 NUSF building that is unable to meet VA's space needs in Ponce, PR.

The lease will provide continued services for the Ponce veteran community and provide the necessary expansion services to meet current and projected health care service delivery gaps in the market.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	56,550
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	114,300
Expansion/Reduction NUSF:	57,750 (expansion)
Estimated Maximum RSF:	154,305
Expiration Dates of Current Lease(s):	2/27/2020
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<p><u>North:</u> State Road 10 (starting next to the "Parque Ceremonial Tibes" and continuing to State Road 14) and State Road 14 (continuing to the eastern boundary of city of Ponce)</p> <p><u>South:</u> Coast line (starting at "Rio Matilde" and extending to the eastern boundary of the city of Ponce)</p> <p><u>East:</u> Eastern boundary of the city of Ponce (starting at State Road 14 and extending south to the coast line)</p> <p><u>West:</u> State Road 503 (starting at State Road 10 and continuing to State Road 133), then State Road 133 (extending west to State Road 123 (south)), then State Road 123 (extending south to State Road 163), then State Road 163 (extending west to State Road 9), then State Road 9 (extending south to PR Highway 2) and then "Rio Matilde" south to the coast line</p>
Number of Official Parking Spaces:	915
Scoring:	Operating Lease

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PONCE, PR**

Prospectus Number: PPR-01-VA17

Current Total Annual Cost:	\$1,325,597 (leases effective 2/28/2000)
Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$1,213,582
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$47.56 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$5,436,108

Justification

The proposed 114,300 NUSF facility will provide expanded outpatient services to address utilization and space gaps in the southwestern, south and southeast regions of Puerto Rico that were identified through the Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) process. At 56,550 NUSF, the current Ponce Outpatient Clinic does not provide sufficient space, parking, or the medical technology to meet the projected needs of the veteran community.

Several programs currently provided at the Ponce Outpatient Clinic have both workload and space gaps identified by the Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) process. To address these gaps, the replacement Ponce Outpatient Clinic lease will include all current services: Primary Care; Mental Health Clinic; Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR); Surgery; Laboratory; Pharmacy; Radiology; Audiology; Eye Clinic; Prosthetics; Sterile Processing and Distribution (SPD); and Acquisition and Material Management Service (AMMS). The replacement clinic will also enhance and expand the following programs: Women's Care, Audiology and Speech Pathology, and Home Care. Finally, the replacement clinic will also add several programs: Chemotherapy, Gastroenterology, Day Hospital, Mental Health Program, Imaging Center, and MRI suite.

Although the proposed services in the replacement clinic are currently offered in San Juan, this is a one- to two-hour drive for some veterans. Locating and expanding programs in Ponce will afford medical care to the underserved catchment areas of Ponce, Mayaguez, and Guayama and improve access to veterans in these areas.

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSAPBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PONCE, PR**

Prospectus Number: PPR-01-VA17

constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____


Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: _____


Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, REDDING, CALIFORNIA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §3307, a lease of up to 77,000 net usable square feet of space, and 520 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Redding, California to replace and consolidate two existing leases for the existing Redding Community Based Outpatient Clinic at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$3,343,340 for

a lease term of up to 20 years, a prospectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delin-

eated area included in the prospectus, *except that*, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
REDDING, CA**

Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes a consolidated outpatient clinic lease of approximately 77,000 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This action will consolidate two existing leases totaling 48,293 NUSF in Redding, CA.

The lease will provide continued services for the Redding veteran community and provide the necessary expansion services to meet current and projected health care service delivery gaps in the market.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	50,165
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	77,000
Expansion/Reduction NUSF:	26,835 (expansion)
Estimated Maximum RSF:	103,950
Expiration Dates of Current Lease(s):	10/31/2016, 2/28/2022
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<p><u>North:</u> Route 299 / Eureka Way (starting at Buenaventura Blvd and extending east to Market St), then South Market Street (extending northeast to Lake Blvd East), then Lake Blvd East (extending east to Old Oregon Trail)</p> <p><u>South:</u> Ox Yoke Rd/Riverside Ave (starting at Eastside Rd and extending east to Airport Rd)</p> <p><u>East:</u> Old Oregon Trail / Airport Rd (starting at Lake Blvd East and extending south to Riverside Ave)</p> <p><u>West:</u> Bonaventure Blvd (starting at Route 299 / Eureka Way and extending south to Route 273) and then Route 273 / S. Market St / Eastside Rd (extending south to Ox Yoke Rd)</p>
Number of Official Parking Spaces:	520
Scoring:	Operating Lease

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
REDDING, CA**

Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1

Current Total Annual Cost:	\$1,096,328 (leases effective 11/1/1996, 3/1/2012)
Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$604,500
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$43.42 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$3,343,340

Justification

The 77,000 NUSF facility will address utilization, space, and wait time gaps through the consolidation and expansion of two expiring leases into a new state-of-the-art leased outpatient clinic. The new consolidated lease will provide space for a second x-ray unit, mammography, and will accommodate 17 additional mental health providers. The proposed project will also provide the clinical space necessary to accommodate projected workload demands and improve access for veterans.

The consolidated outpatient clinic will allow for growth in Primary Care, Mental Health, and Specialty Care for the following services: Laboratory and Pathology, Audiology, Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Neurology, Endocrinology, Dermatology, Infectious Diseases, Pulmonary Medicine, Homeless Services, Mental Health, Primary Care, Urgent Care Radiology, Ear-Nose-Throat ENT, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Orthopedics, Podiatry, and Urology. The new leased facility will add telemedicine exam rooms to provide specialty services in Allergy and Immunology, Nephrology, and Rheumatology.

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
REDDING, CA**

Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____



Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: _____



Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §3307, a lease of up to 99,986 net usable square feet of space, and 675 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in San Diego, California to replace and consolidate two existing outpatient facilities in San Diego at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$4,049,433 for a lease term of up to 20 years, a pro-

spectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except*

that, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN DIEGO, CA**

Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 53

Executive Summary

The General Services Administration (GSA) proposes a consolidated outpatient clinic lease of approximately 99,986 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), merging the two existing separate outpatient facilities in San Diego, California.

The lease will provide continued services for the San Diego veteran community and provide the necessary expansion services to meet current and projected health care service delivery gaps in the market.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	53,473
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	99,986
Expansion/Reduction NUSF:	46,513 (expansion)
Estimated Maximum RSF:	134,981
Expiration Dates of Current Lease(s):	12/31/2022, 9/20/2022
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<u>North:</u> Navajo Rd (starting at Hwy. 125 and extending east to Lake Murray Blvd), then Lake Murray Blvd (extending south to Beaver Lake Dr), then Beaver Lake Dr (extending west to Cowles Mtn Blvd), then Cowles Mtn Blvd (extending south to Lake Adlon Dr), then Lake Adlon Dr (extending west to Coral Lake Ave), then Coral Lake Ave (extending south to Lake Andrita Ave), then Lake Andrita Ave (extending west to Twin Lake Dr), then Twin Lake Dr (extending south to Jackson Dr), then Jackson Dr (extending west to Golfcrest Dr), then Golfcrest Dr (extending north to Tuxedo Rd), then Tuxedo Rd (extending east to Volclay Dr), then Volclay Dr (extending north to Santar Ave), then Santar Ave (extending northeast to Jennite Dr), then Jennite Dr (extending north to Ruane St), then Ruane St (extending west to Golfcrest Dr), then Golfcrest Dr (extending north to Mission Gorge Rd), then Mission

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN DIEGO, CA**

Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 53

Gorge Rd (extending west to Jackson Dr), then Jackson Dr (extending south to Doreen Rd), then Doreen Rd (extending south to Hillandale Dr), then Hillandale Dr (extending south to Deep Valley Rd), then Deep Valley Rd (extending west to Deerfield St), then Deerfield St (extending north to Mission Gorge Rd), then Mission Gorge Rd (extending west to Friars Rd), then Friars Rd (extending west to I-15), then I-15 (extending north to Aero Dr), and then Aero Dr (extending west to Hwy. 163)

South: I-8 (starting at Hwy 163 and extending east to I-805); then I-805 (extending south to El Cajon Blvd), then El Cajon Blvd (extending east to Hwy 125)

East: Hwy 125 (starting at I-8 / El Cajon Blvd and extending north to Navajo Rd)

West: Hwy 163 (starting at I-805 and extending south to I-8).

Parking Spaces:	675
Scoring:	Operating Lease
Current Total Annual Cost:	\$1,956,614 (Leases Effective: 10/1/2013, 10/1/2012)
Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$1,050,744
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$40.50 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$4,049,433

Justification

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN DIEGO, CA**

Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 53

A new 99,986 NUSF lease in San Diego will replace and consolidate the two existing leases in the San Diego/Mission Valley market including the 43,473 NUSF Mission Valley Clinic, the 10,000 NUSF Mission George Clinic.

The current space in these facilities is insufficient to meet the projected needs of the veteran community and cannot address the growing need for Women's Health, Blind Services, or Dental and Ambulatory Surgery. The facilities have poorly configured space and numerous deficiencies are currently present at the existing clinics.

A new, single lease consolidating the existing locations will create economies of scale and overall operating efficiencies that will yield significant cost savings as well as the ability to expand services to a greater number of Veterans.

The new facility will enhance VA outpatient services by integrating care delivery (Primary, Mental Health, Specialty Care and Ancillary Services) as well as expand services for Women's Health, Audiology, Blind Rehabilitation and Eye Clinic Services.

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

GSA

PBS


**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN DIEGO, CA**


Prospectus Number: PCA-01-VA17
Congressional District: 53

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: 
Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: 
Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 3307, a lease of up to 190,800 net usable square feet of space, and 1,526 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in San Antonio, Texas to replace and consolidate seven separate outpatient facilities in San Antonio at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$5,519,844 for a lease term of up to 20 years, a pro-

spectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except*

that, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN ANTONIO, TX**

Prospectus Number: PTX-01-VA17
Congressional District: 20, 23

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes a consolidated outpatient clinic lease of approximately 190,800 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This action will consolidate VA operations that are currently located in seven separate outpatient facilities in San Antonio, TX.

The lease will provide continued services for the San Antonio veteran community and provide the necessary expansion services to meet current and projected health care service delivery gaps in the market.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	110,203
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	190,800
Expansion/Reduction NUSF:	80,597 (expansion)
Estimated Maximum RSF:	257,580
Expiration Dates of Current Lease(s):	5/2/2021, 6/21/2021, 6/21/2021, 8/4/2019, 12/31/2018, 12/31/2016, 12/31/2016
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<u>North:</u> Starting at North Loop 1604 W at the intersection with FM 1560 (East) and Bandera (16), proceed eastbound on 1604 to McDermott Hwy (I-10)). <u>South:</u> Take McDermott Hwy southbound to Huebner Rd. Continue southwest on Huebner Rd to Bandera Rd. Proceed south on Bandera (16) to NW I-410. <u>East:</u> Take NW I-410 westbound to TX-151. Take TX-151 north and continue to the intersection with W Loop 1604 N (North). <u>West:</u> Follow 1604 N northbound to the intersection with FM 1560 and Bandera Rd.
Parking Spaces:	1,526
Scoring:	Operating Lease
Current Total Annual Cost:	\$2,151,854 (leases effective 5/3/2011, 6/22/2011, 6/22/2011, 12/27/1999, 5/29/2009, 5/17/2011, 2/7/2006)
Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$1,551,501

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN ANTONIO, TX**

Prospectus Number: PTX-01-VA17
Congressional District: 20, 23

Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$28.93 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$5,519,844

Justification

A new 190,800 NUSF lease would replace and consolidate seven existing leases in the San Antonio market including the Frank Tejeda Outpatient Clinic (FTOPC), three annex leases, and three specialty care clinic leases, as well as one contract clinic, which currently occupy approximately 110,203 NUSF of space.

The current space in these facilities is insufficient to meet the projected needs of the veteran community. The existing clinics are operating at full capacity, cannot accommodate the projected workload increase of 20,000 primary care clinic stops by 2019, and cannot be expanded. Several of the leased facilities contain environmental issues including air quality concerns, which have been reported to the U.S. Department of Labor - Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration by VA employees. Due to the term structure of the leases, VA is responsible for maintenance costs and has spent a significant amount to remediate existing mold. These conditions are expected to worsen and will require additional investment to prevent impacts to veteran and employee health.

The new facility will establish a centralized location for delivery of coordinated health care and reduce utilization and space gaps in primary care, mental health, and specialty care as well as consolidate medical-surgical specialties, diagnostics services, dental, eye, women's health, radiology, and pharmacy. Overall operating efficiencies generated from the proposed consolidation would produce significant cost savings as well as the ability to meet the increases in projected workload.

Resolutions of Approval

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SAN ANTONIO, TX**

Prospectus Number: PTX-01-VA17

Congressional District: 20, 23

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____



Commissioner, Public Buildings Service



Approved: _____

Administrator, General Services Administration

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

LEASE—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS, TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives, that pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §3307, a lease of up to 140,000 net usable square feet of space, and 945 parking spaces, for the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Tulsa, Oklahoma to replace and consolidate two existing leases in Tulsa at a proposed unserviced annual cost of \$4,634,000 for a lease term of up

to 20 years, a prospectus for which is attached to and included in this resolution.

Approval of this prospectus constitutes authority to execute an interim lease for all tenants, if necessary, prior to the execution of the new lease.

Provided that, to the maximum extent practicable, the lease contract(s) shall include a purchase option that can be exercised at the conclusion of the firm term of the lease.

Provided further, that the delineated area of the procurement is identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, *except*

that, if it is determined that the delineated area of the procurement should not be identical to the delineated area included in the prospectus, an explanatory statement shall be provided to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives prior to exercising any lease authority provided in this resolution.

Provided further, that the design of the outpatient clinic shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Community Based Outpatient Clinic Prototype Proposed Layouts.

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS -- LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
TULSA, OK**

Prospectus Number: POK-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1

Executive Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes a consolidated outpatient clinic lease of approximately 140,000 net usable square feet (NUSF) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) merging two separate outpatient facilities in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The lease will provide continued services for the Tulsa veteran community and provide the necessary expansion services to meet current and projected health care service delivery gaps in the market.

Description

Occupant:	Veterans Affairs
Current NUSF	63,908
Estimated Maximum NUSF:	140,000
Expansion/Reduction NUSF:	72,332 (expansion)
Estimated Maximum RSF:	189,000
Expiration Dates of Current Lease(s):	11/26/2020, 12/31/2020
Proposed Maximum Leasing Authority:	Up to 20 years
Delineated Area:	<p><u>North:</u> I-244 (starting at Hwy 412 junction and extending east to N 129th Ave)</p> <p><u>South:</u> E 91st St (starting at S Lewis Ave and extending east to S Garnett Rd)</p> <p><u>East:</u> N 129th Ave (starting at I-244 junction and extending south to W Albany St / E 61st St), then W Albany St / E 61st St (extending west to S Garnett Rd), then S Garnett Rd (extending south to E 91st St)</p> <p><u>West:</u> E 91st St (starting at S Lewis Ave and extending west to Riverside Pkwy), then Riverside Pkwy / Riverside Dr (extending north to I-44), then I-44 (extending west to Hwy 75), then Hwy 75 (extending north to I-244), then I-244 (extending north to Hwy 412)</p>
Parking Spaces:	945
Scoring:	Operating Lease

GSA

PBS

**PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
TULSA, OK**

Prospectus Number: POK-01-VA17
Congressional District: 1

Current Total Annual Cost:	\$911,182 (leases effective 11/27/2000, 1/1/2006)
Current Total Unserviced Annual Cost:	\$742,486
Estimated Unserviced Rental Rate ¹ :	\$33.10 per NUSF
Estimated Total Unserviced Annual Cost ² :	\$4,634,000

Justification

A new 140,000 NUSF lease would replace and consolidate two existing leases in the Tulsa market including the existing Tulsa Outpatient Clinic and Tulsa Behavioral Medicine Clinic that currently occupy approximately 63,908 NUSF of space.

The increase in workload in recent years and the implementation of the Uniform Services Package for Mental Health Services has rendered the existing space too small to provide adequate services. Additional space is not available at either location and both have existing deficiencies. This lack of space and functional obsolescence, along with the projected workload increases, exacerbates patient wait times, and decreases overall Veteran satisfaction.

The new facility will establish a centralized location for delivery of coordinated health care and reduce utilization and space gaps in primary care, mental health, and specialty care as well as consolidate medical-surgical specialties, diagnostics services, dental, eye, women's health, radiology, and pharmacy.

The new facility will enhance VA outpatient services by closing wait time, utilization, and space gaps, specifically for Mental Health and Medical and Surgical Specialties, as identified in the Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) process. This project will allow VA to provide timely access to Primary Care (including women's health), Imaging, Specialty Clinical Services (including Cardiology, Neurology, Gastroenterology, Pulmonology, Urology), General Mental Health, as well as Specialty Mental Health (including Substance Abuse, Smoking Cessation, and PTSD).

Resolutions of Approval

¹ This estimate is for fiscal year 2018 and may be escalated by 2.0 percent annually to the effective date of the lease to account for inflation. The proposed rental rate is unserviced and excludes all operating expenses, whether paid by the lessor or directly by the Government.

² New leases may contain an escalation clause to provide for annual changes in real estate taxes and operating costs.

GSA

PBS

PROSPECTUS – LEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
TULSA, OK

Prospectus Number: POK-01-VA17

Congressional District: 1

Resolutions adopted by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approving this prospectus will constitute approval to make appropriations to lease space in a facility that will yield the required net usable area.

Interim Leasing

The Government will execute such interim leasing actions as are necessary to ensure continued housing prior to the effective date of the new lease. It is in the best interest of the Government to avert the financial risk of holdover tenancy.

Certification of Need

The proposed project is the best solution to meet a validated Government need.

Submitted at Washington, DC, on December 21, 2016

Recommended: _____



Commissioner, Public Buildings Service

Approved: _____



Administrator, General Services Administration

There was no objection.

STATEHOOD FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House this afternoon because a very significant event occurred yesterday in the Senate.

The Mayor of the District of Columbia, the city council chair, a statehood representative, a statehood senator all came to the Capitol to deliver a petition from the residents of the District of Columbia. Residents voted 85 percent strong that the District of Columbia become the 51st State. At the same time, I introduced the bill to bring that about.

This afternoon I want to discuss why the residents of this city would want to become a State. I find that Members of Congress are almost entirely ignorant of the status of the District of Columbia, and, frankly, I cannot really blame them.

Members of Congress have no reason to be concerned about the District and its 670,000 residents. That is my concern. Candidly, I wish Members of Congress would not be concerned at all. There are a number of ways in which the Congress could leave the city alone.

Statehood is, of course, the ultimate reason and way; and it is the only way that the residents of this city can become equal to the residents represented by my colleagues. This is indeed, as we come now full throttle into the 21st century, in the name of democracy and of American values, why statehood for the District of Columbia simply must come.

On this House floor, the residents of the District of Columbia have no vote and, of course, they have no senators whatsoever.

What do they give to their country?

Let us begin with something very tangible. The residents of this city are number one per capita in the federal taxes they pay to support the United States of America. Let us translate that into a comparison to the taxes my colleagues pay. The residents of this city pay more in federal taxes than the residents of 22 States, and this city is not yet a State.

When a matter comes to this floor, every Member can vote on that matter, even when that matter involves uniquely the District of Columbia—every Member can vote on that matter, except the Member who represents the District of Columbia.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, where the Member representing the District can vote, just voted to eliminate a District law. Imagine that. In the United States of America, the Congress of the United

States, unaccountable to the residents of the city of Washington, D.C., on local matters can overturn a bill. They have done so in committee on an admittedly controversial bill.

I don't expect every State and city to agree with the District of Columbia on matters affecting our city. The DC Death with Dignity bill would allow people to take their own lives with a drug in their possession administered by themselves. In order to do so, two doctors have to have found that the resident does not have more than six months to live, among other requirements.

A third of those who choose this option in the United States never use the drug.

How do I know that?

Because six States already have death with dignity laws. That means 24 Republican Members of this House represent States that have death with dignity laws yet the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform under Chairman CHAFFETZ just voted to keep the District from doing what six States already allow.

This bill was introduced as a so-called disapproval resolution. Such a resolution requires an actual vote in the House and the Senate. It was introduced very late and taken up very late because I believe that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the Speaker of the House didn't want to bring that bill to the floor because there are six States that have precisely this kind of law and because there are 24 Republican Members who would be implicated and would be caught in a matter of supreme hypocrisy if they voted against the very same bill for the District of Columbia.

Yesterday, the Mayor of the city, Mayor Muriel Bowser, and council chair Philip Mendelson came to the Senate, who hosted us, to deliver a petition to become the 51st State. This is a procedure that is allowed under our Constitution.

It is a procedure that was used in Tennessee where all the prerequisites for statehood have to be fulfilled, the boundaries, et cetera; and you simply present a petition. That is how Tennessee and a number of other States became States.

I am very grateful to Senator TOM CARPER for hosting us in the Senate where we have no representation. Senator CARPER of Delaware is a champion of statehood. He has introduced this bill for years now and did so again in the Senate.

It is not unusual for Democrats in the Senate to support D.C. statehood. The four top Democratic leaders are among those who cosponsored the bill last year. I expect that to be the same this year because Senator TOM CARPER introduced the bill in the Senate yesterday, even as I introduced the bill in the House at the same time.

I want to just say, once again, how faithful and true to his own principles Senator CARPER has been in supporting

D.C. statehood and stepping out front to introduce the bill.

You might ask: What chance, with a Republican House, Senate, and President, do you have of getting D.C. statehood? Why would you bother?

No matter who sat in the White House today—and Hillary Clinton was a strong champion of statehood—we are about where we would have been. The work really isn't in the Presidency. The work is in the Congress and, even more so, in the District of Columbia.

The District of Columbia has to itself get this shameful record out of having residents who have served in every war, including the war that created the United States of America, paying taxes beyond those paid by other residents. This is on us, and we recognize it.

I think you will see a social media campaign informing the American people of what they do not now know because they wouldn't tolerate it if they did.

□ 1230

It was very difficult, until the age of social media, to get such word out without a massive advertising campaign. All we need to do now is use the existing social media, and I think we can change this shameful situation.

I am very encouraged by what has happened. Yesterday, 60 Democrats joined me as original cosponsors. An original cosponsor is a Member who stands with the sponsor on equal footing to introduce the bill. That already beats the record we set for last year when we had 93 original cosponsors in the 114th Congress. By the end of that Congress, 72 percent of House Democrats were cosponsors of the bill, and we could have gotten many more than that but for the logistics and the timing involved.

Our goal is to improve our chances for statehood every year; one way to do that is to get more cosponsors every year, and we are meeting that goal.

Why are we pursuing statehood? It is not out of hubris. It is not that we want to be like Delaware and New York. It is because it is the only way to become full and equal citizens of the United States, and because we have tried everything else.

Without statehood, Members will continue to bring our matters to the House floor for unaccountable Members to vote on them. Without statehood, we won't have the right to vote on this House floor. We won't have the right to vote in the Senate.

We have tried short of statehood. I pay tribute to former Representative Tom Davis, who, in the majority, sponsored a bill with me to get a House vote, only a House vote for the District of Columbia. This was a very important effort strongly supported by the residents of the District of Columbia to say: look, you don't give us statehood, let us get there gradually, give us the House vote.

Tom Davis saw that Utah did not have the House vote because their missionaries were not counted by the census, and they had expected an additional House Representative. The Governor of the State and the State legislature supported the action and most States have used similar bipartisan action to come into the Union.

This, of course, would have been only a House vote; one for very Republican Utah, one for Democratic D.C. This bill was passed in the House—thank you, Utah—and was passed in the Senate.

And the only reason the District of Columbia does not have a vote, as I speak, is because the National Rifle Association was able to place an amendment on the bill that, in the event D.C. got a vote, would have eliminated all of our gun laws, each and every one. A big city without gun laws, of course, is open territory, and we were left with the woeful and shameful option of giving up our vote, a vote we could have had.

We also have tried, short of statehood, to get budget autonomy.

Imagine bringing our budget, raised in the District of Columbia, \$7 billion, and asking Members who don't know anything about it to vote on it. That is what the residents of the District of Columbia have to do.

I pay tribute to the former Republican chairman of the House committee of jurisdiction, Oversight and Government Reform, DARRELL ISSA, who held a hearing when he chaired the committee on D.C.'s local matters, including its local budget.

Upon hearing the testimony about this district's financial conditions, its reserves, its growth among the best of the Nation, upon hearing in testimony from the Mayor, the city council, the chief financial officer, despite meeting those marks, then-Chairman DARRELL ISSA supported budget autonomy for the District of Columbia, and worked tirelessly for this goal during his chairmanship of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

So I am not here to say that there is no sense of a necessity to have something done, as you see that in former Chairman DARRELL ISSA's actions.

For that matter, Chairman JASON CHAFFETZ, last week, called for the District of Columbia to be made a part of Maryland in order that it would get Senators and Representatives. He wasn't joking. He wasn't making fun of us.

There has long been a small group of Republicans who acknowledge the shame of having almost 700,000 Americans without representation in the House and the Senate. And one of the easier ways to get it, they think, is to retrocede, that is the word, because the District was created out of Maryland and Virginia. Virginia itself cast off, the District of Columbia because it was afraid Congress would abolish slavery. So the notion is, go back to Maryland.

My first notion or response is: Have you asked Maryland? In other words,

you don't decide to reconfigure a State with a big city, and Maryland has only one big city, because you are fulfilling one value without fulfilling the other value, which is to make sure you have the permission of that State.

Now, Maryland has been a very friendly State to the District of Columbia. But the District is not asking Maryland to become a part of its State. We want to become the 51st State of the United States of America, and it would probably be easier to do that than to become a part of Maryland.

Now, we also are not insisting that there is nothing else that will do. We have asked for legislative autonomy.

Why should our legislation have to lay over here for 30 days, or 60 days? They must be legislative days, so that often means 6 months, 9 months, to give the Congress time to see whether the Congress wants to overturn legislation it had nothing to do with and knows nothing about.

The fact is that the legislative autonomy provision is virtually never used. Instead, the Congress tries to add amendments to the District's budget, a sneaky, easy way, they think, to overturn a law. So they keep legislative autonomy on the books inconveniencing the District and never use it.

They fear budget autonomy because they wouldn't have anything to attach matters to like overturning our gun laws. They regularly try to do that on appropriations.

So what you have is a kind of invitation for Members to interfere with somebody else's district, my district, instead of attending to your own business. People did not send my colleagues here to attend to the business of the District of Columbia, and we intend to call them out every time they interfere.

So, yes, we are struggling for the components of statehood, even before we achieve statehood, knowing how difficult and what a high climb that is.

Madam Speaker, could I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TENNEY). The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia has 11 minutes remaining.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, if there is such a thing as earning statehood, and of course there is not, let me indicate the ways in which the District of Columbia has, indeed, earned statehood.

Our economy is one of the strongest in the United States. It is a \$12.5 billion budget total. That is a budget larger than 12 States represented in this House by my colleagues.

How many of my colleagues can boast a \$2 billion surplus the way the District of Columbia can? That would be, of course, the envy of most States.

Our city has a per capita income higher than that of any State. We are not asking for any handouts. Our total personal income is higher than that of seven States. Our per capita personal consumption expenditures are higher than those of any States.

This is a prosperous district, that would bring luster to the United States as the 51st State. Its growth rate is third highest in the Nation; 1,000 new people coming to live in the Nation's Capital every single month.

As to our population, the population of the District of Columbia, is in the league with the population of seven States. We have a greater population than Vermont and Wyoming.

And, if you look at the seven States that have one Representative, as the District of Columbia does, then you will see that we are all about the same. Yet, those seven States that are about the same in population as the District of Columbia, each has one Representative and two Senators, while we are unrepresented in the Senate of the United States.

I don't even want to speak, but I must, about perhaps the most poignant reason why the District should have statehood. The residents of this city have fought and died in every war, including the war that created our country itself.

I remember coming to the floor on those occasions where we have voted whether or not to go to war, and on each of those occasions, residents of the District of Columbia have gone. I remember the purple fingers in Iraq and Afghanistan that signified that our country had given them the vote, while the very members of the armed services from the District of Columbia who had served came back to the District of Columbia without a vote themselves.

Is that an irony that this body can even stand any longer? Fought and died in all the great wars of the 20th century, and we remember especially Vietnam, when there were more District of Columbia casualties than from 10 States of the Union.

I don't want to go into the technicalities of congressional power, but Congress has the authority to make our city a State because of its Article IV, section 3 power to admit new States to the Union. When you combine that with Congress' Article I, section 8, clause 17 power over the seat of the Federal Government, which is what the District is, it is an accident, an accident of history that the District does not have the same votes as other Americans.

□ 1245

It is a slander to think that those who went to war on the slogan of "no taxation without representation" would leave any residents of our city without representation.

There was a march by Revolutionary War veterans when the Capitol was in Philadelphia that frightened, frankly, the Framers. So they thought: Well, you can't have a separate State, and it can't be part of a State, and we don't know what to do, so let's just make it a district. But they never believed that it would be a district without any rights, and that is exactly what it became.

Indeed, the District was carved out of Maryland and Virginia, but for the 10-year period of transition the citizens of the new district did not lose the votes in the Senate and the House. Only in 1801, when the District became the Nation's Capital under the Congress of the United States did we lose Senate representation and representation in the House.

Enormous change has occurred in our city in the 216 years since we became the Capital. I am a third-generation Washingtonian. My great-grandfather was a runaway slave from Virginia, so my own family has seen 150 years of those changes. This is no longer a sleepy Southern city where I went to segregated schools—segregated by the Congress of the United States, indeed, because it had the sole authority to do it. In fact, today, it is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the United States, a city that people are flocking to for residence.

Everything about the District of Columbia has changed except its status and the status of its residents as second class citizens in their own country. We are sick and tired of being voyeurs of democracy. That is why the District of Columbia gave itself budget autonomy, although the Congress did appropriate a budget. Thank you for nothing. That is why the city voted 85 percent for statehood for itself. The citizens of the District are simply not going to sit still with the status quo. They are not going to sit on their second class citizenship.

So I come to the floor after we have brought our petition to the Congress to become the 51st State. I come to the floor the day after I have introduced the bill to put the Congress on notice: Be ready. Be ready for a campaign by the residents of the District of Columbia and our allies throughout the United States to be treated fairly, or as Frederick Douglass said, “not as aliens.”

We can decide to get rid of this anomaly as we have so many others that deprived citizens of the right to vote, whether they were slaves or women. We have gotten rid of those. Statehood does not require a constitutional amendment. All it takes is the conscience of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. JORDAN (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of personal reasons.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on March 01, 2017, she presented to the President of the

United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 609. To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the “Able Abraham VA Clinic.”

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 6, 2017, at 4 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

681. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Office of the General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Safety Standard for Sling Carriers [Docket No.: CPSC-2014-0018] received February 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

682. A letter from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a Report to Congress on Gifts Given by the United States to Foreign Individuals for Fiscal Year 2016, pursuant to 22 U.S.C.A. 2694; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

683. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 21-621, “Constitution and Boundaries for the State of Washington, D.C. Approval Resolution of 2016”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

684. A letter from the Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled “Planning, Buying, and Implementing New Information Technology: A Case Study of the D.C. Business Center”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 455(d); (87 Stat. 803); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

685. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final specifications — Pacific Island Fisheries; 2016-17 Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measures; Main Hawaiian Islands Deep 7 Bottomfish [Docket No.: 160811726-6999-02] (RIN: 0648-XE809) received March 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

686. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 150916863-6211-02] (RIN: 0648-XE880) received March 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

687. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's tem-

porary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shortraker Rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XE894) received March 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

688. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Several Groundfish Species in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 150916863-6211-02] (RIN: 0648-XE925) received March 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

689. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Big Skate in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XE922) received March 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

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. JOHNSON of Georgia (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. LEE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. MOORE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. POCAN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 1299. A bill to suspend United States security assistance with Honduras until such time as human rights violations by Honduran security forces cease and their perpetrators are brought to justice; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, 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. MCKINLEY (for himself and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 1300. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas, to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans, and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, and Education and the Workforce, 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. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.R. 1301. A bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations,

and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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 Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. LANCE, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. KATKO, Mr. VELA, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. HURD, and Mr. LOUDERMILK):

H.R. 1302. A bill to require an exercise related to terrorist and foreign fighter travel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. PASCRELL (for himself, Mr. BRAT, Mr. KHANNA, and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 1303. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to reform and reduce fraud and abuse in certain visa programs for aliens working temporarily in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. ROE of Tennessee (for himself and Mr. WALBERG):

H.R. 1304. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from the definition of health insurance coverage certain medical stop-loss insurance obtained by certain plan sponsors of group health plans; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Education and the Workforce, 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. POE of Texas (for himself, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. OLSON, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 1305. A bill to make participation in the American Community Survey voluntary, except with respect to certain basic questions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself and Mr. WALDEN):

H.R. 1306. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1307. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to establish a public health insurance option; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 1308. A bill to designate the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area in the State of Oregon; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KATKO (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 1309. A bill to streamline the office and term of the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. SOTO (for himself, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CRIST, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 1310. A bill to support programs for mosquito-borne and other vector-borne disease surveillance and control; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska (for himself, Mr. LOEBACK, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 1311. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to the ethanol waiver for Reid vapor pressure limitations under such Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. POLIQUIN (for himself and Mr. VARGAS):

H.R. 1312. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Incentive Act of 1980 to require an annual review by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the annual government-business forum on capital formation that is held pursuant to such Act; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself and Mr. WALBERG):

H.R. 1313. A bill to clarify rules relating to nondiscriminatory workplace wellness programs; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and 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. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. YOHIO, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BRAT, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Ms. FOXX, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. OLSON, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. POSEY, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. BARTON, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. DENT, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. COLE, Mr. STEWART, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. FASO, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. WILLIAMS):

H.R. 1314. A bill to repeal the renewable fuel program of the Environmental Protection Agency; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. COSTA, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. POSEY, Mr. DENT, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. COLE, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. COOPER, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. BABIN,

Mr. GAETZ, Mr. JONES, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia):

H.R. 1315. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to eliminate certain requirements under the renewable fuel program, to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from approving the introduction into commerce of gasoline that contains greater than 10-volume-percent ethanol, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. LOEBACK, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. BLUM, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. BABIN):

H.R. 1316. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for pharmacy benefits manager standards under the Medicare prescription drug program and Medicare Advantage program to further transparency of payment methodologies to pharmacies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Armed Services, and Oversight and Government Reform, 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. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. BABIN, Mr. WALZ, Mr. HILL, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ROUZER, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, and Mr. YOHIO):

H.R. 1317. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow members of the Ready Reserve of a reserve component of the Armed Forces to make elective deferrals on the basis of their service to the Ready Reserve and on the basis of their other employment; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER (for herself, Mr. CONVERS, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Ms. DEGETTE):

H.R. 1318. A bill to support States in their work to save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and in the postpartum period, to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes for pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, to identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MARCHANT (for himself, Mr. THORNBERRY, and Mr. CRAWFORD):

H.R. 1319. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to permit cooperative governing of public entity health benefits through local governments in secondary States; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KINZINGER (for himself and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1320. A bill to amend the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 related to Nuclear Regulatory Commission user fees and annual charges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BROWN of Maryland:

H.R. 1321. A bill to amend the National Housing Act to require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to issue guidance to reduce up-front premiums for FHA-insured mortgages if the capital ratio of the Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund exceeds the statutory limit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California (for herself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AGUILAR, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BERA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr.

BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GALLEGÓ, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HECK, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. HIMES, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 1322. A bill to protect a woman's right and ability to determine whether and when to bear a child or end a pregnancy by limiting restrictions on the provision of abortion services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COLLINS of New York (for himself and Mr. FLORES):

H.R. 1323. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits under the Medicaid program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 1324. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for the establishment of cybersecurity standards for certain radio frequency equipment; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BUCSHON:

H.R. 1325. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with flexibility with respect to providing premium assistance under the Medicaid program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SCHRADER (for himself and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 1326. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a certain study by the Defense Business Board regarding potential cost savings in the Department of Defense and to provide for expedited consideration of legislation to implement such cost savings; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, 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. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H.R. 1327. A bill to improve transparency regarding the activities of the American Red Cross, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BOST (for himself and Ms. ESTY):

H.R. 1328. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BOST (for himself and Ms. ESTY):

H.R. 1329. A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, to improve the processing of claims by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 1330. A bill to improve the control and management of invasive species that threaten and harm Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1331. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide educational and vocational counseling for veterans on campuses of institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. BONAMICI (for herself and Ms. STEFANIK):

H.R. 1332. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the child and adult care food program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia:

H.R. 1333. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow States more flexibility with respect to using contractors to make eligibility determinations on behalf of the State Medicaid plan; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. OLSON, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BABIN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. YOHIO, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H.R. 1334. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, upon the request of a law enforcement official, to make a prompt determination of whether to issue a detainer in the case of an alien arrested for a violation of Federal, State, or local law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 1335. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue rules to se-

cure communications networks against cyber risks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CRAMER (for himself and Mr. MULLIN):

H.R. 1336. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with flexibility in providing choice of coverage through managed care under Medicaid; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CRAMER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. PAULSEN, and Mrs. NOEM):

H.R. 1337. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts to include rollovers for charitable life-income plans for charitable purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DESJARLAIS (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. COMER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky):

H.R. 1338. A bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to provide increased protection for horses participating in shows, exhibitions, or sales, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. SESSIONS):

H.R. 1339. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure from the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 1340. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish an Interagency Communications Security Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. GOSAR (for himself, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CAPUANO, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. COOPER, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. JONES, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. YOHIO, and Mr. GOHMERT):

H.R. 1341. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit the acceptance by political committees of online contributions from certain unverified sources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. HARRIS (for himself, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. YOHIO, and Mr. LAMBORN):

H.R. 1342. A bill to prohibit any institution of higher education that receives a Federal research and development grant and does not comply with a lawful request for information

or detention of an alien made by any officer or employee of the Federal government who is charged with enforcement of the immigration laws from receiving indirect cost reimbursement funding, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 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. HULTGREN (for himself, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. STIVERS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, and Mr. MACARTHUR):

H.R. 1343. A bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise its rules so as to increase the threshold amount for requiring issuers to provide certain disclosures relating to compensatory benefit plans; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself and Mrs. COMSTOCK):

H.R. 1344. A bill to provide grants to assist States in developing and implementing plans to address cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on 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. LANGEVIN (for himself, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 1345. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to create protected credit reports for minors and protect the credit of minors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Ms. ESTY, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. NOLAN, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Mr. DENHAM):

H.R. 1346. A bill to repeal the rule issued by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform"; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. LOUDERMILK (for himself, Mr. KATKO, Mr. KEATING, Mr. HURD, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. RATCLIFFE, and Ms. MCSALLY):

H.R. 1347. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide counter-radicalization training to Department of Homeland Security representatives at State and local fusion centers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 1348. A bill to require the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to complete a study on the human health implications of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in drinking water; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK (for himself, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. WESTERMAN, and Mr. PEARCE):

H.R. 1349. A bill to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. NOLAN:

H.R. 1350. A bill to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of

Minnesota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. PERRY (for himself and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 1351. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to make certain improvements in managing TSA's employee misconduct, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. RENACCI (for himself, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. KILMER, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, and Mr. TIBERI):

H.R. 1352. A bill to encourage States to engage more TANF recipients in activities leading to employment and self-sufficiency, and to simplify State administration of TANF work requirements; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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 (for herself, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 1353. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require certain additional information to be submitted to Congress regarding the strategic 5-year technology investment plan of the Transportation Security Administration; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida (for himself and Mr. RYAN of Ohio):

H.R. 1354. A bill to increase the penalties for fentanyl trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:

H.R. 1355. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to give States the option of monitoring covered criteria air pollutants in designated areas by greatly increasing the number of air quality sensors in exchange for greater regulatory flexibility in the methods of monitoring, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Ms. SHEAPORTER, Mr. WELCH, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. HIMES, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. JONES, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. KEATING, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. EVANS, Ms. LEE, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. SIREN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington):

H.R. 1356. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit disclosure of tax return information to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and to the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. STEFANIK (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 1357. A bill to provide for the issuance of a semipostal to benefit programs that combat invasive species; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, and Agriculture, 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. TONKO (for himself, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KILMER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GALLEGOS, Mr. SOTO, Ms. LEE, Mr. NADLER, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. BEYER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. MOORE, Mr. RUSH, Ms. MENG, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. NEAL, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. BEN RAY LUJAN of New Mexico, Mr. POCAN, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CRIST, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. ESTY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. BERA, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. MEEKS, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ):

H.R. 1358. A bill to protect scientific integrity in Federal research and policymaking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mrs. WALORSKI (for herself and Miss RICE of New York):

H.R. 1359. A bill to provide for the reconsideration of claims for disability compensation for veterans who were the subjects of experiments by the Department of Defense during World War II that were conducted to assess the effects of mustard gas or lewisite on people, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, 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. WILLIAMS (for himself, Mr. CUELLAR, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 1360. A bill to exempt small seller financiers from certain licensing requirements; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ZELDIN (for himself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. LATTA, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. LANCE, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CROWLEY, and Ms. DELAURIO):

H.R. 1361. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories; 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. THOMPSON of California (for himself, Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. MIMI

WALTERS of California, Mr. EVANS, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. PANNETTA, Ms. TSONGAS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. CORREA, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. TITUS, Ms. PINGREE, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Ms. LEE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. POCAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SIREN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. COSTA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. SOTO, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. COMSTOCK, and Mr. PETERS):

H. Res. 164. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Women's History Month; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H. Res. 165. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to polio; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Financial Services, 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. AMODEI (for himself and Mr. WELCH):

H. Res. 166. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States postal facility network is an asset of significant value and the United States Postal Service should take appropriate measures to maintain, modernize and fully utilize the existing post office network for economic growth; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself and Ms. NORTON):

H. Res. 167. A resolution supporting the designation of the week of February 26 to March 4, 2017, as "National Spinal CSF Leak Awareness Week"; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H. Res. 168. A resolution encouraging people in the United States to recognize March 2, 2017, as Read Across America Day; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NEAL (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. WELCH, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. SHEAPORTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. ESTY, and Mr. HIMES):

H. Res. 169. A resolution congratulating the New England Patriots on their victory in Super Bowl LI; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. STEFANIK (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H. Res. 170. A resolution expressing the commitment of the House of Representatives to work to combat the nationwide problem of invasive species threatening native ecosystems; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Transportation and In-

frastructure, 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.

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. JOHNSON of Georgia:

H.R. 1299.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3: Congress shall have the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations; Article I, section 8, clause 18: Congress shall have the power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers.

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 1300.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to enact this legislation to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.R. 1301.

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 Ms. MCSALLY:

H.R. 1302.

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. PASCRELL:

H.R. 1303.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 1304.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, paragraph 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 1305.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution which states that Congress has the power "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. DeFAZIO:

H.R. 1306.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. DeFAZIO:

H.R. 1307.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. DeFAZIO:

H.R. 1308.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. KATKO:

H.R. 1309.

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. SOTO:

H.R. 1310.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska:

H.R. 1311.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 3 (related to regulation of commerce among the several states).

By Mr. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 1312.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress "To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;" as enumerated in Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. FOX:

H.R. 1313.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. GOODLATTE:

H.R. 1314.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3. Since the federal government has extended Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (the commerce clause) beyond its intended boundaries, it follows that efforts to rein in excessive federal government encroachment in this area can be justified by Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. GOODLATTE:

H.R. 1315.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3. Since the federal government has extended Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (the commerce clause) beyond its intended boundaries, it follows that efforts to rein in excessive federal government encroachment in this area can be justified by Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 1316.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority in which this bill rests is the power of Congress to regulate commerce as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, as applied to healthcare.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 1317.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER:

H.R. 1318.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 1319.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

1. The power to regulate commerce among several states as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

2. to provide for the general welfare of the United States as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KINZINGER:

H.R. 1320.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. BROWN of Maryland:

H.R. 1321.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Commerce Clause (Art. 1, Sec. 8, Cl. 3)

Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1, Sec. 8, Cl. 18)

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:

H.R. 1322.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. COLLINS of New York:

H.R. 1323.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 1324.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States grants Congress the authority to enact this bill

By Mr. BUCSHON:

H.R. 1325.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.R. 1326.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under:

U.S. Const. art. 1, §1;

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 13;

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 14; and

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 18.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H.R. 1327.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The U.S. Constitution, including Article I, section 8

By Mr. BOST:

H.R. 1328.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. BOST:

H.R. 1329.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 1330.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1331.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. BONAMICI:

H.R. 1332.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia:

H.R. 1333.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia:

H.R. 1334.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 1335.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. CRAMER:

H.R. 1336.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I (the Spending Clause) of the United States Constitution states that "The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay for Debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

By Mr. CRAMER:

H.R. 1337.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, which states "The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes," and Article I, Section 7, which states "All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives."

By Mr. DESJARLAIS:

H.R. 1338.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3. Congress shall have Power to regulate Commerce with Foreign Nations, and among the several states, and with Indian Tribes.

By Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee:

H.R. 1339.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8—this bill regulates Commerce among the several states.

Amendment V—the bill assures that citizens' liberty and property (their businesses and livelihood) are not deprived, that the government does not take property (market share, potential for profit and livelihood) without just compensation.

Amendment X—Nothing in the Constitution authorizes the Federal government to do anything other than those things enumerated (coin money, enter into treaties, conduct a Census — — — which are inherently governmental). Thus, under Amendment X, the right to carry out commercial activities is reserved to the people.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 1340.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. Art. I §8.

By Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 1341.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper Clause

In 2011, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia held in *Bluman v. FEC* that "It is fundamental to the definition of our national political community that foreign citizens do not have a constitutional right to participate in, and thus may be excluded from, activities of democratic self-government." *Bluman* specifically addressed and prohibited political campaign contributions to U.S. elections. In 2012, the United States Supreme Court affirmed, holding that the prohibition in 2 U.S.C. 441 (e) on campaign contributions by any "foreign national" was narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling government interest. Given that the Stop Foreign Donations Affecting Our Elections Act supplements the intent of these rulings and the 1966 law that banned such contributions, it is both within the scope of Congress's power and is thus constitutional.

By Mr. HARRIS:

H.R. 1342.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4 of the United States Constitution which grants Congress the authority to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States.

By Mr. HULTGREN:

H.R. 1343.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8, Clause 3: To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

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 the Constitution in the Government of the United States, in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 1344.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. LANGEVIN:

H.R. 1345.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 1346.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article one, section 8, clause 18, United States Constitution

By Mr. LOUDERMILK:

H.R. 1347.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, 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. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 1348.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. I, Sec. 8

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK:

H.R. 1349.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause), which confers on Congress the power to make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. NOLAN:

H.R. 1350.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution provides that Congress shall have the Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 1351.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. RENACCI:

H.R. 1352.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to "provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States."

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 1353.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida:

H.R. 1354.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power "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 any Department or Officer thereof".

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:

H.R. 1355.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 1356.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. STEFANIK:

H.R. 1357.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 1358.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mrs. WALORSKI:

H.R. 1359.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 U.S. Constitution

By Mr. WILLIAMS:

H.R. 1360.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 ("To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes")

By Mr. ZELDIN:

H.R. 1361.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 20: Mr. FOSTER and Mr. RICHMOND.

H.R. 38: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. McCaul, Mr. FLORES, and Mr. BERGMAN.

H.R. 154: Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 165: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 184: Ms. ROSEN.

H.R. 187: Ms. LOFGREN and Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 367: Mr. HUNTER, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 368: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.

H.R. 453: Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 525: Mrs. HARTZLER.

H.R. 532: Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 539: Mr. WENSTRUP.

H.R. 545: Mr. COLE, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. COLLINS of New York.

H.R. 553: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 586: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 625: Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, and Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 627: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 639: Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 696: Mr. PALLONE and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 706: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 721: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. PALAZZO, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. KILMER, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. RUSH, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MESSER, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 747: Mr. LOBIONDO and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.

H.R. 772: Ms. TENNEY, Mr. BUCK, and Mr. GALLAGHER.

H.R. 781: Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 804: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 807: Mr. LANCE, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. NUNES, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. DEFazio.

H.R. 812: Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 816: Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 820: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. GRIMALVA, Mr. WALZ, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 838: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 839: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 846: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CALVERT, and Ms. TITUS.

H.R. 849: Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 854: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 895: Mr. DESANTIS.

H.R. 926: Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 953: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, and Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 968: Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. HASTINGS, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 970: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 972: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1001: Mr. WELCH and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 1005: Mr. BISHOP of Utah and Mr. SUOZZI.

H.R. 1037: Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 1038: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1049: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1069: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1094: Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. MOORE, and Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 1096: Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana and Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 1101: Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. FLORES, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. HUNTER.

H.R. 1127: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

H.R. 1148: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. TONKO, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Mr. MEEHAN.

H.R. 1158: Mr. HIGGINS of New York.

H.R. 1159: Mr. AMODEI, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. RENACCI, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. WALORSKI, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 1186: Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 1259: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. DESANTIS, and Mr. ROYCE of California.

H.R. 1276: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H.R. 1284: Mr. MARSHALL.

H.J. Res. 31: Mr. KILMER.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. WESTERMAN.

H.J. Res. 73: Mr. STEWART, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. CARTER of Texas, and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.J. Res. 75: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H. Con. Res. 13: Mr. BARTON.

H. Con. Res. 24: Mr. NEAL, Mr. WELCH, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H. Res. 28: Mr. VEASEY, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CORREA, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. MACARTHUR.

H. Res. 69: Mr. TONKO.

H. Res. 84: Mr. YARMUTH.

H. Res. 92: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H. Res. 130: Mr. COHEN and Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H. Res. 135: Mr. BYRNE, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mr. MITCHELL.

H. Res. 140: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H. Res. 142: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Ms. MOORE, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. PASCRELL.

H. Res. 152: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.

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. FRELINGHUYSEN

H.R. 1301, making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, does not contain any congressional earmark, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2017

No. 37

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by Sharad H. Creasman, campus minister and advisor to the president of Brevard College in Brevard, NC.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

We are grateful to stand at the beginning of a new day and a new session. Thank You for the roads we have traveled and for the strength, courage, and fortitude to continue on the roads yet traveled.

Thank You also for the incredible individuals in this space, who have committed themselves to a life of service—women and men who have chosen to use their gifts and their passions to serve their respective constituencies and our Nation.

Help us all on this day to choose courage over fear, benevolence over unkindness, and selflessness over selfishness. Remind us in all of our endeavors that Your energizing and enlivening presence is already with us. And as we continue to press forward through this session and this day, thank You for being the one who has already made the way. 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 (Mr. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR COCHRAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to start by taking a moment to recognize our distinguished colleague who just marked an impressive milestone in the history of the Senate. Last week, the senior Senator from Mississippi became the 10th longest serving Senator in U.S. history. With over 38 years of service in this body, Senator THAD COCHRAN has proved himself to be a leader and a statesman.

When the Magnolia State sent Senator COCHRAN to the Senate, it was the first time a Republican had won a statewide election in Mississippi in over a century. When he decided to run, Senator COCHRAN didn't falter in the face of long odds. He campaigned hard, and he won. Because of his passionate and dedicated service, the people of Mississippi have sent him back time and again.

Senator COCHRAN has come a long way from his first job as a carhop at Gunn's Dairy Barn near Jackson, MS. Now, he proudly serves the people of his State and helps craft legislation for the entire Nation.

Here in the Senate, we have all had the opportunity to work with Senator COCHRAN. Whether on agricultural issues, responding to national disasters, or negotiating appropriations bills, Senator COCHRAN has played a crucial role on many pieces of legislation. As the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, he has done important work as well.

I know that colleagues on both sides can agree that working with him is always an enjoyable experience. Senator COCHRAN has accomplished a great deal during his years in the Senate. With a conservative philosophy and an affable personality that endears him to both sides of the aisle, Senator COCHRAN has made an important impact.

A few years ago, Senator COCHRAN reached another important milestone when he cast vote No. 12,000 here in the

Senate. At that time, I mentioned that Time Magazine included him on the list of America's "Top 10 Senators." They named him "The Quiet Persuader." We all know that Washington is filled with loud voices, but Senator COCHRAN's manner has served our friend and this institution very, very well.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Senator COCHRAN, his wife Kay, and his entire family on this notable occasion.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter entirely, I appreciated the opportunity to visit with the President yesterday after his impressive speech before Congress. We had a positive discussion about the upcoming legislative agenda. One important item we discussed was the way forward on repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

Just yesterday, our Members came together for a productive discussion on the next steps toward protecting American families from the broken promises of ObamaCare. Here in Congress, we remain committed to working with the administration to repeal and replace this failed law.

President Trump, in his address to Congress, reaffirmed his own commitment as well. He provided important direction on what the path forward should look like as we transition away from ObamaCare toward truly patient-centered care.

Now, look, we know this transition isn't going to be easy. Providing relief from the disaster of ObamaCare is going to be a challenge. However, the status quo is simply not sustainable. The American people need help, and they need it right now.

That is why we started the process of repealing and replacing this partisan law at the beginning of the year, and it is why we will keep working to make

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S1545

this right for American families. It is what the people who sent us here have called for, and it remains among our top priorities here in the Senate.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on yet another matter, the Senate has been working to put the President's Cabinet in place with several important agencies that serve the American people. I am pleased to share that, by the end of the week, we will have confirmed even more nominees, including Representative ZINKE, whom we approved yesterday, as well as Dr. Ben Carson and Gov. Rick Perry. Both Carson and Perry received bipartisan support in committee, and I expect to see the same when the Senate votes to confirm them. Once we do, Dr. Carson can begin bringing much needed reforms to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, while Governor Perry can begin leading on smarter policies at the Energy Department.

I also look forward to confirming another important nomination before the Senate. Judge Neil Gorsuch continues to earn praise from both sides of the aisle, including many on the political left. President Obama's legal mentor calls Gorsuch "brilliant."

His former Solicitor General praises Gorsuch for his "fairness."

Alan Dershowitz says Gorsuch is "highly credentialed" and "hard to oppose on the merits."

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg recently had praise for the judge, too, complimenting his collegiality and excellent writing abilities.

Judge Gorsuch has received wide support in his local community as well, with more than 200 Colorado lawyers from across the political spectrum voicing their support for his nomination. Here is what they said in a letter to Colorado's Senators just last week. They wrote:

We know Judge Gorsuch to be a person of utmost character. He is fair, decent, and honest, both as a judge and a person. His record shows that he believes strongly in the independence of the judiciary. Judge Gorsuch has a well-earned reputation as an excellent jurist. He voted with the majority in 98 percent of the cases he heard on the Tenth Circuit, a great portion of which were joined by judges appointed by Democratic presidents.

We all agree that Judge Gorsuch is exceptionally well-qualified to join the Supreme Court. He deserves an up or down vote.

That is from 200 Colorado lawyers.

It is praise that has been reiterated by other Coloradans as well. Here is how the Colorado Springs Gazette put it this week in an editorial supporting the nomination. The paper said:

To vote against Judge Gorsuch would favor . . . party over someone who clearly ranks among the top-qualified nominees in the court's history.

The considerable praise we have heard regarding Judge Gorsuch is not surprising when we consider the reputation he has earned across his State,

in the Federal judiciary, and among those who have worked with him through the years. That includes Judge John Kane, a senior district court judge in Colorado appointed by President Carter. He also shared his view this week on what type of jurist Judge Gorsuch has been, and will continue to be, if confirmed to the Supreme Court. Here is what he had to say. This is a Carter appointee:

[Judge Gorsuch's] opinions, concurrences and dissents are clear, cogent and mercifully to the point. I have been affirmed and reversed by him and in each instance I thought he was right and fair.

Let me repeat what Judge Kane, a Carter appointee, said:

I have been affirmed and reversed by him and in each instance I thought he was right and fair.

Judge Kane added that Judge Gorsuch's "writings indicate a strong respect for tradition and precedent" and, he said, "I don't find his decisions reflecting any sort of ideological bias."

"I am very comfortable with this nomination," Judge Kane concluded, and "I'm not sure we could expect better, or that better presently exists."

Let me say that again. This is a Carter appointee to Federal courts. He said: "I'm not sure we could expect better, or that better presently exists."

In other words, no one is better.

It is high acclaim from someone who not only has professional experience with the nominee before us but also someone who, as a judge himself, has a clear-eyed understanding of the standards a jurist must uphold.

In the coming days, we can expect to see more examples of bipartisan support for Judge Gorsuch. He is an outstanding nominee. He is both well qualified and well respected, and he deserves fair consideration and an up-or-down vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

THANKING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, let me thank the distinguished majority leader for his generous remarks about my service in the Senate, as has been reflected by the last long number of years. It is heartwarming, and it also reminds me of how important our collective efforts are for the future of our country, our economy, peace in our time, and in helping ensure that we make our time here a positive influence over the opportunities that are available for our citizens to enjoy life, safe and secure, with good leaders and commonsense leaders. That is what our leader is.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 20 minutes of debate equally divided.

If nobody yields time, the time will be charged equally.

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I stand this morning just before we vote on Dr. Benjamin Carson as the next Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to strongly urge my colleagues to support his nomination.

Dr. Carson was advanced in the committee by a voice vote, as Senator BROWN and I worked with the Banking Committee to assure that his nomination moved through smoothly. I thank Senator BROWN for his cooperation and work to help us move this nomination promptly.

Dr. Carson also received numerous letters of support from former HUD Secretaries and housing stakeholders alike. There truly is an excitement for his leadership to be brought to the Department.

As I highlighted yesterday, Dr. Carson has said that once confirmed, he is committed to embarking on a listening tour, where he will hear stories and concerns from housing stakeholders across America. This presents a real opportunity for Americans to weigh in on how housing issues affect them in their local communities—input that can make a lasting impact on HUD policies.

Once Dr. Carson is confirmed, we can begin working on several important issues under HUD's jurisdiction. Homelessness, especially among our Nation's veterans, needs to be addressed. We need to streamline regulatory burdens on local public housing agencies so that they can more efficiently serve the communities that rely on them. Financing arrangements for small and rural affordable housing developments should also be strengthened.

For years, there has been bipartisan interest in a number of these reforms. I look forward to having a strong partner at HUD so that we can tackle these important issues and many others head-on. I am eager to get that process started and to start work with Dr. Carson, with Ranking Member BROWN, and

with other members of the Banking Committee on these critical issues.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm Dr. Carson so that this important work can begin.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Department of Housing and Urban Development plays a vital role ensuring that all Americans have access to safe affordable housing. Affordable housing should not be a political issue; it is a moral issue. Programs like Section 8 and the Community Development Block Grant, CDBG, Program keep families in their homes and support and maintain affordable housing. That is not up for debate.

I am disappointed that President Trump did not look to our knowledgeable housing advocates across the country to identify a qualified, experienced nominee to serve as Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and instead nominated Dr. Ben Carson to this important position. In testimony before the Senate Banking Committee, Dr. Carson, like many nominees, said the right things. He made the right promises. I want to believe that he will fulfill those commitments.

Programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development keep shelter over the heads of our Nation's struggling and low-income families. They combat homelessness among adults and children alike by building and maintaining affordable housing and helping families buy their first homes. I am proud of the progress we have made in Vermont and across the Nation through programs implemented by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. During his confirmation hearing, Dr. Carson testified to the crucial role of rental assistance programs. He pledged to be an advocate for funding for housing assistance programs. He turned away from his previous call for a 10-percent across-the-board cut to housing programs. I hope that Dr. Carson will fulfill these commitments.

I continue to have concerns regarding Dr. Carson's seeming animosity toward the affirmatively furthering fair housing, AFFH rule, which he called a "failed socialist experiment" in an op-ed in the Washington Times. While Dr. Carson tried to minimize those comments in his hearing, I remain concerned that Dr. Carson doesn't understand the AFFH rule. This rule asks cities and towns receiving Federal dollars to look at their housing patterns to identify racial bias and to take action to rectify any bias they find. Dr. Carson has called it social engineering. I call it social justice and support the examination of policies to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. During his confirmation hearing, he pledged to enforce our fair housing laws. I believe this includes upholding the AFFH.

I am concerned that Dr. Carson lacks the necessary experience to successfully serve as our Secretary of Housing

and Urban Development. He will be confirmed, of that there is no doubt. I hope that Dr. Carson will work with both sides of the aisle to further the mission of the Department, strengthen the successful programs that keep families in their homes, build and support and maintain affordable housing in Vermont and across the Nation, and help first-time home buyers realize their homeownership goals.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, Congress created the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1965 to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all Americans. During last year's Presidential campaign, however, President Trump often called into question his commitment to an inclusive America. Thus, the abilities and commitment of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development are all the more important.

I voted, along with others in the Banking Committee, to report Dr. Carson's nomination to the full Senate because I wanted to allow the nomination to proceed to the floor for consideration and debate. During that time, I have further examined the nomination. I reviewed the statements and letters that I have received from organizations and individuals who are directly impacted by the work of HUD.

Dr. Carson is a gifted neurosurgeon, but nothing in his experience indicates that he is prepared to run an 8,400-employee government agency. Armstrong Williams, a business manager and close friend of Dr. Carson's, told Reuters in November, "His life has not prepared him to be a Cabinet secretary." Mr. Williams told CNN, "He's never run an agency and it's a lot to ask. He's a neophyte and that's not his strength." And Mr. Williams told The Hill newspaper, "Dr. Carson feels he has no government experience, he's never run a federal agency."

Moreover, Dr. Carson's past statements have questioned the mission of the agency that he would lead. He has implied that housing assistance provided by the Department is harmful. He has characterized it as if it were calculated to create dependency, ignoring the real world needs of people who rely on this important safety net. Dr. Carson was dismissive when, during his confirmation hearing, I noted that so many millions of people who receive housing assistance are seniors or people with disabilities, and I asked Dr. Carson about his past advocacy of abolishing Medicare and Medicaid. Dr. Carson's testimony in committee did not show understanding of the importance of these safety net programs to seniors or people with disabilities.

Dr. Carson has also made several statements that call into question his view of the role of the Department in ensuring fair housing for all. Specifically, he has said disparaging things about housing desegregation efforts. In July of 2015, Dr. Carson wrote in the Washington Times that the Depart-

ment of Housing and Urban Development rule designed to desegregate housing, the "affirmatively further" rule, was a "social experiment" and he likened it to "failed socialist experiments."

Dr. Carson likened housing desegregation to "what you see in communist countries." After HUD issued a letter declaring that the city of Dubuque's implementation of the section 8 housing voucher program was intentionally discriminatory against Black applicants from Chicago, Dr. Carson told Iowa radio show host Jan Mickelson, "This is what you see in communist countries, where they have so many regulations encircling every aspect of your life that if you don't agree with them, all they have to do is pull the noose."

Dr. Carson has also shown a lax attitude toward holding accountable those who triggered the housing crisis and financial collapse.

In the February 2016 CBS Republican Presidential debate, Dr. Carson seemed to question the penalty that the Justice Department and the New York Attorney General extracted from a big New York bank for contributing to the mortgage crisis. The Wall Street Journal's Kimberly Strassel asked Dr. Carson: "This week Morgan Stanley agreed to pay a \$3.2 billion fine to state and federal authorities for contributing to the mortgage crisis. You have a lot of Democrats out saying that we should be jailing more executives, so two questions. Should financial executives be held legally responsible for financial crisis, and do you think fines like these are an effective way to deter companies from future behavior like that?"

Dr. Carson replied: "Now, the—as far as these fines are concerned, you know? Here's the big problem. We've got all these government regulators, and all they're doing is running around looking for people to fine. And, we've got 645 different federal agencies, and sub-agencies. Way, way too many, and they don't have anything else to do. I think what we really need to do is start trimming the regulatory agencies rather than going after the people who are trying to increase the viability, economic viability of our society."

While criticizing the Justice Department for its work to hold Wall Street accountable, Dr. Carson also advocated for a policy that would have made housing less affordable. His campaign website called for "privatizing housing giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac." Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac play an important role providing liquidity to the nation's mortgage finance system. A large number of advocacy groups, academics, and industry stakeholders alike agree that some form of government backstop is necessary to ensure a stable housing market and to maintain the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage.

I am also deeply troubled by statements made by Dr. Carson that indicate intolerance. When, in September

2015, Chuck Todd of NBC's Meet the Press asked Dr. Carson whether he thought Islam is consistent with the Constitution. Dr. Carson answered, "No, I don't, I do not." Dr. Carson's remarks revealed a fundamental misunderstanding about the First Amendment and religious liberty. And Dr. Carson's remarks about the LGBT community also raise concerns about tolerance.

Because of all the concerns that I have raised, I will not be able to support Dr. Carson's nomination for this post. However, should he be confirmed, I will do everything possible to help make his tenure successful. Specifically, I was heartened by Dr. Carson's statements about wanting to address the hazards of lead paint. I was pleased that, at his confirmation hearing, Dr. Carson agreed that he would urge President Trump to continue the White House task force that President Obama created after the Freddie Gray tragedy in Baltimore to help Baltimore by trying to break down some of the silos among different Federal agencies. We have a lot of work to do in Baltimore and throughout Maryland.

Mr. CRAPO. 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. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Carson nomination?

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 58, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 77 Ex.]

YEAS—58

Alexander	Cornyn	Graham
Barrasso	Cotton	Grassley
Blunt	Crapo	Hatch
Boozman	Cruz	Heitkamp
Brown	Daines	Heller
Burr	Donnelly	Hoeven
Capito	Enzi	Inhofe
Cassidy	Ernst	Johnson
Cochran	Fischer	Kennedy
Collins	Flake	King
Corker	Gardner	Lankford

Lee	Risch	Tester
Manchin	Roberts	Thune
McCain	Rounds	Tillis
McConnell	Rubio	Toomey
Moran	Sasse	Warner
Murkowski	Scott	Wicker
Paul	Shelby	Young
Perdue	Strange	
Portman	Sullivan	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote on the nomination, and I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield back the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of James Richard Perry, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy.

John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, James Lankford, James M. Inhofe, Michael B. Enzi, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Lamar Alexander, Bill Cassidy, John Barrasso, Orrin G. Hatch, Jerry Moran, David Perdue, John Thune, Mitch McConnell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of James Richard Perry, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 78 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heitkamp	Rubio
Cardin	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Cochran	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Stabenow
Corker	Kennedy	Strange
Cornyn	King	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Udall
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Van Hollen
Coons	Markey	Warren
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	
Franken	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 62, and the nays are 37.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of James Richard Perry, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will speak briefly, as I know the distinguished senior Senator from Alaska is waiting to speak.

I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

CALLING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL COUNSEL

Mr. LEAHY. Every day we learn more about the troubling connections between the Russian Government and both President Trump's administration and his campaign, but last night kind of topped everything—a revelation that Attorney General Sessions met with Russian officials during the height of the Presidential campaign, which raises a new level of alarm.

One of the reasons is, we now know the Attorney General, under oath, misled the Senate Judiciary Committee in response to my direct question about his contacts with Russian officials. I asked then-Senator Sessions if he had

been in contact with anyone connected to any part of the Russian Government about the 2016 election. His answer was unequivocal. He said no. He provided a similarly misleading response to Senator FRANKEN, saying that he was “not aware” of any connections between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government.

Especially those of us who are lawyers, and who have had a chance to serve as attorney general or as prosecutors in our States, know it is an egregious breach of public trust that Attorney General Sessions has not recused himself from this investigation. I think everybody would agree he has to recuse himself. Of course, as this goes on, the question now arises: Has he perjured himself?

In response to these reports, the Attorney General claims that he “never met Russian officials to discuss issues of the campaign.” That is a wholly inadequate response. The Attorney General was a top adviser to the Trump campaign. He took a private, undisclosed meeting with the Russian Ambassador during the height of concerns about Russian involvement in our election. Think about it. There are reports everywhere about concerns about Russian involvement in the election of the United States, and he has an undisclosed meeting with the Russian Ambassador.

He also met with the Russian Ambassador during an event at the Republican National Convention. One would think, at the Republican National Convention, it is possible that politics might be discussed. Now, if the Attorney General thinks his explanation is sufficient after he misled Congress about these contacts, of course, he is mistaken. I don’t say that as a Democrat. I think everybody would agree to that. What I worry about is that the Attorney General is only the latest Trump administration official who has attempted to mask his contacts with the Kremlin.

The President’s first National Security Advisor lied to the Vice President about his communications with the Russian Ambassador. He only resigned after the media reported how he had lied to Vice President PENCE, and even that was weeks after the President had been informed. He had to leave only when it became public. The President’s Chief of Staff attempted to use the FBI—which, of course, would be in violation of Justice Department policies—to suppress news reports about Russian contacts. I have been here through seven previous Presidents—Republicans and Democrats. You would assume they would play by the rules. This administration seems to want to make up the rules.

My concern is not just what the administration might be doing; my concern is about Russia. We are, I believe strongly, the greatest democracy history has known. We are the longest existing democracy in history, and now we have Russia meddling and trying to

undermine our democracy. Every American should worry about that. Every American should be frightened, not just concerned but frightened. It is an attack on our democracy. This is one of the most disturbing national security challenges facing our country. Russian President Putin ordered a multifaceted campaign that was aimed at helping Donald Trump win and undermining public faith in our election. That should alarm and outrage everybody no matter what party one belongs to.

We didn’t hear a word about it in the President’s speech on Tuesday during the joint session of Congress. In fact, the President’s only reaction has been to disparage American investigators, to disparage the intelligence community, to cast journalists who report on this as “enemies of the American people.” Journalists are not enemies of the American people. Russia is the enemy of the American people. Putin is the enemy of the American people. Do not cast our journalists, do not cast our investigators, do not cast our intelligence people, do not cast those who dare speak out as being enemies of America. Point to the real enemies—Vladimir Putin and those he controls.

It is about time we take this seriously. I have been here 42 years. I have never seen such a perfidious threat to our democracy than what we are seeing in Vladimir Putin, and my concern is the administration does not call it out for what it is. We Americans deserve to know the facts. We deserve a full and fair investigation. We deserve one that is free from any political influence.

I have repeatedly called on Attorney General Sessions, who was one of President Trump’s top advisers during the campaign, to recuse himself and appoint a special counsel to conduct the investigation. Earlier this week, he said: “I would recuse myself on anything that I should recuse myself on.” This morning, he said he would recuse himself “whenever it’s appropriate.” This would be a ludicrous response from a law clerk at the Department of Justice. From the Attorney General, it is dissembling.

Recusal is not optional here. It is required by very clear Justice Department regulations. It is required to maintain at least a semblance of integrity in this investigation. The Attorney General has to recuse himself because, as stated clearly in Department rules, he is obviously “closely identified” with the President due to his “service as a principal adviser.” That is the rule, and that is the rule whether it is a Republican or a Democratic administration. It describes his relationship with the President.

The investigation has to be led by someone who, in reality and in appearance, is impartial and removed from politics. That does not describe someone who was in the trenches of a political campaign with the subjects of the investigation while they were allegedly engaged in the very activity under in-

vestigation. It does not describe somebody who misled Congress—who misled the Republican-led Senate Judiciary Committee—about his own activities that have been implicated in the investigation.

This is not a close call. We know Russia is doing everything to undermine our democracy. Let’s stand up for America. Let’s do what is best for our country. The Attorney General should start by stepping aside. Then what we need is an independent investigation, and we need answers.

I thank the distinguished senior Senator from Alaska for her indulgence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the matter pending before the Senate this morning is the nomination of Rick Perry to be Secretary of Energy, and I have come to the floor to speak to that nomination.

As with Representative ZINKE, whom we confirmed to be Secretary of the Interior just yesterday, I am equally proud to support Governor Perry’s nomination. I know colleagues from both sides of the aisle will be joining me as we make statements in support of this individual to our new President’s Cabinet.

Before that though, here’s a little bit on Governor Perry’s background. He is one who has devoted his life—literally decades of his life—to public service. After graduating from Texas A&M, he joined the U.S. Air Force. He piloted C-130 tactical airlift aircraft in Europe as well as in the Middle East. He has served as a State representative, agriculture commissioner, Lieutenant Governor, and of course Governor of Texas.

During his time as Governor, Rick Perry showed that economic growth and environmental stewardship cannot only survive and coexist, but that they can really thrive. Over the course of 14 years, Texas added 2.2 million jobs, saw its population grow by more than 6 million people, and at the same time he had this robust growth within his State’s population, the State reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 17 percent, reduced its sulfur dioxide emissions by 56 percent, and reduced its nitrous oxide emissions by 66 percent. So in most States where you have a considerable plus-up in your population and a growing economy, you also see growing levels of impact, growing levels of emission. However Governor Perry dealt with this head-on, and we saw the results over the course of 14 years in the State of Texas.

He led an effort to decommission older and dirtier power plants. He prioritized the development of emerging and innovative technologies, including carbon sequestration and capture. As a result of his leadership in the State of Texas, that State now leads our Nation in producing more wind energy than all but five other countries.

Coming from the State of Alaska, as the Presiding Officer and I do, we recognize that we are labeled as an oil State. Well, Texas certainly has been labeled as an oil-producing State. Yet under Governor Perry's leadership, we have seen Texas lead the Nation in producing more wind energy than all but five other countries. For those who may come to the floor and suggest that, somehow or another, Governor Perry is anti-environment or bring up the issue of climate change and suggest that he does not support care for our environment, that is simply not the case, and clearly in his case, actions speak louder than words.

As Texas's longest serving Governor, Rick Perry guided a large, diverse and very complex State government to economic success. Again, when we are talking about States, Alaska is always out there bragging about our size, but if Texas were its own country, it would be the 12th largest economy in the world. So it is one thing to talk about size just by way of geography, but I think it is important—when we are talking about economic contribution, the size of Texas as the 12th largest economy in the world is pretty significant.

What happened in the State of Texas? Not only did the people of Texas give their endorsement to Governor Perry to ask him to serve again as Governor, they gave him their endorsement for his work by reelecting him to office not once but twice—14 years. Governor Perry is a principled leader, and that will serve him well as he takes the helm at the Department of Energy.

DOE has a very important mission, ranging from the maintenance of our nuclear weapons stockpile to the research and development of new energy technologies. At the same time it is also a department, a bureaucracy, something that I think we recognize. It is large. It is cumbersome, with tens of thousands of employees and contractors. I think the example Governor Perry showed as the State leader of Texas is an example that will do well at the Department of Energy—capable of really setting a good direction for the Department.

It has been suggested that he is not one of them in the sense that he is not an award-winning scientist, but, as I mentioned at his hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, you do not necessarily need to have a scientist to lead other scientists; you need to have somebody who is a good, strong, competent, capable manager. That is what Governor Perry has demonstrated, and that is what the Department of Energy needs. He will hold his employees and contractors accountable. We know he will be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars.

I think he will work to continue to break down the research silos that have frustrated the Department and work to find ways where there can be greater collaboration, greater working together.

I am also confident that he will pursue policies that will ultimately provide us with more energy, more stable sources of energy for us where—unfortunately, we have great sources of energy, but it is high cost. We need to be working with the Department of Energy. We need collaboration there to do what we can to reduce the cost of energy, as well as reduce the amount of energy we consume. By supporting basic research, encouraging scientific exploration, and fostering innovation, the Department will increase access to energy, make it more affordable, and continue to improve its environmental performance.

We have 17 National Labs. We are very proud of them. These National Labs are at the heart of those efforts. I have had good conversations with Governor Perry. He reaffirmed in our committee hearing that he clearly recognizes and values the work done by the men and women at our National Labs.

One area, which we do not cover within our Committee on Energy and Natural Resources but which is a big part of DOE's mission, is the maintenance and the protection of America's nuclear weapons. Governor Perry recognizes the importance of that mission, and he is committed to working with experts at the NNSA to maintain a proper stockpile stewardship program.

I believe Governor Perry will also put his management experience to work on a challenge that has really vexed the Department and affected States for a long period of time. He recognizes that we must clean up the legacy wastes that have been left behind by our nuclear weapons programs, particularly at the largest of these sites in Washington State. My hope is that, through his leadership, the Office of Environmental Management can finally move off of GAO's high-risk list. I know these conversations have been had with many members on the committee. It has been pressed as a priority. But, again, ensuring that we deal with these legacy waste sites has to be a priority.

I will reiterate that my hope is that Governor Perry will help address the crisis of rural energy prices in Alaska, as well as in other parts of the country where unfortunately we face high energy costs.

The Department must do a better job of partnering with institutions. In our State of Alaska, we have the opportunity to work with DOE collaboratively. We have been the incubators of good ideas, whether it is in energy microgrids or in some of the other pioneering way, we have done it because of necessity. We have no other options. We look to our institutions to find these good ideas, build on them, and work to bring down the costs and transition our many remote communities that are still relying on diesel power. Far too many of our communities are still dependent on diesel and that is just not right.

So working with Alaska—allow us to be that proving ground for the Depart-

ment of Energy. Allow us to be that place where we can first deploy some of these new ideas, these innovative ideas, these projects to help lower the costs and really make a difference in people's lives.

Again, I am proud to be here to support Governor Perry's nomination. I believe he has the management experience we need in the Department of Energy right now to help pursue scientific discovery and to promote innovation, to maintain and safeguard our nuclear weapons stockpile, to make progress on the cleanup of legacy waste, and to partner with States like Alaska that suffer from high energy costs.

I think we recognize that he has his work cut out for him, but we are counting on him to fulfill those responsibilities and to keep the Department of Energy as one that we look to for true leadership not only here in the United States but around the world.

Governor Rick Perry has a strong record of results based on his public service in the State of Texas. He is a proven leader, and I am confident he will do a good job for us leading the Department of Energy in this new administration. I will be supporting his nomination, and I certainly urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. President, 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today is Texas Independence Day—a day that inspires pride and gratitude in the hearts of all 28 million Texans.

Before I came to the floor, I asked the Presiding Officer, who hails from the great State of Alaska, to remind me—and he did—that Alaska is 2½ times the size of Texas in terms of landmass, not in terms of population. But today commemorates the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence, when Texas declared itself a republic and independent from the Nation of Mexico.

Here in the Senate, we remember the sacrifice of those who came before us and laid the foundation for our State by reading a letter written by William Barret Travis, a defender of the Alamo. That tradition goes back to 1961, when then-Senator John Tower started that tradition. I am told my colleague Senator CRUZ will read that letter in full later today, perhaps around 12:30, carrying on this great tradition. So today I wish to express my gratitude for these Texas patriots, many of whom would later serve in the U.S. Congress, including Sam Houston, whose Senate seat I am honored to now occupy.

Sam Houston came from his farm outside Huntsville, TX, in 1846. It took

him about 3 weeks to get to Washington, DC. Of course, he didn't have a modern mode of transportation, but I always marvel at the fact that it now takes me about 3 hours to get home, where it took old Sam 3 weeks just to make a one-way trip.

U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

Mr. President, on another matter, last week I had the great privilege of hosting a number of my congressional colleagues at the Texas border. At a time when so many people are talking about the border of the United States and Mexico, I thought it was important to bring colleagues who were willing to come to learn and listen about the impact of trade, border security, and our relationship with Mexico on my State and on the United States. Of course, this border is so important on all of those issues—security, trade, the economy. It is important to see where they intersect. I am glad they had a chance to come to listen and learn last week.

We did receive a number of very important and useful briefings from Customs officials, Border Patrol agents, and other Federal partners in three major areas along the border, including the Rio Grande Valley. We were in McAllen, TX, Laredo, and Del Rio. I think what my colleagues discovered—if they didn't already know it—is how varied each part of the border is. This is not just true in Texas. It is true in San Diego. It is true in Arizona. It is true in New Mexico. When anybody suggests that we can attain a goal that we all share, which is border security, by just one solution, I think it is important to examine that conclusion and to test it because, frankly, I think what the Border Patrol will tell you is that what we need is infrastructure, yes. We need technology, yes. Then we need people.

That is the formula—personnel, technology, and infrastructure. In my own view, border security is a question of political will. The previous administration did not have that political will. I believe this administration does, and it has been long overdue. I welcome that.

We are going to be working with our State and local officials to make sure that they have the resources they need in order to get the job done. At the same time, I think what we were able to demonstrate to some of our friends from out of State is that we have an important trading relationship with Mexico. As a matter of fact, 5 million American jobs depend on binational trade with Mexico.

We went to one of the largest land ports in the country. I think, maybe, it is the largest port of the country—Laredo, TX—where some 15,000 trucks enter the United States every day. It is a huge influx of cargo and, fortunately, businesses all up and down and along the border have worked with the law enforcement agencies, with Customs and Border Protection to make sure that we can expedite the flow of legal trade into the United States. At the same time, we police for the entry of il-

legal drugs and for people illegally entering the United States without proper authority.

One reason why my State has done pretty well relative to the rest of the country in terms of our economy is because of our business-friendly attitude. We believe in lower taxes, reasonable regulation, and a welcoming attitude when it comes to people who make investments and who want to come to our State and start businesses or grow businesses.

We all know that roughly 70 percent of job growth in this country comes not from the Fortune 500 companies but from those small and medium-sized businesses. We work very hard to be a business-friendly State. Why? It is not just because we care about businesses but because we care about the workers who work at those employers.

As one of my former colleagues likes to say, you can't claim to be worker-friendly if you are hostile to the businesses that employ them. That is an inconsistent approach. You need to be consistent.

In addition to the issue of illegal entry into the United States by individuals who come without regard to our immigration laws, we also have a tremendous influx of illegal drugs into the United States. I think one of the things I was reminded of that we all should be cognizant of is that when we focus on the illegal drug activity in Mexico, Central America, or South America, we need to look in the mirror as a nation because the only way those cartels exist and make the money they make and commit the mayhem and violence they commit is because of demand in the United States.

I was very encouraged to hear Secretary John Kelly—former Marine Gen. John Kelly. He is still a marine, always a marine, but now he has taken off the uniform and assumed the responsibility of Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. He previously served as the commanding general in the Southern Command, as the Presiding Officer knows, which covers the combatant command from south of Mexico down to Central America and South America. So he is very familiar with the region. He made the point, before his confirmation hearing, that there is one thing he would like to see the United States do—effect a major societal and cultural change to deal with the demand for illegal drugs, which fuels all of the cartels and the transnational criminal organizations which plague our security situation along the border and in our neighbors to the south.

I want to say that I am appreciative of our colleagues who joined us on the trip—Senators TILLIS and HELLER, Congressman ROUZER from North Carolina, and my colleagues from Texas, Congressmen JOHN CARTER and MIKE CONAWAY.

I also wanted to say how much I appreciate Speaker RYAN coming to Texas and the Rio Grande Valley last

Wednesday for, unfortunately, a short period of time, but we are all grateful that he came at all—I think, at the invitation of people like Congressman MICHAEL MCCAUL, chairman of the Homeland Security Committee in the House of Representatives. I think it is going to take all of our efforts working together to effect and implement the President's vision of border security, a goal we all share.

I think what we all were reminded of is that it is more complex than some people assume, and it is going to take a combination of approaches, including personnel. We need to plus-up the Border Patrol because it doesn't do you any good if you identify somebody illegally bringing a shipment of drugs or illegally entering the United States if you don't have a Border Patrol agent to stop them. Also, the very useful border infrastructure—fencing and walls, for example, in the Hidalgo County area—were actually implemented as a way to improve their levee system when the Rio Grande river floods. They have actually created a dual-use structure that actually satisfies the Border Patrol's need for physical infrastructure along with levee improvements in a win-win situation.

I believe that consulting with local officials and local stakeholders, we at the Federal level can come up with more of those win-win solutions. The point is that we have learned a lot, particularly in our military, about how to use technology to keep us safe—whether it is unmanned aerial vehicles or ground sensors or radars. Actually, they have several new aerostats, or balloons, up in the sky that are basically the eyes in the sky, or radar, which do a tremendous job helping to identify people illegally entering the United States and equipping the Border Patrol and law enforcement authorities with the sort of early notice they need in order to interdict people illegally entering the country.

I will close by saying that one of the always surprising things I learn when I go to the Rio Grande Valley and talk to the Border Patrol is this. I ask them: How many different countries are represented by the people whom you detain illegally entering the United States? Obviously, the majority of them come from our neighbors to the south, not as much from Mexico as you might suspect anymore, because the Mexican economy is doing better and people are finding more opportunities there. But right now, the majority of the flow of people illegally entering the United States is from Central America.

Unfortunately, the tragic situation there where mothers and fathers worry about their children—whether they are going to be killed by gangs or whether they are going to be forced to join gangs—and somehow make the very painful and difficult choice of turning their children over to human smugglers to try to make their way up the backbone of Mexico and into the

United States, to be deposited on our doorstep in the United States.

Last week when the congressional delegation was in McAllen, we went through the processing area where some of these immigrants from Central America were being processed. I asked a young boy there, who was in the process of being processed—through my regional director, because he spoke only Spanish—how old he was, and he said he was 6 years old. He wasn't unaccompanied in that trip from Central America, but his mother and father thought it was important enough to get him out of that ravaged part of the world, where the prospects are not very good, and to turn him over to a human smuggler to make his way up into the United States, only to find himself at a Border Patrol processing unit in McAllen, TX.

My point is that I also met a young man from India, and I asked him: How much did it cost you to get to the United States from India?

He said: About \$6,000.

I said: How did you get here?

He said: I took a plane from India.

He went through Moscow, he said, and ended up in Central America, where he worked his way up with the help of human smugglers into the United States.

I mention that only to point out that we have a vulnerability there where anybody determined enough or with enough money can find their way into the United States. We generally assume these people are economic migrants—in other words, looking for opportunity. We all understand that. Those same vulnerabilities create potential danger for our Nation and our local communities when people with unknown motives exploit those same vulnerabilities to come into the United States.

The last point I will make, again, to emphasize the global nature of illegal immigration into the United States is this. We saw that the Border Patrol has several rescue beacons in Brooks County, TX. This is about 70 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. What happens is that the human smugglers will transport people into the United States and across the river. They will put them in stash houses, really in terrible conditions. As a matter of fact, we went to one of these stash houses. They found 18 migrants in the stash house waiting to be transported up the highway into the heartland of America.

One of the checkpoints there is at Falfurrias, about 70 miles away from the border. What happens is that the smugglers will have people packed into a van or some vehicle, and before they get to the checkpoint, they will tell the immigrants to get out. If it is hot, they will give them a gallon jug—a milk jug—full of water and they will say: I will see you on the other side. They go around the checkpoint, out through the very difficult ranchland, and meet up on the north side, and then are transported off.

In Brooks County, TX, we went by a cemetery where a number of unknown and unnamed migrants have been buried because they have died due to exposure. Some of these immigrants coming from Central America come up through Mexico. You can imagine the conditions they have been exposed to, and in the heat of the summer, they have been kicked out of a car and told “meet us on the north side,” with a gallon jug of water, and some of them don't make it. Of course the smugglers don't care about people. You are just a commodity. You are just a paycheck. So they will leave stragglers behind. Many of the ranchers said they found as many as 100 different dead bodies on their property over an unspecified period of time.

But there is a rescue beacon that the Border Patrol has down there that is in three languages. It is in English, Spanish, and Chinese. You might ask, why in the world would you need Chinese written on a rescue beacon where somebody thinks “OK, I am not going to make it; I need help” and goes and presses the button on the rescue beacon—that you need English, Spanish, and Chinese. Well, because they have had Chinese immigrants come through that border region, as well, like the young man from India whom I mentioned earlier. And we have had people from Cuba and from literally all around the world, including some nations that are hosts to terrorist organizations.

This is not only an economic situation. This is not only a law enforcement problem when it comes to drug interdiction. It is a humanitarian crisis, as well. But it is also a national security issue, I think all the leaders of the intelligence community will concede, given the fact that people from 60 different countries have been detained coming across the southwestern border just in the last year by the McAllen sector of the Border Patrol.

We have a lot of work to do. I hope we will be able to work with the President and this administration and in a bipartisan way to come up with the tools we need in order to secure our border. We need to enforce our immigration laws. Of course, 40 percent of illegal immigration in this country occurs not from people entering the country illegally, it is from people entering legally and overstaying their visa. We may not catch up with them until they commit a serious crime and they are arrested by local law enforcement. I think this is what causes so many people to be angry at the Federal Government for not enforcing our laws. And many of our colleagues, me included, would like to do more to fix our broken immigration system generally, but until we regain the public's confidence that we are actually serious about securing our border and enforcing our laws, I don't believe we can have that conversation. I don't believe we are going to be successful, which I would like to see us be.

I think the first thing we need to do is to work with the administration in order to accomplish the goal of securing the border. Again, in the matter of political will, we know how to do it. We just need to have the desire to get it done. And then once we have regained the public's confidence that the Federal Government is once again living up to its responsibilities, then I think we can have that more expansive conversation about what our immigration system should look like.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to talk a few minutes about the challenges so many of our Cabinet members face trying to restore our infrastructure, to maintain our park system, and to create the public-private partnerships the President mentioned earlier this week in his vision for infrastructure reform.

Certainly Governor Perry, whose nomination we are debating right now, will have many opportunities in Energy to do that, in the research components of Energy and the partnership components that can be there.

We just confirmed a new Secretary of Interior, RYAN ZINKE. One of our great assets as a nation is the Federal park system. We are now entering the second hundred years of that Federal park system, and that second hundred years is going to be defined by partnerships in ways the first hundred years weren't.

The park system is a great way to enjoy the blessings we have and the rich geography, the scenic beauty—some of these parks really reflect the great challenges people faced as they settled the country—and also there are historic parks that reflect the history. Sometimes our parks do both of those things.

I think all of my colleagues are aware of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, one of the most visited national parks, the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial there celebrating President Jefferson, celebrating the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and really celebrating that long movement as people moved west—eventually really west and really northwest, Mr. President, where you live in Alaska. But the Gateway Arch is visited often. It opened in 1967, and so now we are 50 years into that particular part of our system. The original park itself needed a lot of restoration, but 50 years later, you look at that park and you look at how it has been used and decide how it could be better used.

What most of my colleagues probably aren't aware of is that right now, it is the biggest investment the National Park Service is making in the system at this moment, trying to connect the Gateway Arch to the Old Courthouse in St. Louis, the Federal courthouse where the Dred Scott case was tried—they are trying to connect that park to

the rest of the city in ways that—when it was built, it was separated by an interstate highway, so you would go see the park, but you wouldn't get to the rest of the national park side there very often.

Rethinking that is important, but what is maybe even more important is this is the biggest park project in the history of the country where private donors provided more of the money than the government did. This is not easily done. If for 100 years you have been doing something one way, it is not easy to immediately begin to say: We are going to do it another way from now on.

If you are in charge, like Secretary Jewell was put in charge of this project—and by the way, I think she has done a good job, as has her regional director, understanding that if you are going to do things differently, they have to be different.

It would be great if the city and private donors—the city even voted a tax just for this project, to provide millions of dollars that the project would be spending. Of course, I think initially the Park Service would think: Isn't that great? We now get this money from private donors, and we now get this money from a city tax, in addition to a portion of the money we are still getting appropriated by the Congress, and we will just spend it the way we have always spent it, as if we had no partners. But that didn't work out very well at all. The partners in the project actually wanted to be partners in the project.

As we look at the next hundred years of this great National Park System, I think we have to understand that for that to work and for that to work in a new way, we have to treat it differently. We are seeing that in St. Louis. We are seeing the three different groups come together in ways that have provided the funding. But, frankly, they also need to be at the table when you talk about how you are going to spend the funding.

We changed the law in Congress just a couple of years ago so that private money, if it is being held by the Federal Government, as it has been on that project, if there is any interest to be earned, if there is any benefit from that money, it also goes to the project rather than going into general revenue.

The goal here would be to do everything we can, if we are going to have a different park system for the next hundred years, to really encourage the next group of people to step up and say: We want to provide—as in the case in St. Louis, MO—more than half of the money, but we would like to have some input on how that is going to be used and how this is going to meet the needs of the community.

But also everybody who visits there, as they connect with the community uniquely in that St. Louis park—Missouri has a great park system. I think we are rated as one of the top four park systems in the country, our State sys-

tem. In fact, right now we are looking at one of those State parks at Ste. Genevieve, which was a part of our State that was first settled by French settlers. The number of buildings there dating right back to the turn of the 19th century—1801, 1804—is reflective of how French settlers built buildings, which is different from how other settlers did.

There is a lot to learn about how we come together as a people in so many of our parks, as well. So when Secretary Zinke takes that job, one of the new opportunities is to build on what is already started in places like St. Louis and figure out how we can have those kinds of partnerships when the President talks about infrastructure expansion and how we are going to look for new ways to do that. As you look at new ways to do that, you have to really be willing to think of how you approach this in a way that encourages partners to be part of it.

Clearly, infrastructure—one of the great benefits of where we are located is where we are located. We have an ocean on two sides. We have a river that runs up the middle of the country, that connects the country in unique ways to all the water travel of the world. We have these coasts on each side that are beneficial to this if we connect ourselves in the right ways.

So the President's view that the road system, the airport system, the port system all need to work in a way that links us up to be better competitors and links us up in a way that allows us to create economic opportunities and better jobs for families is important.

So that kind of partnership, the partnership the park system is in—I think we are seeing the mold established, the model established for how that would work in St. Louis right now at the Arch. In the next couple of years, that project will be completed. It will be different than it was 50 years ago because people want to see things differently than they did 50 years ago.

With Secretary Perry, who should be confirmed today—I think clearly will be confirmed today—his opportunities at Energy to look for partners who add to what we can do there in ways we haven't thought of before—just like we use research money now, take that research money in health research and research money in ag research to bring other people into this discussion that creates opportunities for who we can be.

As we move slowly and in a way that has really made it difficult to take advantage of this new administration, we are apparently going to be able to confirm two nominees to the Cabinet today. But we are still way behind, by any measure, the history of the country in working with a new administration to let them take responsibility. There are going to be 500, 1,000 nominees—I think there are about 1,000 Deputy Secretaries and Under Secretaries who come once we are done with the Cabinet. I hope we can all find a way to

get this done, with an understanding that whether or not you agree with the election, the election was held and the new administration has the responsibility for government. It is the job of the Senate and the Senate alone to be sure that those Cabinet officers and the people who support those Cabinet officers and departments are put in place early, as well.

Looking at the park system, looking at partnership, and looking at how important it is that we are willing to do things in a different way is something we ought to be thinking about in this week that we confirm the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Interior, and, later today, the Secretary of Energy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak on the nomination of Rick Perry, Governor of Texas, to be the Secretary of Energy. I just heard my colleague talking a little bit about the nomination process and hearings and the Cabinet. I want to emphasize that we have never seen a Cabinet quite like this—with their connections to the private sector, their financial holdings, a variety of other things.

The American people deserve for us to do a good job of digging into the backgrounds of the various nominees so that the people know who exactly the President has chosen to run these important government agencies. We are going to continue this process both for Cabinet-level nominees and also those nominated to serve in sub-Cabinet positions.

I am here today to speak about the nominee to serve as Secretary of Energy—Governor Rick Perry of Texas. Most people probably remember Governor Perry for his famous quip during a Presidential debate during which he announced he wanted to get rid of three agencies, but could not remember that the Department of Energy was one of them.

So he became famous for forgetting that he wanted to abolish the Department of Energy. In some ways, this allowed everyone to focus on exactly how important the Department of Energy is to our Nation. The Department's vital missions not only help us with the R&D of the future, but also with our national security. The national laboratories that are overseen by the Department drive our leadership in a global economy. They are based on innovation and play a vital role across the Nation for people who rely on affordable and efficient energy to heat their homes, run their appliances, and connect to the internet.

The Department of Energy safeguards our nuclear arsenal. It also is responsible for cleaning up the waste generated by our nuclear weapons complex facilities that helped us win World War II and the cold war. The Department also plays a key role in protecting our energy infrastructure from cyber attacks. It also makes important contributions to our understanding of climate science, enabling the collection and management of data needed to understand our changing environment and is a major driver of innovation.

Before Mr. PERRY was even nominated, the transition team was already targeting Department of Energy climate scientists. The transition team sought a list of those Department employees and contractors that had worked on climate change issues during the Obama Administration. This came across as an attempt to try to shut down those climate scientists and target them in a Trump Administration.

Silencing scientists is outrageous. We need an Energy Secretary who is not only going to protect the scientists who work at DOE no matter what their responsibility is but who is also going to make sure we use that important data for research and for mitigating the impacts of climate change on our coastal communities and pristine areas. Climate change is already producing significant impacts in the State of Washington and throughout the West. We need scientists working on this issue to get our States and local governments the best data and information possible.

As I previously mentioned, the Department of Energy is also an important driver of innovation. There is so much happening in the areas of smart buildings and modernizing our grid and resiliency and energy efficiency.

The thing that concerned me most about Governor Perry was his unwillingness to commit wholeheartedly to preserving the Electricity Office and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy within the Department. We need these offices and their R&D so that the U.S. can continue to create jobs in our growing energy economy.

Continued aggressive research and development is necessary if we are going to become more energy efficient and consumers are going to have access to reliable and affordable electricity. We need a Secretary who is going to emphatically push the Trump administration in the proper direction. That is exactly what we wanted to hear from Governor Perry in the Energy committee. Four members of the committee asked about his commitment to these programs. Unfortunately, the nominee dodged the questions. I followed up with Governor Perry after his confirmation hearing, and he still failed to provide a commitment to fight for these important programs. So I regret that I will not be able to support this nominee.

We need to make sure that the United States will continue to support the R&D, the scientists, the investments in electric grid modernization, and the investments in cyber security that are going to help make our Nation safe and our economy strong. I urge my colleagues to oppose this nomination, and I hope that we can move forward on making sure that we have an aggressive energy strategy for the future.

With that, I see my colleague from Washington. I would like to yield some time to her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Washington State, who has made a really important case. I want to be here today to add my opinion, as well, because over the past 2 months we have heard a lot about President Trump's plan to drain the swamp, which is to reject special interests and the corporate elite and, instead, fight for workers across our country.

There are a whole lot of claims, a whole lot of promises—all great. Fighting for workers is what this Congress should be doing, but the President's actions speak a lot louder than his words. I find it telling that we are here again debating yet another Cabinet nominee sent over from the White House—this time Gov. Rick Perry—whose interests have been more closely aligned with those of Big Oil and corporations rather than advancing our country's energy challenges or fighting for the working families we represent.

So let me be clear. If confirmed to head up the Department of Energy, Governor Perry would join the ranks of other unqualified candidates chosen by this President to lead critically important agencies with very specific and complex functions. It is a big job. I believe that getting the top spot at the Department of Energy—or anywhere else in the President's Cabinet—should not simply be a prize for demonstrating loyalty during an election.

Getting the job should be borne of a solid understanding of the agency, a respect for the tens of thousands of workers they would lead, and, most importantly, a commitment to putting families across the country first. So as a voice from my home State of Washington, where DOE's presence is extremely important, I will vote no on Governor Perry's nomination. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Washington State is home to the Hanford nuclear reservation near the Tri-Cities. Nearly 75 years ago, this region underwent a dramatic transformation, practically overnight and under top-secret conditions, to help the United States win World War II and later the Cold War.

Families and workers in this region of our State sacrificed immensely for the good of our country and the safety of our world. To this day, there is a massive environmental impact in the Tri-Cities created by decades of nu-

clear weapons production. Now this cleanup effort is vital, not only to the health and safety of families and workers and the economy in Central Washington but also for communities along the Columbia River.

As I have told anyone elected as President, whether Democrat or Republican, it is the Federal Government's moral and legal obligation and responsibility to clean up Hanford. I know that is not an easy feat, but it is essential. It requires a very deep understanding of a very large and complex cleanup project and a great deal of respect for the workers who show up each day to make progress on this massive project. I remain deeply concerned that Governor Perry and this administration fail to grasp what is at stake.

I am also concerned that they don't get the importance of another national asset not far from Hanford, the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. For more than 50 years, the men and women at PNNL have been on the forefront of scientific discovery. It was originally created to support research and development at Hanford, but PNNL has become DOE's premiere chemistry, environmental sciences, and data analytics national lab, tackling some of our Nation's most complex and urgent challenges.

PNNL is a leader in atmospheric research, nuclear detection and non-proliferation, and the Nation's electric grid. Its researchers have taken on everything from high-performance computing to advanced biofuels to analyzing lunar samples from NASA. These are critically important functions that advance our Nation.

I have worked hard with the entire Washington State congressional delegation, not to mention a whole host of leaders at the local and State level, to support this vital research and development hub and its incredible workforce. Just like the workers at Hanford, they also deserve leaders in this administration who respect and value their work. So, if President Trump were truly looking out for workers across our country, he would take this nomination to the Energy Department very seriously.

I understand Governor Perry gave his word during his confirmation hearing that he would work with us and even come to Washington State to visit Hanford and PNNL. If he is confirmed by the Senate, you can bet I will hold him to that because one I thing I have learned in the short 40-plus days of this administration is that we do get a lot of words. But it is the action that truly matters.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for coming to the floor and for her statement on this important issue. She and I are partners in making sure that Hanford waste is cleaned up. We so much want to continue to make progress on this important issue for our State. Having dealt

with previous Energy Secretaries, we know that it is always a fight to make sure that Hanford gets the priority it deserves, so I thank her for that.

I want to resume my comments about the key functions the Department of Energy performs and why it is vitally important that the agency succeeds in its missions, rather than be dismantled by a President who may not understand the significance of the work the Department does.

I am speaking specifically about the Department of Energy's programs to enhance our energy efficiency, promote renewable energy innovation, mobilize, modernize and bolster the security of our electricity grid, and continue to make significant advancements in science. I have spoken to Governor Perry on a couple of occasions, but, as I mentioned earlier, I failed to hear him commit to these essential DOE programs.

Our Nation's energy sector is undergoing an unbelievable transformation from fossil fuels. These changes are giving consumers more choice and lower energy bills and producing a more robust job-creation environment.

There are now 2.2 million Americans who work in the energy efficiency industry alone. In fact, energy efficiency accounted for 14 percent of all new jobs created in this country last year. That is an incredible number. We need to continue making investments in smart cars and smart buildings and homes of the future and how they are going to be integrated to reduce energy use and lower bills.

We just had a hearing this morning in the Commerce Committee and talked about broadband and white space and the continued development of the mobile economy and how we need to continue to take advantage of those advancements, particularly in rural communities.

The solar power workforce is also growing at a rapid rate. Last year, 1 out of every 50 new jobs in the United States was from solar power. The solar industry now employs more people than the oil and gas extraction or coal mining industries. These are important economic sectors.

In the last administration, the Energy Department's Quadrennial Energy Review estimated that 1.5 million new energy jobs will need to be filled, many of which will be in emerging energy technologies that will help define our clean energy economy. There are approximately 60,000 people in my home State of Washington who are employed in the clean energy sector. In fact, clean energy employment is growing twice as fast as the overall job rate in the State of Washington.

We have made too much progress, we have come too far in continuing to advance these important technologies to reverse course now. These advancements are going to help drive more savings and efficiency for consumers and businesses so they can be competitive. We must have leadership at the Depart-

ment of Energy making sure that progress continues.

I take Governor Perry at his word that he has now been fully briefed and he no longer believes the Department of Energy should be abolished. But his testimony raised questions about whether he will fight to protect the Department's essential programs from ideologues in a Trump administration that want to defund and eliminate these programs.

To better understand these challenges, let's briefly review the history. Just before the President was elected, the transition team's energy group sent a memo outlining 14 energy and environmental initiatives the new administration would be pushing. The memo pointed out that the Trump administration was going to eliminate and rescind and relax several Obama administration initiatives that are important to energy efficiency, important to reducing greenhouse gases, and require agencies to take the costs associated with climate into account. Shortly afterwards, the transition team sent an unprecedented questionnaire to the Energy Department, targeting scientists and civil servants who worked on these issues and asked the Obama administration to identify them.

The morning of Governor Perry's hearing, we awoke to news that the President's team was working on a proposal to eliminate the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and the Office of Electricity. So all those jobs I previously mentioned that are key in my State, key in the United States, and, I guarantee you, key to the U.S. economy's competitiveness in the future, would be at risk. Driving down the cost of electricity and keeping our businesses competitive is key to our Nation's economic strategy. I know that as a Senator who comes from a State with very affordable electricity. It has built our economy over and over and over and over again.

If you think about how our manufacturers have to compete in a global economy and look at where some of the manufacturing has gone or where our competition exists, these issues of cost-effective and efficient energy are key to our competitiveness as a nation.

We have seen in the State of California unbelievable results from energy efficiency. It is far cheaper to save a kilowatt of energy than it is to produce one, and this key factor is what has made California the leader in our Nation in energy efficiency and helped California businesses to be competitive. So we do not want to eliminate the Office of Energy Efficiency or the Office of Electricity.

As I said earlier, we tried to get Governor Perry to take a solid stance on these issues and commit wholeheartedly to fighting any attempt to do away with these important offices, but he failed to make a commitment.

During the President's very first hour in office, the administration announced it was going to eliminate the

Obama administration's climate action plan. This plan even included a program started by President George H.W. Bush—the Global Climate Research Initiative to assess and predict the impacts of climate change in the future.

This is not a partisan issue. President George W. Bush called on Congress to enact energy efficiency legislation, which he subsequently signed into law, and based on bipartisan energy legislation passed in 2005 and 2007, we improved lighting efficiency by 70 percent and increased fuel efficiency standards for automobiles. So I don't understand why the Trump administration is apparently so hostile to energy efficiency.

The Energy Department's energy efficiency programs are expected to save American consumers \$2 trillion on their utility bills by 2030 and reduce carbon emissions by 7.3 billion tons over the same period. That is equivalent to taking 1.6 billion cars off the road. The fact that businesses could save \$2 trillion by reducing their utility bills in the future is something we should all be passionate about. Our manufacturing base needs to remain competitive.

In addition, the Bush administration worked to get the United States and China—the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters—to work together on clean energy solutions. President Bush also chose in his State of the Union Address to be an advocate for energy efficiency, electric vehicles, biofuels, R&D, and a clean energy economy. I now appreciate even more now how much he advocated for those programs. It seems strange now to see a new Republican administration that seems so single-mindedly against these important energy advancements that are going to help our economy.

The Department of Energy also plays an essential role in protecting the electric grid from cyber and physical attacks. The Office of Electricity plays a very key role for our Nation, and, as we know, there is a full-throated debate about what cyber security attacks can do to the United States of America.

These issues about how some regime could undermine our U.S. democracy are critical. We need to address it, and we need to be aggressive as a nation about it.

The Office of Electricity plays a key role, and we want the Department of Energy to be aggressive in asserting its leadership on cyber security. If you are not committed to the Office of Electricity, if you are not committed to these vital programs, how are you going to be committed to protecting us on cyber security?

It should not have been difficult for Governor Perry to speak more urgently about these programs or to say he disagreed with the administration's reported desire to cut them. For instance, he spoke eloquently about energy diversification and pointed us to his record as Governor. But, as I looked

back at his record, I noticed that he tried to add 11 new coal plants, 8 of which were subsequently canceled after a court overturned his executive order expediting the coal permitting process. This is the kind of leadership we cannot afford at the Department of Energy. That is not about holding on to the past; we need a plan for the future.

Finally, I want to mention President Trump's recent Executive order regarding the National Security Council. While it is within the discretion of the President to structure his National Security Council as he sees fit, the Secretary of Energy is a member of the National Security Council by virtue of statute. The President's Executive order removed the Secretary of Energy from the principals committee and what under the Obama administration was called the senior interagency forum for considering policy issues that affect the national security interests of the United States.

I can guarantee you that energy is an issue of national security. We need leadership out of the Department of Energy to be strategic on electricity, transmission, and cyber security.

The Department of Energy's technical expertise is vast and is not limited to the implementation of the Iran deal. The Department plays a key role on nuclear security issues.

I take the Governor at his word that he will come to Hanford, that he will look for funding to make sure that cleanup happens, and I take him at his word that he does want to work with Members of Congress.

Unfortunately, his unwillingness to commit to critical offices at the Department that are responsible for important scientific research, giving our government and our communities more data and information about climate science, making the investments we need in our electricity grid of the future, is something that concerns me about his nomination. I cannot support Governor Perry.

I know so much will get boiled down to this sound bite of him being the nominee of an agency that he said he wanted to abolish and then, at the same time, could not even remember the agency. I guarantee you, the Energy Department is a vital, functioning program not just for today's energy needs, but as the quadrennial review said, for our future energy needs.

So we could have an Energy Secretary who is going to help us with the transformation, protecting us on cyber security, making sure our businesses reap the benefits of greater energy efficiency, and, when it comes to the electricity grid of the future, making sure we plan for those 1.5 million jobs that are going to be needed. But those aren't the commitments we have had from Governor Perry.

I hope my colleagues will recognize that this nomination is not the direction the Department of Energy needs to go in and oppose Governor Perry for the Department of Energy.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, as recently as 2006, Hawaii relied on imported fuel for 92 percent of our energy needs. This was bad for our economy and bad for our environment, and it needed to change. Today, Hawaii has the most ambitious renewable energy goals in the country, and we are working toward becoming 100 percent energy self-sufficient for electricity by 2045. In order to meet this ambitious goal, we are investing in a renewable energy future. It means cleaner air and water to enjoy, and it is driving a lot of local innovation. Let me give you a few examples.

Last Friday, I attended a blessing for a new biofuel project in Maui's central valley. Pacific Biodiesel, run by Bob and Kelly King, is repurposing 115 acres of land previously used for commercial sugar cultivation in order to test the energy potential of different sunflower varieties for biofuels. If they are successful, this project could grow to provide hundreds of jobs on the island and help Hawaii on its path to energy self-sufficiency.

Bob and Kelly got their start in repurposing used cooking oil. They have grown their company to run the Nation's first commercially viable biodiesel distillery on Hawaii Island, and they employ 80 people. Along the way, they have received support and funding through the Hawaii Military Biofuels Crop Program, which has allowed them to experiment, learn from their mistakes, and, ultimately, succeed.

Yesterday, I met with Naveen Sikka, the founder and CEO of TerViva, which is a startup that grows pongamia trees that produce an oil seed that can be used for biofuels. In working with Hawaii's Energy Excelsator, TerViva is already growing pongamia trees on 200 acres on Oahu and is looking to expand its operations across the State.

TerViva and Pacific Biodiesel are working together to explore how to help Hawaii achieve its renewable energy goals.

In 2015, I met with Global Algae Innovations, a company that is pioneering the production of algae for use in biofuels on Kauai. Funding from the Department of Energy, or DOE, has been instrumental in its research. Support from the Department is vital in helping them and other algae biofuel companies finish scaling up commercial production at competitive prices.

These stories provide a compelling counternarrative to the President's belief that we should prioritize fossil fuel extraction over renewable energy development. These stories also demonstrate the role government can play in encouraging energy innovation.

During the Obama administration, our country made significant progress in confronting the challenge of climate change, investing in clean energy research and development, and growing our renewable energy economy. Unfor-

tunately, by nominating Rick Perry to serve as Secretary of Energy, the President is sending a clear signal. Instead of continuing the progress we have made, he wants to take us backward.

During his confirmation hearing, Governor Perry insisted that he believed in an "all of the above" energy strategy. So far, it does not seem that the President shares his commitment.

During the transition, a disturbing report leaked in the media that outlined the President's plans to make dramatic funding cuts at the Department of Energy. This extreme plan included eliminating the DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, which focuses on the transition to American energy generation that is clean, affordable, and secure, not to mention sustainable. The plan would eliminate the DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, which ensures the Nation's energy delivery system is secure, resilient, and reliable. This office works to strengthen the resiliency of the electric grid. The plan would also eliminate the DOE's Office of Fossil Energy, which focuses on technology to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

It is hard to see how it would be possible to pursue an "all of the above" energy strategy if so much of the Department's "all of the above" capabilities are eliminated.

I asked Governor Perry, during his confirmation hearing, whether he supported those proposed cuts and program eliminations within the Department that he was nominated to head. His response was telling. Governor Perry said: "Well, Senator, maybe they'll [meaning the Trump administration] have the same experience I had and forget that they said that."

Remember, Governor Perry had originally said that the Department of Energy should be eliminated. Governor Perry's "oops" answer got a laugh at the hearing, but it failed to convince me that he has the willingness and fortitude to stand up to the Trump White House on its energy policies.

I also asked Governor Perry if Hawaii could count on his support in our efforts to become energy independent and a leader in the clean energy economy. Again, Governor Perry said yes, but in the same transition memo, the Trump White House proposed eliminating the DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy entirely, as I mentioned before. It is unclear how Governor Perry could keep his commitment to the State of Hawaii and to me if the entire office that is responsible for renewable energy is eliminated.

Many of my constituents share my concerns about Governor Perry. Charlotte from Wailuku wrote to me:

Please do not confirm Rick Perry for US Secretary of Energy. He is not a visionary leader. In Hawaii, we have committed to being 100% carbon emission free by 2045.

Rick Perry is not the person who can help provide innovation, funding or the tools needed to make this happen.

I share Charlotte's concerns. We have made so much progress over the past 8 years in embracing a clean and renewable energy future, and Governor Perry and the Trump administration will work to reverse this progress and take us backward.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I want to explain my opposition to the nominations of Ryan Zinke to be Secretary of the Interior and Rick Perry to be the Secretary of Energy. I have closely reviewed their records, testimony, and responses to questions for the record.

CONFIRMATION OF RYAN ZINKE

Madam President, the Secretary of the Interior is one of the most important jobs in the Federal Government and has a far reach when it comes to coordinating our Federal policy in the 50 States and U.S. Territories for our public lands, parks, and cherished natural resources. The Secretary and the Department of Interior are tasked with using sound science to manage and sustain America's lands, water, wildlife, and energy resources, while honoring our Nation's vital obligations and responsibilities to tribal nations. The Secretary of Interior also coordinates Federal assistance to the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau under the Compacts of Free Association. There are few Cabinet positions with such a wide range of management and organization.

Any nominee for this position should be selected for their commitment to protecting our precious resources, as well as their dedication to uphold and enforce our environmental laws.

After reviewing Mr. Zinke's record, there is little doubt that he is dedicated to public service and that he has a strong connection to the outdoors. However, the Secretary of the Interior has a great responsibility as the leading steward of our majestic public lands, the champion of our great tribal nations, and the manager and defender of our diverse wildlife. I fear that Mr. Zinke may not be fully prepared to set aside some of his personal views on the management of our resources and consider the views of all Americans as we debate critical natural resources issues.

I enjoyed learning that Mr. Zinke is an admirer of President Teddy Roosevelt, a point that has been repeated countless times, and I was pleased that he agrees that, yes, President Roosevelt did get it right when he placed millions of acres of lands under Federal protection. However, I hope that Mr. Zinke will not only study the work that President Roosevelt did to instill a conservation ethic in this country, but will look more broadly at other individuals whose steadfast commitment and dedication to conservation and historic preservation have left their mark in Vermont and across the country.

For instance, Laurance Rockefeller made significant contributions to the American conservation movement that had a lasting impact on the American landscape. The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, VT, honors not only Rockefeller's dedication to conservation, but is also the first national park to tell the story of conservation history and the evolving nature of land stewardship in America. Conservation of the environment and recreational development was a passion to which he dedicated his life. In addition to his work in Vermont, he was instrumental in the creation and development of the Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming and the Virgin Islands National Park on the island of St. John. These three national parks could not be more different, but they are each spectacular pieces of our natural heritage. This heritage that would not exist today and be available for the public to enjoy, had it not been for the vital work of Laurance Rockefeller and the Federal investments that have been made in these important public lands.

I hope Mr. Zinke will also study and hopefully visit the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, which carves its way not only through Vermont, but 13 other States as well. This trail is an amazing footpath for the people that traverses over 2,100 miles through wild forests, towns, valleys, and mountaintops, and connects a myriad of through-hikers and day hikers to our scenic landscape. All of them are able to enjoy the important Federal investments in this trail, which is maintained by the countless hours of work done every year by devoted volunteers like the Green Mountain Club in Vermont.

Work to build and maintain the Appalachian Trail is not static, nor is it complete. There continue to be important investments needed through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, LWCF, to acquire land and conservation easements to safeguard the trail. There is much needed trail maintenance that should be included as part of any infrastructure bill the Senate considers. This work is shovel-ready and will have a considerable impact in supporting our outdoor economy on which Vermont is so dependent.

Mr. Zinke should also seek out expertise and guidance from the past Secretaries of the Interior who have dedicated their lives to this work. I hope he will study the exit memo that Secretary Jewell prepared on the Department's Record of Progress and the moral imperative the Department has to positively impact our American economy, our rural communities and cities, and ultimately, the well-being of our planet.

As Secretary of Interior, Mr. Zinke will oversee a number of ongoing debates concerning our fragile public lands, the protection of endangered species, and how we respond to climate change. I know that there is no single

solution that can answer the different land management issues facing each region of our country. Many stakeholders are constantly engaging the Interior Department and the Senate with a wide variety of views on how we should protect, access, and use our natural resources. In Vermont, we are deeply concerned about the pressure being placed on our natural resources from rapid growth and climate change.

I heard from hundreds of Vermonters concerned about Mr. Zinke's nomination and worried that our environmental standards and laws will not be enforced for our lands, air, water, and threatened species under his leadership. His record has shown an opposition to policies that protect valuable rivers and streams from polluting coal runoff and a willingness to weaken historic laws such as President Teddy Roosevelt's Antiquities Act. He even authored a bill that sought to obstruct efforts by the Department of the Interior to review and modernize management of our Federal energy resources and ensure that taxpayers are fairly compensated for their sale. Taxpayers deserve a Secretary of the Interior who will work to support the protection of our shared Federal resources 100 percent of the time, not one who will actively work to weaken or dismantle the powers of protection invested in this Department.

Based on that record, I voted against his nomination. Nonetheless, now that Mr. Zinke is the Secretary, I want him to know that I am committed to working closely with him on a variety of issues that are important to Vermonters and all Americans. I will work with him to foster consensus not only in New England, but throughout the country. As the Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and a member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, I am committed to working with him to ensure that we protect our Federal lands and continue the important conservation ethic of Teddy Roosevelt to permanently protect our beautiful and fragile natural resources, while also addressing new challenges posed by climate change.

Madam President, with respect to the nomination of Rick Perry to be the Secretary of the Department of Energy, hundreds of Vermonters have written to me in opposition. They were concerned that under his leadership we will halt the forward progress we have made towards a responsible energy strategy for the future of our country. Not only did Governor Perry make headlines for famously proposing to abolish the Department of Energy, he lacks a background or any true experience on the complex scientific and technical issues in the Department of Energy's portfolio. This agency must be focused on addressing our energy and environmental challenges through transformative science and technology solutions; yet Mr. Perry expedited the permitting of coal-fired electric generating plants and filed suit challenging

the Environmental Protection Agency's finding that greenhouse gases significantly endanger public health. How can we trust him to lead the Energy Department?

I was pleased that, during his confirmation hearing, Governor Perry apologized for suggesting that the entire Department of Energy should be abolished. However, he has yet to say that he will fight to maintain important offices within the Department, such as the Office of Electricity and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. I find it hard to see how we can pursue an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy called for by the administration if so much of the Department's capabilities are targeted for elimination. By supporting research around wind, solar, and efficiency, offering loan guarantees for innovative demonstration projects, and providing expertise and support to the private sector in commercializing new research we can create American jobs and grow the national economy. Conversely, if we turn our back on the future, we are ceding these important and fast growing fields of research and production of renewable energy technologies to China, the European Union, and other countries at a critical time. That would be a monumental mistake to haunt our economy for many years.

Earlier today, I had the chance to talk to a Vermont company that is closely watching the work of the Energy Department to advance America's clean energy revolution. Northern Power Systems in Barre, VT, has been designing and developing wind turbines for almost 40 years and offers support services for energy generation needs around the world. Last year, they received an award for their increase in exports, but rather than selling to an international market they would rather see their sales here in the U.S. take off so that they can create more American jobs to manufacture American-made wind turbines. Turbines that should be installed here to utilize this reliable, abundant, and free resource to lower energy costs for Americans.

It is troubling that Mr. Perry has taken such an aggressive stance against the Department of Energy and dismissed large parts of its mission. I hope that he will devote himself to learning everything he can about the diverse work of the Department and surround himself with some of the best public servants and technical experts he can find.

The last Secretary of Energy, Dr. Ernest Moniz, prepared two documents that I am hopeful Mr. Perry will study closely. First, the Quadrennial Energy Review provides a broad review of federal energy policy in the context of economic, environmental, occupational, security, and health and safety priorities. The Department also prepared an extensive suite of analyses to accompany the Quadrennial Energy Review that I know would serve Mr. Perry well as he tries to understand

the wide array of issues that will come before him at the Department.

I would also recommend that he review the exit memo Secretary Moniz prepared, which highlights the responsibilities and opportunities for the Department's enduring service to the Nation as our leading science, technology, and innovation agency. The Department has an extraordinary span of responsibilities from energy and the environment, to cyber security, science and national security, and it must collaborate with other agencies like the Defense Department and our intelligence community.

I remain committed to supporting and protecting the essential mission of the Department of Energy in order to move us forward with 21st century jobs and make needed investments in our electricity grid, clean energy, and energy efficiency that will save American consumers and businesses money.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I am strongly opposed to the nomination of Rick Perry to be the Secretary of Energy.

While Governor Perry has a long record of public service, he is the wrong choice to lead the Department of Energy. He does not possess the technical expertise or necessary qualifications. Moreover, his past statements calling for the elimination of the Department and questioning the science behind climate change, coupled with his reported lack of understanding about the scope of the Department's responsibilities, call into question his ability to lead an agency that is so critical to our national and economic security.

What Governor Perry learned during this confirmation process is that the Secretary of Energy not only oversees our country's energy initiatives and strategies, but is also the steward of our nation's nuclear weapons stockpile. The National Nuclear Security Administration, or NNSA, a part of the Department of Energy, ensures the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nuclear weapons. The NNSA brings together exceptionally dedicated men and women from our Armed Forces to work alongside some of our best scientists and engineers to provide expert advice in nuclear nonproliferation and counterterrorism. The Secretary of Energy must understand their work and advise the President on our nuclear arsenal capabilities and national security issues. Governor Perry has no experience in these areas and is not qualified to lead the agency tasked with maintaining our nuclear deterrent.

The Department of Energy also protects our Nation's security by strengthening the electrical grid's resilience in the face of natural disaster and cyber attacks. Its Office of Electricity works with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and utilities to protect the electrical grid; yet the Trump administration has reportedly proposed eliminating this office, something which Governor Perry has not sought to dispel.

The Department of Energy leads the country and the world in renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. For my home State of Rhode Island, renewable energy from the wind, sun, and ocean is not just a path to local energy production, but also a source of well-paying jobs ranging from steelworkers to scientists. Last year, Rhode Island became the first State to build an offshore wind farm, off the coast of Block Island, proving that offshore wind can be a viable renewable energy source for the United States.

This technological feat could not have been accomplished without the science, engineering, and policy research supported by the Office of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. This office drives the research in wind, solar, geothermal, and ocean energy that has made affordable renewable energy a reality. However, Governor Perry, in his written responses, refused to comment on reports that the administration would cut funding, or even worse, eliminate this vital department. Failure to invest in this department and its research risks our future as an energy-producing nation.

We need a Secretary of Energy who also can effectively manage the Office of Science and the National Laboratories, programs that have made the United States a global leader in scientific advancement since the Manhattan project. The National Laboratory system hosts equipment far beyond the capabilities of most universities or companies—such as massive particle accelerators, powerful supercomputers, and high-temperature laser ignition facilities—that are vital to expanding our knowledge base and technological advancement.

The future of many of these energy science programs in the new administration is of great concern to the scientific community. The same budget recommendations that would eliminate the Office of Electricity also showed plans to cut supercomputing research, even as China is making large investments to become the world leader in this area. Advanced computing is vital to national defense and economic competitiveness. Shortsighted budget cuts here, or in any of our basic research programs, threaten our Nation's future security and prosperity. Governor Perry has not pledged to protect or prioritize any of these programs.

The Department of Energy's leadership in atmospheric science and climate change is also threatened. The Trump administration has gone beyond merely ignoring the threat of climate change; it has proposed cutting off funding to the critical programs that monitor our planet. It has also cast doubt that climate data will be accessible and available to the public and other researchers. We have already seen an unprecedented attempt by the Trump transition team to collect the names of scientists who study the consequences of carbon dioxide emissions. It appears that, for the first time in

the history of the agency, its scientists are worried that honestly reporting their findings may be a career-ending decision.

This is an alarming assault on the integrity of American science. The Secretary of Energy must be someone who understands science and will protect the government scientists who work in the national interest. The Secretary must understand and be able to present to the President the overwhelming scientific consensus that the climate is changing and that human activities are responsible. All Governor Perry committed to do in this and other areas is to learn more about the science.

This is not sufficient.

We have been fortunate that recent occupants of this post were not learning basic science on the job. Both Presidents Bush and Obama filled this post with experts possessing a deep understanding of science and technological issues. President Bush appointed Dr. Samuel Bodman, who served as a member of MIT's faculty before moving into business and government. President Obama appointed a Nobel prize winner in physics, Dr. Steven Chu, and a MIT physicist, Dr. Ernest Moniz. The result is that, for the past 12 years, the Department of Energy has been well equipped to respond to challenges in national security, energy, and science.

We need a Secretary of Energy who can build on that legacy. We need a Secretary of Energy who has the technical expertise to oversee our Nation's nuclear stockpile, the integrity to protect basic science from political attacks, and the willingness to fight for a secure grid and renewable energy technology. I am not convinced that Governor Perry has those qualifications.

For these reasons, I cannot support his nomination. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting no.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I will vote against confirming former Texas Governor Rick Perry as Secretary of Energy. There are too many policies he promoted while he was governor that cause concern. He refuses to accept scientific consensus regarding human causes of climate change. His support for clean energy and energy efficiency seems tenuous, at best, and he is in lock-step with the Trump administration's desire to boost fossil fuel production at the expense of human health and the environment.

Governor Perry, while campaigning for the Republican nomination for President in 2012, proposed abolishing the agency he has now been nominated to run. I appreciate his candor and honesty in repudiating that position and acknowledging that he really didn't understand the Department of Energy's mission at the time. He has served our Nation and Texas as an Air Force pilot, a member of the Texas House of Representatives, the Texas Agriculture Commissioner, and the Lieutenant Governor and Governor of Texas.

A key part of DOE's mission has been to promote clean and advanced energy

technologies, via grants for research and development, and through the work of 17 national laboratories. In response to growing global demand for clean energy solutions, DOE under the leadership of Secretaries Steven Chu and Ernest Moniz launched initiatives to expand the global reach of DOE's clean and advanced energy missions.

In 2009, then-Energy Secretary Chu announced that he would host the first Clean Energy Ministerial, CEM, to bring together ministers with responsibility for clean energy technologies from the world's major economies and ministers from a select number of smaller countries that are leading in various areas of clean energy.

The CEM is a high-level global forum to promote policies and programs that advance clean energy technology, to share lessons learned and best practices, and to encourage the transition to a global clean energy economy. Previous CEMs have yielded remarkable national pledges from both the United States and foreign governments to develop and deploy clean energy technologies which in the aggregate have played a significant role in improving the global market competitiveness of clean and renewable energy technologies.

DOE also serves as the linchpin of the U.S. pledge to Mission Innovation, a global initiative involving 20 nations aimed at doubling public clean energy research and development.

The program, spearheaded by President Barack Obama and French President Francois Hollande with private sector support from Bill Gates via the Breakthrough Energy Coalition. The current U.S. Government investment portfolio of more than \$5 billion spans the full range of research and development activities—from basic research to demonstration activities, RD&D. The U.S. Government investment portfolio includes programs at 11 agencies, with the largest investment at DOE. These programs address a broad suite of low carbon technologies, including end-use energy efficiency, renewable energy, nuclear energy, electric grid technologies, carbon capture and storage, advanced transportation systems, and fuels.

At DOE, these programs are implemented through a number of mechanisms including cost-shared projects with the private sector research and development activities at the National Laboratories, grants to universities, and support for collaborative research centers targeted to key energy technology frontiers. The next planned phase for Mission Innovation, as envisioned by former Energy Secretary Moniz, was developing an international clean energy consortia, based on the principle of sharing institutional and technological resources to deploy shared energy solutions across international boundaries. The goal was to bring countries of all sizes together to develop, produce, and deploy clean energy solutions, with our 17 National

Research Laboratories at the center of this results-oriented partnership.

Unfortunately, all of this investment and America's ability to lead and profit from the clean energy revolution is in jeopardy. There is no credible reason to believe that former Governor Perry or President Trump appreciate the U.S. interest in growing clean energy research and cooperation. President Trump deliberately ignores the significant growth of solar energy in the U.S. Human health, the environment, and America's global competitiveness will suffer as a result of this backwards ideological outlook on U.S. energy research, development, and production.

There were significant investments in wind energy in west Texas while Mr. Perry was Governor, but he also tried to fast-track 11 new coal-fired power plants in the State, a plan the courts ultimately scrapped.

During Mr. Perry's two unsuccessful runs for the Republican Presidential nomination in 2012 and 2016, he consistently recited popular tropes coined by climate change denialists. For instance, in his book, "Fed Up" former Governor Perry called the science behind climate change a "contrived, phony mess." During his 2012 campaign, former Governor Perry accused climate scientists of manipulating data in order to receive funding for their projects. While he was Governor, his administration deleted all references to climate change from a report about sea level rise in Galveston Bay.

I am also concerned that, during the Perry administration, Texas dropped from 11th down to 27th in the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy's ranking of State energy efficiency policies. Under his watch, Texas filed suit in 2012 challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's finding that greenhouse gases significantly endanger public health.

Under his watch, Texas sued EPA a dozen times between 2008 and 2011.

According to press reports, the Trump administration may eliminate several DOE offices, including the Office of Electricity and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Former Governor Perry was asked about these reports during his confirmation hearing but didn't commit to fighting for the offices or the vital programs they administer.

Former Governor Perry was also an active member of the Outer Continental Shelf Governors Coalition, OCSGC. While the OCSGC supports offshore wind development, its primary purpose is to promote oil and gas production on OCS lands, including the mid-Atlantic, and expand revenue sharing for interested States. So States to the south of Maryland may push for OCS oil and gas production and reap increased benefits from it at the expense of all taxpayers. But if there is an oil spill that hits Maryland's coastline and enters the Chesapeake Bay, it will be our fishing and tourism industries that suffer.

For all of these reasons, I will vote against confirming former Governor Rick Perry as Secretary of Energy.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I oppose the nomination of Governor Rick Perry to be Secretary of the Department of Energy, a Department that he called for eliminating in 2011. After briefings on the Department's mission and programs, Governor Perry came to "regret" that position, but his short education on his prospective job is not enough to prepare him for its complexity and importance.

The Department of Energy is a home of innovation and, critically, the Federal agency that manages the safety and reliability of our nuclear arsenal. The last two Secretaries of Energy were physicists.

According to the Dallas Morning News: "In all of the department's missions, science is front and center. But during his 14 years as governor, Perry built a questionable record when it comes to science. He has a pattern of supporting offbeat medical theories while dismissing the established science on climate change. And his record of using public funds to boost technology and research in Texas is littered with poor management and allegations of cronyism."

In one example, a 2010 Dallas Morning News investigation discovered mismanagement and political influence in the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, which Governor Perry established to provide funding to high-tech startups. The Dallas Morning News reported that the fund awarded more than \$16 million to companies with connections to large campaign donors. A company in which an old college friend and donor invested received \$2.75 million. Another company, where an investor had given more than \$400,000 to Governor Perry's campaigns, received \$1.5 million. A company founded by a former Perry appointee got \$4.5 million.

The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Texas House Speaker made the Emerging Technology Fund's decisions based on input from an advisory committee that operated in secret and did not take minutes. Its recommendations to the Governor were not public. This unusual decision-making process, with ultimate power vested in elected officials rather than technical experts, is deeply troubling. As Secretary of Energy, Governor Perry would be charged with managing a number of grant and loan programs aimed at developing the next generation of energy technologies.

Governor Perry has also failed to commit to funding for ARPA-E and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. These programs are essential to ensuring that the United States is a leader in the 21st century energy economy and confronts the critical challenge of climate change.

I am deeply concerned by Governor Perry's limited experience with our Nation's nuclear program. While he did advocate a low-level nuclear waste re-

pository in his State, he has no experience with nuclear weapons. His inexperience is particularly problematic when the President he would serve has also appeared confused by issues surrounding the nuclear triad and has inaccurately said that the United States has "fallen behind on nuclear weapons capacity."

The United States is engaged in a \$1 trillion program to refurbish our nuclear weapons systems, a process that should be tightly controlled. We should be reducing, not expanding, the number of nuclear weapons in the world. President Trump has questioned the New START Treaty, a critical tool to decrease nuclear weapons in both the United States and Russia. He glibly and irresponsibly called for "an arms race," even though the United States and Russia already control 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons and each have enough to destroy the world many times over.

The Secretary of Energy needs to have a clear vision to manage our nuclear arsenal and ensure that the President fully understands our capabilities and their implications for national security and international peace. There is nothing in Governor Perry's record or testimony that indicates that he is prepared for this job.

Governor Perry may have considered the Department of Energy insignificant enough to forget during his Presidential run, but its mission is essential to the safety and security of the American people. Between our national labs and research and loan programs, it fosters greater economic competitiveness and discovers new technologies to drive energy independence and solutions to climate change. I do not believe that Governor Perry is prepared to manage the Department and provide thoughtful counsel to the President, and thus I must vote against his nomination today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Georgia.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in defense of a dear colleague of ours who is now the Attorney General of our Nation, Jeff Sessions. He is my friend. More importantly, he is a former colleague of this very body. He is a man of integrity. He is a man of principle. I trust him, and I take him at his word.

Furthermore, he has repeatedly said just today that he will, in fact, recuse himself if and when it becomes appropriate. In my opinion, it is not appropriate right now, but if it ever were to become appropriate, he has said, without hesitation, that he would.

I have really never witnessed anything quite like this in my brief time here in the Senate. The last 2 years have been very interesting, but never have I seen the hypocrisy that we see going on around this one issue.

It is increasingly clear that the minority party is singularly focused on sabotaging this new administration at

every turn, and today is no exception. They have exercised procedural rules in the Senate time and again, beyond the intent of the Founders' design, in order to stop President Trump from even getting his team in place—his very Cabinet. Our President today, as we stand here in this well, cannot have a staff meeting because he doesn't have all of his Cabinet members in place.

As for the Cabinet members who have been confirmed, the minority party seems equally fixated on finding any red herring they can ultimately find to undermine the individual's character. We have literally reached the point where Members of this body are slandering former colleagues for having and taking the same opportunities afforded to them.

This morning, my colleague, the senior Senator from Missouri, tweeted that she had never, "EVER" met with or taken a call from the Russian Ambassador. But her own Twitter account proved that she has at least twice in the last 4 years.

Thirty Members of this body, as a matter of fact, met with a Russian Ambassador and Ambassadors from other nations in 2015 for a sales pitch on President Obama's deal with Iran. Many of them, including the senior Senator from Missouri, were open supporters at that time of candidates in the President's race.

In the process of this hypocrisy, the minority party is prohibiting us from taking action on legislation that would solve many of the problems that have manifested themselves over the previous 8 years.

Make no mistake, Russia is a traditional rival whose actions pose a definite threat to global security and even our own security here at home. Their actions over the last 8 years have helped destabilize Eastern Europe and the Middle East. It was the inaction and refusal to lead of the past administration—a policy that the minority party followed hook, line, and sinker—that created a power vacuum around the world and allowed this Russian resurgence.

I have said this repeatedly, and I am going to continue to do so. Until there is definite proof that Russians changed a single vote from Hillary Clinton to Donald Trump, I will be focused on one thing; that is, doing exactly what the American people sent us here to do. I encourage my colleagues to do the same, which is to not engage in political theater for the sake of partisan politics, but to work together to get America back to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Texas Independence Day.

One hundred eighty-one years ago, 59 delegates met in Independence Hall at Washington-on-the-Brazos to risk everything to make freedom a reality for generations of Texans to come.

Today, I continue on a tradition started by the late Senator John Tower and carried on by Members of the Texas delegation to read the words of a 26-year-old Lieutenant Colonel, William Barret Travis, who at the time was under siege by the forces of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

On February 24, 1836, Travis penned the following immortal letter:

To the People of Texas & All Americans in the World—Fellow Citizens & compatriots—

I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

Signed:

William Barret Travis.

That same love of “life, liberty, and property of the people” that spurred the Texans at the Alamo and throughout the revolution still lives in each Texan today.

I think it is particularly appropriate that right now this body will be confirming former Texas Gov. Rick Perry to be the Secretary of Energy. That is fitting to the spirit of freedom and independence of Texans.

Texans fought for it, they died for it, and we owe it to their sacrifice to carry the torch of freedom for future generations, and we will.

To all Texans: Happy Independence Day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is reminded that it is a violation of rule XIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate to impute to another Senator or Senators any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming of a Senator.

The Senator from Florida.

REMEMBERING DOUG COE

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, America lost one of our best friends, well-known to us in the Washington, DC, area.

Doug Coe, a disciple of a fellow named Abraham Vereide, over a half century ago came from Oregon to minister the Gospel to the Government of the United States. He has been doing that for over a half a century.

Doug, well-known to us in the Congress for so many years, always was bringing other people to the fore, and he always stood in the back. He encouraged so many of us to have fellowship together, to meet with each other, especially to have a meal together, to enjoy each other, and to do this in the Spirit of the Lord, and particularly the Spirit of Jesus. Because of that, he made so many friends all over the world.

This was a man whose religion brought people together across religions, not dividing us, as is so often the case. In Doug's spirituality, he could bring people of all faiths together in unity and understanding through the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

I have just come from the cemetery where Doug has been laid to rest. He is so well-known around here in the spirit of President Eisenhower's suddenly calling up a couple of his friends in the Senate and saying: Please come down here and visit with me; this is the loneliest house in America. That started the annual Prayer Breakfast, and, of course, that Prayer Breakfast has been held ever since, once a year, with the President, the Congress, the President's Cabinet, the Vice President, the Joint Chiefs, the diplomatic corps. Now over 150 nations attend that annual National Prayer Breakfast. It is really an international Prayer Breakfast.

Just this past one that was held in the first week of February indeed had a couple of heads of state, including His Majesty King Abdallah of Jordan. You wonder, how could a Muslim, who traces his roots all the way back—his lineage—to the Prophet Mohammed come to a group celebrating a Prayer Breakfast that generally identifies with the Christian faith? Well, that is the unique unity of all of these Prayer Breakfasts that are handled and held all over the world.

The Abrahamic faiths coming from the original single God, from which the seed of Abraham had not only the Jewish religion, the Muslim religion, and the Christian religion—in that, Doug Coe found unity. So all of these years he spent organizing the National Prayer Breakfast.

Doug lived through this last one. He wasn't able to attend, but he was holding court over in Northern Virginia as so many of the international guests came to Washington for that annual celebration.

We just laid Doug to rest today. Tomorrow, there will be a memorial service for him at a huge megachurch to try to accommodate the size of the audience that will be there out in Northern Virginia.

When this Senator first came to Congress many, many years ago, Doug Coe was the one who came to me and said: What I want you to do is I want you to get two Democrats and two Republicans, and I want you all to come together each week—breakfast or lunch—meet faithfully, read the Scriptures, enjoy each other's company, and then pray together.

We did that faithfully for 10 of the 12 years I was in the Congress. One of our Members was elected to the Senate at the time, and therefore he arranged for us to have one of the hideaways. As a matter of fact, it was Senator Mark Hatfield's hideaway that we would meet in and have the luncheon so that if we had to go vote, we were close to the Senate Chamber for him or close to the House Chamber for us.

Over the years, what has happened is these little groups that meet in the House on Thursday morning and the Senate on Wednesday morning, faithfully, they have gone across the globe and started other Prayer Breakfasts. That is why there are over 150 nations that now come annually to the National Prayer Breakfast. That is all because of our friend Doug Coe.

Doug Coe was never up front speaking. It was the President and a guest speaker who was not a religious person. This year, we made an exception. The Senate invited the Senate Chaplain Barry Black to give the main address, other than the President's address. You never saw Doug Coe at the dais. Doug was always quietly in the background meeting, extending the hand of friendship, extending his love, representing the values he spoke.

The Good Book tells us a lot of stories about those values. It also indicates that as someone put it in the street language of today, I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

By the example Doug Coe lived, he taught us how to live. God bless you, Doug Coe. You have done so much for so many.

Mr. President, 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING SHERIFF RALPH E. OGDEN

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise with a heavy heart to mark the passing of a pillar of the Arizona law enforcement community. When people think of the Old West, they often picture a Stetson-wearing lawman sitting astride his horse, keeping watch over his community.

For generations of residents in Southwestern Arizona, that lawman was Yuma County Sheriff Ralph Ogden. With his towering frame and trademark mustache, Sheriff Ogden looked every bit the part. Despite having an imposing physical presence, Sheriff Ogden was a kind, compassionate man, beloved by his deputies and celebrated by his community.

After 4 years of distinguished service in the U.S. Marine Corps, Ralph Ogden began his 42-year law enforcement career as a dispatcher and a jailer in Parker, AZ. A dedicated public servant, he would eventually serve as chief deputy for 12 years. Ralph would go on to be elected to five consecutive terms as sheriff, with his 20-year tenure the longest ever in Yuma county history.

Sheriff Ogden always understood the importance of getting to know the community he served. He encouraged his employees to get involved in charities, religious groups, and service organizations. He valued teamwork. He recognized that no one can succeed on

their own. This philosophy of always having some other person's back was something he carried with him throughout his time in the sheriff's office, and it was reflected in the way he treated those around him.

I was fortunate to get to know Ralph over the last few years and learned a lot of what I know about the border and about law enforcement from that great man.

Sheriff Ogden was known to write personal birthday and anniversary cards for each of his employees, just to show that he valued their service and their friendship and to show they were important to him.

When asked about the benefits of serving law enforcement, Sheriff Ogden said that when you go home tired and beat after a long day, you sleep well knowing that you did some good. Sheriff Ralph Ogden did a lot of good. I know he is resting well.

I yield back my time.

Mr. President, 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. CORNYN. 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 1:35 p.m. all but 10 minutes of postcloture time, equally divided in the usual form, be considered expired on Executive Calendar No. 9, the nomination of Rick Perry to be Secretary of Energy, and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, let me just say briefly, I couldn't be happier that my friend, the former Governor of the State of Texas, Rick Perry, will be confirmed here shortly as the next Energy Secretary.

I know, personally, as do 28 million Texans, that Rick Perry has dedicated his life to public service. He is best known perhaps for serving our State as Governor for a record 14 years. Before that, he served in the Air Force. He served as a State representative in the Texas Legislature. He was elected as our Agriculture commissioner, then served as Lieutenant Governor. As you can tell, the man was born to lead.

During his governorship, Texas became known throughout the country as the economic engine that could pull the train of the U.S. economy and could weather even the toughest national economic downturn. Under Governor Perry's leadership, the State promoted cutting-edge innovation and sensible regulation in order to foster an "all of the above" energy strategy that revolutionized the Texas energy landscape and the Texas economy. The

State became not just an oil and gas powerhouse but the top wind-producing State in the country. We really do believe in an "all of the above" strategy when it comes to energy.

In short, Rick Perry created an environment where all energy producers could not just succeed but really prosper, and that continues to serve the people of our State well.

Texans still benefit from policies that continue to create more energy options for families across our State. Put it another way, Governor Perry has a very strong track record when it comes to promoting energy in a way that makes everybody better off. I have no doubt Governor Perry will take to the rest of the country these same principles that led to the Texas success story, opening America to a new energy renaissance.

I look forward to voting to confirm him in just a few minutes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

CALLING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL COUNSEL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, in the minutes remaining before this vote, I want to briefly call attention to an impending constitutional crisis we are facing in this Chamber and in this country as a result of recent revelations coming to our attention, literally within the last 24 hours, about contacts between now-Attorney General Jeff Sessions, our former colleague, and the Russian Ambassador.

Nearly 2 months ago, my Judiciary colleagues and I were told by then-Senator Sessions—and the Presiding Officer is on the Judiciary Committee. We were told in no uncertain terms that he "did not have communications with the Russians," and we took him at his word.

Last night, we learned that Senator Sessions' statement was inaccurate. These inaccurate, possibly intentionally false, statements misled us. They misled me, personally, and I feel they failed to provide the whole truth about his communications with and ties to the Russians, likely on behalf of the Trump campaign. These contacts were in the midst of an unprecedented attack on our democracy, an act of cyber warfare against our democratic institution that not only violated our law but subverted our electoral process.

The potentially false statements on this topic by then-Senator Sessions were not only deeply relevant and critically important in their own right, but they leave us with the question: What else is missing or misleading in that testimony, and the consequential questions about his fitness to lead the Department of Justice must be answered.

Unless Attorney General Sessions can provide a credible explanation, his resignation will be necessary. Senator Sessions' false statements heighten my deep concern about credible allegations

that the Trump campaign, the transition team, and the administration officials have colluded with the Russian Government, not only in actions prior to the election but possibly since then in what may amount to a coverup. Unless the whole truth is uncovered—and if there is a coverup, truly the adage will be fulfilled that the coverup is as bad as the crime. The only way to deter Russian aggression and continued cyber attacks on our democracy is to uncover the truth and deter this kind of aggression in the future.

At the time of his meetings with the Russian Ambassador, Senator Sessions was chairman of the Trump campaign's National Security Advisory Committee. Ambassador Kislyak is, of course, the same individual whose repeated covert contacts with former LTG Michael Flynn, President Trump failed to disclose both to the American public and to his own Vice President. General Flynn's failure to make those disclosures led to his own termination as National Security Advisor.

Contacts between these two men would raise concerns under any circumstances, but Senator Sessions' decision to, in effect, conceal them makes them even more troubling. I use that word with regret because I sat in the committee hearing as he answered those questions, and, personally, I can reach no other conclusion than to say he must have intended to conceal them and hide them from us as committee members.

The Attorney General, who is the most important law enforcement official in our country, must be held to an even higher standard. The sudden disclosure that he met repeatedly with the Russian Ambassador after denying under oath any such contact, gives us all the more reason—indeed compelling evidence—that a special counsel is necessary, and necessary now, to investigate Russian ties and contacts with the Trump campaign.

I have called for such a special counsel or prosecutor for weeks now and led a letter with more than 10 of my colleagues asking that Attorney General Sessions designate such a special prosecutor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak 2 more minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

I want to make sure we do have locked in at 1:45 a vote on confirmation of Rick Perry to be Secretary of Energy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We do.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. As long as I still have about a minute prior to that vote, I have no objection.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I will end my remarks within a minute.

In short, over the past weeks, I have called repeatedly for a special counsel. My view is that now-Attorney General Sessions must be brought back before the Judiciary Committee and provide an explanation. The lack of a credible explanation makes his resignation necessary, and his denial of contacts raises serious and troubling questions about the process that led to his confirmation. Absent swift action by a special counsel, evidence of this troubling conduct will be at high risk of concealment by the very agency, the Department of Justice, entrusted by the American people to seek and uncover the truth. An impartial, objective, comprehensive, and thorough investigation by a special prosecutor is unquestionably necessary now, and I hope we will have bipartisan support for it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as we near the vote on the nomination of Governor Rick Perry to be our next Secretary of Energy, I want to again reiterate my support for his confirmation.

As I mentioned earlier, Governor Perry has devoted his life to public service. During his 14 years as Governor of Texas, he championed an "all of the above" energy strategy, and led his State to tremendous economic growth. He was a good steward of the environment as he worked to find ways to grow the economy and worked toward achieving major reductions in emission levels in the State of Texas.

As I said this morning, Governor Perry is a principled leader. He will set a good direction for the Department of Energy. I am confident he will pursue scientific discovery, promote innovation, be a good steward of our nuclear weapons stockpile, and make progress on the cleanup of our legacy sites, which we recognize are very important. He will help us build the infrastructure we need to become a global energy superpower and partner with States, like my State of Alaska, that suffer from very high energy costs.

He has a strong record. Governor Perry gets results. He is a competent manager and I think a proven leader. I am pleased to be able to support his confirmation. I know Members from both sides of the aisle agree. I think he will be a good addition to our new President's Cabinet, and I would urge that all Members support his nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, speaking in opposition to the Perry nomination, I would say this: We need an Energy Secretary for the 21st century, one who will help protect us by fighting for an electricity grid that will make our entire Internet economy more reliable and safe from cyber attacks. We need someone who is invested in an energy efficiency strategy

that will save our businesses money and make them competitive.

The last two Presidents made energy efficiency a key priority—President Bush by advocating for plug-in vehicles and energy efficiency legislation and President Obama, who made a major investment in the smart grid and made energy efficiency and creating clean energy jobs a top priority for the Nation.

Governor Perry has not committed to those same principles, to move us forward into the 21st century energy economy. We don't want this part of our economy to be left behind to our international competitors.

I encourage my colleagues to oppose his nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Perry nomination?

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 79 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heitkamp	Rubio
Carper	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Cochran	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Stabenow
Corker	Kennedy	Strange
Cornyn	King	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Udall
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Van Hollen
Coons	Markley	Warren
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	
Franken	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote on the

nomination, and I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

DISAPPROVING A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, AND THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 37 and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 80 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Sanders
Brown	Heitkamp	Schumer
Cantwell	Hirono	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Stabenow
Carper	King	Tester
Casey	Klobuchar	Udall
Coons	Manchin	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Markley	Warner
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warren
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	
Franken	Murray	

NOT VOTING—3

Isakson Leahy Schatz

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

DISAPPROVING A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, AND THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 37), disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration relating to the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to ask my colleagues to support H.J. Res. 37, a resolution disapproving of the Federal Acquisition Regulation issued by the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

As is the case in so many of these rules and regulations, it has a really nice name. It sounds really good—the fair pay and safe workplaces rule—but the bottom line is, because of the substance of this rule, it has become commonly known as “the blacklisting rule.” Had it been up to me, I would have called it “the blackmailing rule.” Let me explain why.

It requires contractors and subcontractors submitting bids on Federal Government contracts to disclose any proven or alleged violations within the last 3 years of 14 different labor laws, plus “equivalent State laws.”

Now, that may sound reasonable, but it is not. And it is entirely unnecessary. Any competent purchasing manager—again, I come from the private sector, and there are a lot of competent purchasing managers—could readily obtain the information required by this regulation. And, of course, any competent purchasing manager should also always be evaluating the qualifications, integrity, and the past performance record of any kind of potential suppliers.

This rule also has the very real potential of subjecting perfectly innocent contractors to blackmail and extortion tactics during union contract negotiations.

In case anyone thinks I am overstating this threat, listen carefully to the following quote from one union describing an “ideal message” their union president should convey to a general manager of a business negotiating a union contract:

Putting it plainly: unless you settle this strike within the next few days, and the union withdraws its charges—

Those would be those allegations; unless the union withdraws those charges—

you are likely to be marked as a “repeat labor law offender,” one of the highest cat-

egories of wrongdoing under the President’s Order. Check this out with your hotshot legal team.

This union message goes on:

Counting all of its divisions, this corporation has federal contracts in the hundreds of millions. Do you really want to jeopardize this pot of gold to save a few hundred thousand dollars to the union contract?

This is the kind of negotiating tactic that illustrates exactly how this regulation would be used as a form of federally sanctioned blackmail. There would be no due process for contractors wrongly accused. There would be no way for them to defend themselves or avoid being blacklisted.

As if the blackmail potential of the rule isn’t bad enough, the Obama administration admitted that the final rule would cost at least \$398 million to comply with every single year. And except for the benefit that extortion leverage provides to unions, I can think of no financial benefit to taxpayers or our economy—and neither could the Obama administration, as they were unable to quantify any financial benefit for this rule in their regulatory filings.

In addition to the \$398 million annual regulatory cost, the agencies themselves detailed the following regulatory burdens:

The rule will affect over 24,000 contractors. Industry estimates are even higher.

The rule imposes costly reporting requirements on small businesses that many simply cannot bear.

And it also reduces the availability and increases the price of much needed supplies and services, including to our military.

Others have pointed out even more problems with the rule. For example, it does not define what the “equivalent State laws” are that have been included in the disclosure requirement. Also, the definition of a violation that is reportable is incredibly broad. It is not limited to government contracts and includes pending and other nonfinal disputes—in other words, mere allegations of wrongdoing.

This, in particular, is a slippery slope. For example, in fiscal year 2016, the National Labor Relations Board received over 21,000 unfair labor practice charges, but more than half of those were withdrawn or dismissed, and less than 6 percent resulted in a formal complaint by the NLRB. Also in fiscal year 2016, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission received over 91,000 complaints but issued a “determination of reasonable cause” in only 3,113—about 3.4 percent of those—and filed enforcement suits in only 114—about 0.1 percent of the 91,000 complaints that were filed.

Various studies report that it costs \$2 trillion per year to comply with Federal Government regulations. That is \$14,800 per family per year. Of course, no one writes a check for \$14,800. Instead, those costs are realized in reduced opportunities, higher prices to

consumers, and stagnated wages and benefits for hard-working Americans.

Economic growth is the primary component of a solution for many of our country’s problems, yet Washington continues to stifle growth by adding layer upon layer of regulation. The blacklisting rule is just one harmful example.

Fortunately, last October, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas issued a nationwide preliminary injunction the day before this rule was set to go into effect. The judge issuing the order noted there was merit to the claims that this rule violates statute, exceeds Executive authority, and is unconstitutional. The court found that letting this rule go into effect would cause “irreparable harm.” But the case is still pending. Until we act to decisively repeal this rule, a significant burden hangs over our country’s contractors and suppliers.

Through the use of the Congressional Review Act, we have the opportunity to reduce that regulatory burden and repair a small portion of the damage done by President Obama’s regulatory overreach.

We owe it to the American people and American businesses to start providing them with regulatory relief.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes to disapprove and repeal this very harmful, very costly, and completely unnecessary rule.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

RUSSIA AND THE PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. President, on Tuesday night, along with my colleagues, I listened to the President of the United States address the joint session of Congress. As the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I was particularly interested to hear what the President would be saying about American foreign policy.

I heard him say during the speech that American foreign policy would be based on the respect of the sovereign rights of nations, which is something that I strongly believe in. I then thought I would hear the President talk about one of our greatest challenges from a country that is not respecting the sovereign rights of the United States of America, that country being Russia. But the President didn’t mention Russia at all in his State of the Union address, which really surprised me.

When we look at Russia’s most recent conduct and know what they did in regard to their attack on the U.S. democratic election system, it is beyond dispute that they wanted to interfere with our free elections, they wanted to affect the credibility of our democratic election system, and they wanted to influence the outcome of the election. That is pretty clear from the evidence that we have seen to date. Yet

the President did not mention that at all—a country that had attacked us as recently as just a few months ago. There was no mention in the President's State of the Union address.

It wasn't an isolated attack by Russia on the United States. We knew that before that, when we saw Russia's influence in regard to Montenegro's elections and how they tried to impact their parliamentary elections to influence Montenegro's decision to join NATO. We know that Russia is attempting to influence the elections in Western Europe.

So we have a country that is trying to bring down our democratic system of government by using our democratic system of government, and the way that we conduct open elections, to compromise our system.

But that is not the only thing Russia has done that is contrary to the U.S. national security and our foreign policy objectives. We know that they have physically incurred into other countries. They have physically incurred into Ukraine. Today, Russia has annexed Crimea—something we will never recognize. Crimea is part of Ukraine. Russia is continuing to support the separatists in the eastern part of Ukraine, compromising Ukraine's sovereignty.

The President did not mention that in his State of the Union address.

We know that Russia is in Georgia, in Moldova, and other sovereign countries; once again, no mention of that.

And then Russia is very much engaged in the Middle East. We know that Russia's footprint in the Middle East is growing. They have their military presence in Syria, backing the Assad regime, facilitating Iran's participation in Syria.

We also know that the type of conduct that has been conducted under Russian support, where civilians have been targeted, humanitarian convoys have been attacked, amounts to war crimes—a situation where Russia has culpability; yet, we don't hear anything about that.

So we have a role. Congress has a role to play in making sure that we protect our national security interests.

First and foremost, we have to know what is going on. We have to know what Russia was doing. We have to know what Russia's intentions were when they compromised our cyber security and used that information to try to influence our elections. We have to know what Russia's intentions are all about regarding the contacts they have made with Americans in their effort to influence this campaign. We have to understand what Russia's intentions are as they relate to democratic countries.

We saw in General Flynn's case that a contact was made, and as a result of not coming forward with that, General Flynn has left the Trump administration. And then we find out yesterday that the Attorney General, as a U.S. Senator, had contact with the Russian

Ambassador, and that information was not made available during the confirmation process.

The timing of that meeting in Senator Sessions' office is concerning. It is concerning because it was right at the time that Russia was the most active in trying to get information that they could use to influence our elections. So this is an important aspect for us to understand.

We need to understand why that meeting took place and what was involved in that meeting. There have been calls by Members on both sides of the aisle that we get that type of information.

But I will add one more dimension to this: Why was the Russian Ambassador interested in meeting with Senator Sessions during the campaign period? Was this part of an overall strategy by Russia to try to influence the election? We need to get the answers to that.

The only way we are going to be able to get a complete account of what has happened by Russia's attack on the United States is by setting up an independent commission. Russia may not have used MiGs to attack America. They may have used a mouse. But it was an attack. And when we were attacked on 9/11, Congress did right thing—they set up an independent special commission to understand what happened, how we were so vulnerable to an attack, so that we could take steps to protect ourselves from future attacks and hold those responsible accountable. That was a bipartisan effort by the Congress of the United States, setting up an independent commission, a commission where the members could devote their entire full time to the assignment, because that is how serious being attacked is. There was no limit on their jurisdiction. They could go where the facts led. They could give a report to the American people so there would be credibility that we, the policymakers, are going to have independent information in order to act to protect the national security of the people of this country. That is what that independent commission meant. That independent commission met. They made many recommendations on eliminating a lot of the stovepiping of intelligence information and combining agencies together. Congress acted on those recommendations. As a result, we are safer today than we were prior to 9/11.

We need to be safer tomorrow than we are today from the attacks of Russia. The only way we are going to be able to get that objective information with the credibility so that we can act in the best interests for the people of this Nation is to have a nonpartisan, independent commission take a look at what Russia was doing, get all the facts, find ways and recommendations to make us safer, give the credibility to the American people, and then Congress needs to act in order to protect our national security. I know we have some committees looking at this. I

know the Senate Intelligence Committee is doing some very important work. I support that.

We have our responsibilities in Congress to take steps within the jurisdictions of our committees. I am for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee looking into what Russia was doing in order that we can protect the jurisdiction of our committee to do a better job in our bilateral relationship with Russia, or what Russia is doing in Europe or in other parts of the world that affects our national security under the jurisdiction of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We need to do that work. The Intelligence Committee needs to do their work. Armed Services needs to do their work. Judiciary needs to do their work.

But we need one central investigation that includes the broad jurisdiction that can get to answer why the Russian Ambassador may have wanted to see a U.S. Senator who was active in one of the campaigns that close to the elections, that has an opportunity to understand why Russia was so active in their cyber attacks in America, getting so much information, so much political information, why Russia was trying to understand our election system. There is no evidence that they tried to manipulate individual votes. That didn't happen—at least we don't believe that happened—but we know they were looking into how we do that. Was that for some future use? We need to understand that to protect our democratic system of government. That is what an independent commission will allow us to be able to receive.

I urge my colleagues to respond to the national security challenge of Russia, and let's establish an independent commission.

There are other things we need to do. There are two bills I filed with my Republican colleagues to make it clear that it is not going to be business as usual with Russia. There are going to be consequences to what they have done to the United States and our national security interests.

One bill that I filed, of which Senator GRAHAM is the principal sponsor, is to make sure that Congress carries out its responsibility of oversight in regard to our bilateral relationship with Russia. It is the Russia Review Act, which would require the President of the United States to submit to Congress for review any attempt to eliminate or modify the current sanctions against Russia. He would be required to submit that to the Congress of the United States, hopefully working with us and consulting with us before he makes decisions but giving us an opportunity to weigh in before that decision could take effect.

For my colleagues who remember the Iran nuclear agreement, it sounds very familiar. Senator CORKER and I, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator KAINE, and others worked on the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. It passed nearly unanimously in the Congress. It required a President to submit that

agreement to us before it could take effect. It made the negotiations much more transparent. As a result, I believe we had a stronger agreement, but we also had a more open process, and Congress had a chance to carry out its responsibility. In a similar vein, it is important that we pass the Russia Review Act so that we can carry out our responsibilities, preventing the President from taking unilateral action without consulting with us. This is bipartisan; we have Democrats and Republicans working on this. I hope we will be able to pass this bill in a timely way.

The third bill I want to bring to my colleagues' attention as it relates to Russia's activities in the United States is legislation that I have filed with Senator McCAIN and many others. We have a large number of Democrats and Republicans who have cosponsored this bill that would increase the sanctions against Russia because of their attack against us. It would expand the options for imposing sanctions to different sectors that could affect Russia's energy, that could affect the ability of Russia to finance their sovereign debt, that could affect Russia's ability to privatize their industries by making it clear that we are not going to allow Americans or companies to help finance these activities because in reality they are financing activities against our interests, such as the cyber attacks, as we saw last fall.

This legislation is comprehensive. It deals more than just with sanctions; it deals with another major problem that we have found. Through NATO and U.S. leadership, we have made it clear that we will defend the countries of NATO, and we have deployed troops to make it clear to Russia that they better not try to compromise the territorial integrity of the member states.

This initiative has been well received by Europe and has countered Russia's attempts to cause a fracture within the European community. We need a similar initiative on democracy, a democracy initiative, because not only is there a threat against Europe from their geographical boundaries, there is a threat against Europe in regard to their democratic institutions. We know that. We saw that here in America. It is being challenged in Europe. So this democratic initiative would allow us to participate in strengthening the democratic institutions in Europe so that we don't allow Russia to use the democratic institutions to try to bring down the democratic institutions.

There is another part of this legislation which I think is extremely important. We are all getting to better understand the tactics being used by Russia, this fake news—inventing news and then using the social media to make it look like it is the hottest news in town. We know they are good at that. We also know they are very good at propaganda, and they go in directions that we, prior to this election, thought we would never see in our own country. We are now seeing it more frequently.

Part of this legislation is for us to develop a capacity to be able to counter this propaganda and fake news so that Russia's deployment of it will not compromise our national security.

I think all three bills will be considered shortly and favorably by this body—setting up an independent review commission; requiring the President to submit any changes in the Russian sanctions to the Congress for review before they could take effect; and strengthening our sanctions regime against Russia for its conduct, including strengthening our commitment to democratic institutions and fighting this new cycle of fake news.

I also listened to the President during the State of the Union Address when he said that our foreign policy calls for a direct, robust, and meaningful engagement with the world. That is another statement I happen to agree with. And then I thought about what I had heard a little earlier that day: that the President's budget was going to have about a 30- to 35-percent cut—it wasn't exactly clear, but it was a large number—to the State Department.

I said: How are you going to have a robust and meaningful engagement in the world if you cut our diplomacy budget, you cut our development assistance budget? This is how we keep the world safe. This is how we get our goals accomplished globally.

We have had so many hearings in our committee where there is a much greater need. We need to do more in Africa in promoting democracy. We need to do more in the Middle East in promoting good governance and inclusive governance so we don't have to have as many wars. We need to do things in our own hemisphere. We heard today in a hearing what is happening in Venezuela. There is a lot of work for America to do. A 30-percent cut? Is that a more direct, robust, and meaningful engagement within the world? It didn't sound that way to me. I was concerned about that and how we are going to be able to gauge.

It was Secretary Mattis who said: If you don't give the Secretary of State the resources, you better give me more soldiers.

And they are more expensive. We have the best fighting force in the world, and we are going to support our fighting force. The way we show respect for our soldiers is to use them only as a matter of last resort. Diplomacy is critically important for America's national security.

A strong, credible Office of the President is equally important if we are going to be able to be the type of country that influences our values globally, and the President of the United States has put that at risk. That is why I am reintroducing my resolution to try to avoid a constitutional crisis. I introduced it before President Trump took the oath of office, and I am introducing it again to avoid a constitutional crisis. It deals with the emoluments clause of the Constitution of the United States.

Every modern President of the United States prior to President Trump, in order to avoid conflict, in order to do what is ethically right and to comply with the Constitution of the United States—the emoluments clause—has either divested their financial holdings or has set up a blind trust. Some have done both. That is the way that the ethics officers tell us you can comply with not just the Constitution but with the highest ethical standards so that there are no real conflicts and you don't have any perceived conflicts, which can be just as damaging to the credibility of a public office holder.

President Trump, by not divesting, by not setting up a blind trust, has put the Office of the Presidency, our country, in a compromising position.

Let me give some specific examples, if I might. I will mention three countries. I could mention more.

Saudi Arabia. Very interesting country, Saudi Arabia. In August 2015, the Trump organization filed eight separate business companies to do business in Saudi Arabia. As we all know, the President's Executive order that was originally issued that excluded immigrants from seven Muslim countries from visas did not include the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia even though, as we all know, many of the participants in the 9/11 attack against the United States originated from the country of Saudi Arabia. President Trump has vast business interests in Saudi Arabia.

Let me quote President Trump:

Saudi Arabia, I get along with all of them. They buy apartments from me. They spend \$40 million, \$50 million. Am I supposed to dislike them? I like them very much.

It is not a question, Mr. President, of whether they like you or they don't like you; under our Constitution, they cannot give you any favor. If they give you a business favor, that is an emolument and violates the Constitution of the United States and violates your oath of office.

In regard to Turkey, Turkey has two large-scale developments in the country that are under the Trump organization. The Trump organization has a partnership with a luxury furniture company, Dorya International, to build pieces to be sold under the Trump Home Collection brand and a multi-million-dollar branding deal with the Dogan Group—the Dogan Group is run by one of the most politically influential families in Turkey—for a two-tower complex in Istanbul. According to President Trump's May 2016 financial disclosure, he received as much as \$1 million in royalties from the first venture and as much as \$5 million from the second venture.

Because President Trump has not properly divested himself from his business, he will presumably continue to receive royalties from both ventures, and these business arrangements are not unknown to Turkey's leadership. President Erdogan presided over the opening ceremonies of Trump Towers, Istanbul.

Shortly after the election, President Trump held a phone call with President Erdogan in which he praised his business partners. There are substantial business interests known by the Turkish Government that Mr. Trump has in their country. Mr. Erdogan is not shy about talking about and using the Trump Towers. He has bragged about it. We have a lot of foreign policy decisionmaking that affects Turkey. We need to know that when the President is making those decisions, it is America's interest which is at the front and center, not the Trump Organization's interests that are affecting those decisions. That is why we have the emoluments clause, that is why we believe in avoiding conflicts, and that is why President Trump needs to divest of his interest or set up a blind trust.

I will mention one other country, if I might. That country is China. For a decade, the Trump organization has been trying to get a trademark of its brand in China. I am going to quote from Mr. Trump on February 7, 2011, when he wrote to the American Ambassador in China. This is what Mr. Trump said: "I spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees to secure my own name and globally recognized brand for Chinese individuals who seek to trade off my reputation."

For 10 years he was fighting to get that trademark protection. It was granted on February 14, 2017, a few weeks after President Trump took the oath of office, shortly after President Trump stated that he would support the One China policy, something the Government of China strongly wanted him to say.

We don't know connections. We can't draw connections. We don't know that. That is why the emoluments clause is in the Constitution, so you cannot accept any favors from another country. It is against our Constitution. Yet we have concerns as to whether the President is acting under that interest. That is just wrong and it needs to stop. What the President has done is established a circumstance where there is an appearance of conflict, where it looks like foreign governments are trying to influence his decisions.

He has affected America's standing to advance good governance and corruption. I want to underscore that point. He is compromising America's moral authority on the values we hold so dear. Our Western democratic values are being compromised because leaders of autocratic countries, corrupt leaders, can say: If it is all right for the President of the United States to keep his business holdings while he is President, what is wrong with me having an interest in some of our entities here? It takes away our effective ability to use diplomacy to solve problems or advance our goals. We are being compromised. The current arrangement is simply inadequate.

President Trump announced he is going to let his two adult sons handle his businesses, but he still maintains

his financial interests. He gives a couple of different other things he is going to do. I will just go over one or two of them.

He says he is going to donate the profits from his foreign hotels to charities. That sounds good.

Let me just quote from Steve Carvell, a professor at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, who said:

It's a monumental task to constantly run this down. Even if the company is trying its hardest and making its very best effort, it will be difficult to fulfill that goal.

Let's get serious about this. The arrangements he set out will not solve the conflict. It will not comply with the Constitution of the United States. The Office of Government Ethics said on the President's proposal it is "wholly inadequate." That is the Office of Government Ethics. They go on to say: "The plan the [President] has announced doesn't meet the standards that the best of his nominees are meeting and that every President in the last four decades has met."

I am a lawyer but would not claim to be a constitutional expert. Let me quote, if I might, from constitutional experts. Richard Painter, Norm Eisen and Laurence Tribe have written a comprehensive study of the constitutional provisions, concluding that "since emoluments are properly defined as including 'profit' from any employment, as well as 'salary,' it is clear that even remuneration fairly earned in commerce can qualify."

Richard Painter, the chief ethics officer for President George W. Bush, stated it in a blunter fashion. He said:

This is a for-profit hotel. [Trump] is making profits over dealing with foreign governments. Same with the loans from foreign government-owned banks. Those are for a for-profit business. That is prohibited under the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution.

Let me just conclude with this. This is not about any one person. This is about the Office of the President. This is about our constitutional form of government that depends upon the Office of the President being respected. It is bigger than any one person. The Framers of our Constitution went on to say: We recognize it. We know the faults of men. That is why we set up the Constitution, to protect against the frailties of individuals.

This is about the Office of the President of the United States, not about any one person who may occupy it 4 to 8 years. We need to protect the Office of the President, and that is why we need to act now to avoid this constitutional crisis of the President of the United States, who has put our Nation at risk because of his personal conflicts and because of his violation of the Constitution of the United States.

I call upon President Trump to live up to the values of the Constitution. Give the American people the transparency they deserve and completely sever his relationship with the Trump Organization before we are embroiled

in an ethical and constitutional crisis that will not serve the best interests of the President, Congress or the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, in a little more than 2 weeks, the Judiciary Committee will open its hearing on the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch for the U.S. Supreme Court. This is the 14th Supreme Court confirmation process in which I have participated. Over that time, while some things have changed, others have stayed the same.

The conflict over judicial appointments, especially to the Supreme Court, remains at its core a conflict over the proper role of judges in our system of government. The two sides of this conflict want two very different kinds of judges. Some of my colleagues, joined by their liberal allies, instead want judges who owe their fidelity to a particular political agenda.

For them, the judiciary is simply a backup plan for achieving political objectives. If the legislative branch does not deliver, they go to the executive—as they often did in the previous administration. If that does not work, they figure that the courts offer a second or third bite at the political apple.

This vision is fundamentally inconsistent with the way our system of government was destined, designed, and intended to be. Instead, the Framers devised the role of the judiciary on the wisdom of Montesquieu, who posited:

Were the power of judging joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control. . . . Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave [as] an oppressor.

That was Montesquieu. Reflecting this wisdom, the Constitution endows the judge with the role of saying what the law is, rather than what he wishes the law would be.

Alexander Hamilton rightly observed: The people's liberty cannot be endangered by the judiciary "so long as the judiciary remains truly distinct from both the legislature and the executive."

The stakes in this conflict over judicial power are really enormous. The choice determines whether the people or unelected judges will govern the country and define the culture. Our system of government and the liberty it makes possible allow only one answer. The confirmation process allows us to determine which kind of judge Neil Gorsuch is and which kind of Justice he will be.

The dynamics of the confirmation process often reveal what kind of judge Senators and interest groups really

seek. Those who want political judges, for example, use a variety of strategies to determine how a judicial nominee, especially to the Supreme Court, will rule on issues and cases they care about. In fact, most of the time it seems that the policy consequences of how a judge will rule is the only thing that some Senators and advocates really care about.

For example, when President Bush nominated Chief Justice John Roberts in 2005, one Democratic member of the Judiciary Committee said that the real question was this: "Whose side is Judge Roberts really on, on the really important issues of our time?"

Another Democratic Senator said: "Before we vote, it is important to know where Judge Roberts stands on key issues."

Another said that she needed to know whether "Judge Roberts will stand with us and with our families or be on the side of major special interests."

Now, something is seriously wrong when the confirmation process for a Supreme Court nominee sounds more like an election campaign for a Senator or a Senate seat. Unfortunately, the same thing is happening again today regarding Judge Gorsuch. If a corporation won a case before him on the Tenth Circuit, for example, those groups claim that he is a champion of corporate interests, no matter the legal grounds of the decision, the facts, or anything else.

If another decision's result does not sufficiently advance the feminist agenda, they say that he is anti-woman. This radical approach seems to say that judges are free to decide every case based on the political popularity of the result and, therefore, that the judge personally intends every outcome. These advocates do not distinguish between the commands of the law and the personal preferences of the judge.

In this view, statutes and the Constitution mean whatever judges want them to mean, making unelected, unaccountable, lifetime appointees the master of the people. Political judges take away from the people the power to govern themselves and undermine their liberty. Using political or theological litmus tests in the quest for such political judges, demanding that they take sides and insisting that they make commitments to certain policy agendas before even taking office, poses a similar threat to the independence and impartiality of the judiciary.

There is nothing mainstream about political judges and nothing mainstream in the tactics used to appoint them. In contrast, impartial judges are consistent with the principles on which our system of government is based and the independence that judges must have. When Judge Gorsuch took his seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit in 2006, he took the oath required by title 28, section 453, of the United States Code. He pledged to

administer justice without respect to persons and to faithfully and impartially discharge his judiciary duties.

Now, I want to suggest that my colleagues try an experiment. Ask your constituents whether judges should make up their mind on a case before hearing all of the evidence and arguments. Ask whether judges should take positions on issues before those issues even come before them in court.

I know what Utahns would say. The ABA Model Code of Judicial Conduct, for example, twice states this principle:

A judge shall not, in connection with cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the court, make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative [functions and] duties of judicial office.

State codes of judicial conduct include the same commonsense protection for judicial impartiality. The California code, for example, prohibits statements, whether public or not, that "commit the judge with respect to cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the courts."

Now, this has been the consistent practice of judicial nominees before the Judiciary Committee. Elena Kagan came before the Judiciary Committee in June 2010, after being nominated by President Obama to replace Justice John Paul Stevens. On June 29, 2010, she said that it would not be appropriate for her to comment on an issue that could come before the Court.

Samuel Alito—Justice Alito—came before the committee in January 2006, after being nominated by President Bush to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. On January 11, 2006, he said:

But the line I have to draw, and I think every nominee, including Justice Ginsburg, has drawn, is to say that when it comes to something that realistically could come before the Court, they can't answer about how they would decide that question. That would be a disservice to the judicial process.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg appeared before the Judiciary Committee in July 1993, nominated by President Clinton to replace Justice Byron White. On July 20, 1993, she said this: "A judge sworn to decide impartially can offer no forecasts, no hints, for that would show not only disregard for the specifics of the particular case, it would display disdain for the entire judicial process."

Antonin Scalia came before the committee in August 1986, after being nominated by President Reagan to replace Justice William Rehnquist. On August 5, 1986, he said that taking positions in a hearing on issues that could come before him was not just a slippery slope but, in his words, a precipice. He said: "I just cannot do it, and I think the only way to be sure that I am not impairing my ability to be impartial in future cases . . . is simply to respectfully decline to give an opinion."

Let me reach even further back. Justice Abe Fortas came before the Judiciary Committee in July 1968, after being

nominated by President Johnson to replace Chief Justice Earl Warren. The committee sent the nomination to the full Senate and said these words in its report:

To require a Justice to state his views on legal questions or to discuss his past decisions before the committee would threaten the independence of the judiciary and the integrity of the judicial system itself. It would also impinge on the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers among the three branches of Government as required by the Constitution.

Judge Thurgood Marshall came before the committee in July 1967, nominated by President Johnson to replace Justice Tom Clark. The committee sent the nomination to the full Senate and its report noted that the nominee had said he would "wisely and forthrightly decline to give a judicial opinion on hypothetical questions."

Just 2 years earlier, when the committee reported the nomination of Abe Fortas to be an Associate Justice, its report said: "We have always felt it would be unfair to ask any nominee for any judicial office to give a legal opinion on the basis of a hypothetical question."

I think the point is obvious. Every nominee, of either party, for decades has taken the same position, and it is the right position. It reflects a commitment to judicial independence, to impartiality, and to the integrity of the judicial branch of government.

If my Democratic colleagues and their liberal allies believe that Justices Kagan, Alito, Ginsburg, Scalia, Fortas, and Marshall were all wrong, they should say so. If they believe that judges should prejudice cases by committing to particular outcomes, then they should make that case. If they believe that the oath of judicial office and code of judicial conduct are all misguided, then, it seems to me, they should be upfront about it. I, for one, believe that judges should be impartial, that they should follow the law, and that they should stay within their designated role.

America needs impartial, not political, judges. I don't care which party you are in. If you are an attorney, you have to appreciate judges who are impartial, especially if you are an honest attorney.

We need judges who will follow, rather than lead, the law. The Constitution, after all, is the primary way that the American people set rules for government, and that includes—God bless it—the judicial branch. The Constitution cannot control judges if judges control the Constitution.

Yesterday the Judiciary Committee received a letter signed by more than 30 prominent members of the Supreme Court bar. In combination, they have argued more than 500 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Though they hold different political and legal views, they are united in strongly supporting Judge Gorsuch's nomination. They

write that he is fair-minded, principled, and “has the unusual combination of character, dedication, and intellect that would make him an asset to our Nation’s highest court.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

I believe the record demonstrates that Judge Neil Gorsuch is an impartial judge and will, when confirmed, be an impartial Supreme Court Justice. He will take the law as he finds it and apply it “without respect to persons,” just as the oath commands. With him on the bench, the law—made by the people’s elected representatives—will determine winners and losers. In doing so, he will be exactly the kind of Justice America needs.

Judge Gorsuch has a tremendous reputation on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, supported by Democrats and Republicans alike. Judge Gorsuch is a brilliant lawyer and an even more brilliant judge.

He is a person of impeccable reputation and integrity. He is exactly the type of person you would want deciding your case if you had a case before the Supreme Court. He is exactly the type of person whom other judges could emulate and follow, so he is exactly the type of person we want on the Supreme Court.

I have heard some ugly rumors that some of my colleagues in this body might, because of political concerns and political pressure, want to vote against Judge Gorsuch. I would caution them not to do that.

I think Judge Gorsuch will basically please almost everyone in this body over the years that he serves as a Supreme Court Justice. He is a really fine man. He is a fine family man. He is a very fine lawyer and a fantastic court of appeals judge.

He will make a great Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. So I urge my colleagues on both sides to vote for him and help us fill this void so that the Court can continue to act as the Court should.

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

MARCH 1, 2017.

Hon. CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND RANKING MEMBER FEINSTEIN: We write to express our strong support for Judge Neil Gorsuch’s nomination to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. The undersigned are members of the Supreme Court bar with substantial experience before the Court. Collectively, we have argued more than 500 cases before the Court. Many of us, moreover, worked with Judge Gorsuch (or litigated against him) when he was in private practice; served alongside him in the Justice Department; or have appeared before him in the Court of Appeals. We hold a broad range of political, policy, and jurisprudential

views. But we are unified in offering our support of Judge Gorsuch’s nomination.

Fairminded, dedicated, smart, and unfailingly polite, Judge Gorsuch is someone all of us would be pleased to appear before. He is principled in his approach to the law, but also keenly aware of practical consequences. He is a thoroughly kind and decent person. Respectful of colleagues and counsel alike, Judge Gorsuch has the unusual combination of character, dedication, and intellect that would make him an asset to our Nation’s highest court.

We hope this information will be of assistance to the Committee in its consideration of Judge Gorsuch’s nomination. We thank you for your time and attention, and urge you to support his confirmation.

Very truly yours,

Lisa Blatt, Richard P. Bress, Michael A. Carvin, John P. Elwood, Roy Englert, Miguel A. Estrada, Mark Evans, H. Bartow Farr, III, David C. Frederick, Dan Himmelfarb, William M. Jay, Peter D. Keisler, Michael K. Kellogg, Jeffrey A. Lamken, Christopher Landau, Maureen E. Mahoney, Ronald Mann, Roman Martinez, Deanne E. Maynard, Matthew D. McGill, Eric D. Miller, Glen D. Nager, Aaron M. Panner, Mark A. Perry, Carter G. Phillips, Richard H. Seamon, Stephen M. Shapiro, Mark T. Stancil, Kathleen M. Sullivan, Amir C. Tayrani, Christopher J. Wright.

Mr. HATCH. I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CALLING FOR AN INDEPENDENT, BIPARTISAN COMMISSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the highlight of the week, of course, is President Trump’s speech to the joint session of Congress, the first major public speech he has given since his inauguration. The Chamber of the House of Representatives was filled with Members of both the House and Senate, the Supreme Court Justices, the Cabinet, and many other dignitaries for the speech. It went for about 60 minutes, which is reasonable under Presidential standards. Many have gone much longer, and I listened carefully to the statement by the new President to really glean his priorities, in terms of his administration and what he hopes to see happen in this country.

There were many issues that he touched on, but there was one he didn’t. He didn’t say a word—not one word—about the Russian intervention in our last Presidential campaign. This is not speculation. It is a reality that 17 different U.S. intelligence agencies have told us that Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government were attempting to subvert and undermine our Presidential election. To our knowledge, that has never happened at any time in the history of the United States. It is the first time a sovereign nation has tried to literally launch a cyber inva-

sion of the United States of America to try to change the outcome of the most important electoral choice under the Constitution—the choice of President of the United States. It is a major issue. It is one President Trump cannot ignore.

During the course of that speech, he never once mentioned the word “Russia.” He never raised this issue as to whether it was worthy of investigation. He described it as a ruse. He has dismissed it and basically has paid no attention to it whatsoever and wants the rest of America to forget it as well.

That is not going to happen because the investigation about this Russian cyber invasion continues. We know the Federal Bureau of Investigation is deep into an investigation. I don’t know what it will find. I don’t know if they will find any complicity with anyone in the United States, anyone in the Trump campaign. It is only after we have an independent, complete, and credible investigation that we may know the facts.

We also have an investigation underway by many of our intelligence agencies, which are looking at the involvement of the Russians trying to change the outcome of our election. Those investigations are underway.

One element came up last night that has changed the conversation in Washington about this whole issue. Even before last night’s news, we knew Attorney General Jeff Sessions needed to recuse himself from any Justice Department investigation into Russia’s efforts to influence the 2016 election in support of the Trump campaign.

The Department of Justice standard for recusal—that is, the removal of the Attorney General from an investigation—is pretty clear. It requires recusal by someone who has “a personal or political relationship with any person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is the subject of the investigation.”

The Department of Justice regulations define “political relationship” to include service as a principal adviser to a candidate or campaign organization. Well, that certainly covers Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the Trump campaign. Attorney General Sessions was named in March 2016 as chairman of then-Candidate Trump’s National Security Advisory Committee. Steve Bannon, formerly of Breitbart News and now a close adviser to the President, described Jeff Sessions to the Washington Post as follows: “Throughout the campaign, Sessions has been the fiercest, most dedicated, and most loyal promoter in Congress of Trump’s agenda, and has played a critical role as the clearinghouse for policy and philosophy to undergird the implementation of that agenda.”

Attorney General Sessions close relationship with the Trump campaign creates a compelling basis for his recusal from any investigation of Russian involvement in that campaign.

So far, to this day, to this moment, Jeff Sessions has refused to recuse himself from this investigation. He refused when I asked him about it during the course of the hearing, and he has refused since he was named Attorney General. Now it is clear that his unwillingness to recuse himself is no longer tenable or acceptable or even explainable.

Last night, the Washington Post reported that then-Senator Jeff Sessions spoke with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak twice during the Presidential campaign—in July at a Heritage Foundation event near the Republican National Convention and in September in a private conversation in the Senator's office. These communications came as a great surprise because until last night, Attorney General Sessions did not disclose them.

During his hearing in January, in preparation to become Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, then Senator, was asked by Senator AL FRANKEN of Minnesota: "If there is any evidence that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign communicated with the Russian government in the course of this campaign, what would you do?"

Jeff Sessions' answer under oath included this statement: "I did not have communications with the Russians."

Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont also asked Attorney General Sessions in writing: "Have you been in contact with anyone connected to any part of the Russian government about the 2016 election, either before or after election day?" Attorney General Sessions' response was "No."

It is hard to understand why Attorney General Sessions has not been more forthcoming and upfront with Congress and the American people about communications which we now know in fact did take place. If he thinks there was nothing wrong with these communications, why would he conceal them? It is deeply troubling.

The reality is, the Attorney General has compromised his credibility when it comes to investigating Russia's cyber invasion of America's election. His recusal is no longer an option, it is a necessity.

People say: Oh, of course, a Democratic Senator is saying that the Republican Attorney General should recuse himself. This morning, it has been reported that a number of top Republicans in Congress have called for the Attorney General's recusal, including House Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY and House Oversight Chairman JASON CHAFFETZ.

It is imperative that career Justice Department professionals be allowed to follow the facts in this investigation to discover the truth. We may need a special counsel, but these steps alone are not sufficient. I believe we need an independent, bipartisan commission, led by Americans of unimpeachable integrity, to get to the bottom and get to the facts on this attack on our democracy.

I know the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is also conducting an investigation. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which, incidentally, is chaired by Representative DEVIN NUNES, who served on the executive committee of President Trump's transition team, agreed to the parameters of an investigation yesterday.

The Intelligence Committees cannot, by their very nature, provide the transparency and accountability that an independent commission would bring to this issue, and the chairmen of those two committees—House and Senate—have already raised serious questions about their own impartiality by calling on the media organizations at the behest of the White House to challenge news stories on this issue.

How could you possibly maintain objectivity if the elements of an investigation are compromised before the investigation even starts?

I am particularly concerned that Chairman NUNES has already publicly expressed views of the outcome of his committee's investigation before it has even started. That is not a professional, honest, or credible way to approach this.

We need an independent, bipartisan commission to get to the truth, and that may include taking a hard look at the Attorney General's communications with the Russians and at his refusal to disclose those communications. We also need to point out the obvious, which is that when it comes to investigating Russia's involvement in helping the Trump campaign, we have to follow the money, and that includes reviewing President Trump's tax returns, which, unlike any other Presidential candidate in modern times, he has refused to share with the American people.

Yesterday, Senators STABENOW, WYDEN, and a number of my colleagues sent a letter to the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator ORRIN HATCH, of Utah, urging him to allow committee members to review the President's tax returns in a closed executive session. That is something the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee has the authority to do. The letter pointed out that this oversight is essential given the media reports about Russia as well as the possible unconstitutional emoluments being accepted by President Trump's vast business empire.

I support this request from my colleagues. It is imperative that President Trump level with the American people about his business's foreign entanglements, especially those involving Russia.

This issue is not going away. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in pursuing all of the facts about last year's Russian attack on our democracy.

It was just a few weeks ago that the President's National Security Advisor, General Flynn, resigned. Do you re-

member why? He misrepresented to the Vice President and the American people conversations which he had had with the Russians. He ended up giving up his position as the No. 1 person in national security in the White House.

Now questions have been raised about the credibility of the Attorney General—the No. 1 person in the Trump administration when it comes to the administration of justice. What is the issue? It is the same issue as with General Flynn—conversations with the Russians which were not disclosed to the American public.

This is an issue that is going to continue to be in the forefront, as it should be, until we can bring the facts to the American people. The only way to reach that point is by having the Attorney General recuse himself from any investigation, appointing as a special prosecutor—or someone in that capacity—someone who is credible who can pursue this matter and then initiating an independent, bipartisan investigation by a national commission with credible chairs who have no political agenda and care enough for the United States to view this invasion by Russia as absolutely unacceptable.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR COCHRAN

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, earlier today, during his opening remarks, the distinguished majority leader paid tribute to my senior Senator, THAD COCHRAN, upon the occasion of his becoming the 10th longest serving Senator in the history of our Republic.

If you think about this—I just checked with the cloakroom—the Senate first convened in March of 1789 in New York City. In the 228 years of the United States Senate, THAD COCHRAN, of Mississippi, now becomes the 10th longest serving Senator in history. Quite a milestone.

I was chairing a subcommittee hearing this morning and was not able to be on the floor during the majority leader's remarks, and so I take a moment to now pay tribute to Senator COCHRAN at this milestone in his career and in the history of the Senate.

Most Senators do not know Senator COCHRAN and I were born in the same small town. We are both natives of Pontotoc, MS. We are alumni of the same university. We are both Ole Miss Rebels. We also share the same political lineage in Mississippi of being early pioneers in the development of the Republican Party. I was the first Republican Member of the House of Representatives in my congressional district, the First District of Mississippi, back in 1994. Senator COCHRAN

blazed an even more significant trail by becoming the first popularly elected Republican Senator from Mississippi back in 1978—in over a century. He succeeded former President pro tempore Jim Eastland, of Mississippi.

I have been able to watch him and be somewhat of a teammate over the decades, and I just want to pay tribute to THAD COCHRAN as being a trailblazer for quite some time. This is a milestone, and it is a testament to the proven record that Senator COCHRAN has built over 38 years in this Chamber. He served for 6 years in the House prior to that, so he has been around a long time. He has always been a good public servant. He has always been a strong American. He has always been a good member of the troop.

He is chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and a lot of funds are distributed through that committee. He is part of the team, and his committee is part of the team. Again, a lot of our colleagues do not realize this, but we set budget numbers—the House and Senate. We come to an agreement, and we set those spending levels. Then the Appropriations Committee, under the leadership of THAD COCHRAN, does the hard work of figuring out how to abide by those budget caps, and they do it year in and year out. With leadership like Senator THAD COCHRAN's, usually, the numbers are crunched, and they make it work on a bipartisan basis. Many of the votes in the Appropriations Committee last year, under the leadership of Chairman COCHRAN, were unanimous votes or virtually unanimous votes.

At the same time, he has been able to, within the constraints of those budget caps, take care of the needs of our country and certainly the needs of our State of Mississippi at some very dark moments in the history of our State. Hurricane Katrina—the worst natural disaster in recorded history ever to hit the North American Continent—was visited upon our State, and we were certainly fortunate to have the leadership of Senator THAD COCHRAN, and I was glad to be his partner in that regard. After Deepwater Horizon, the entire gulf coast region—and in fact the entire Nation—benefited from the leadership of Senator COCHRAN.

He makes us proud, and he has made us proud for years and years now. He was called by someone the “quiet persuader,” and that nickname has stuck and has been appropriate for quite some time. Throughout his time in Congress, indeed, THAD COCHRAN has been the quiet persuader. Not a lot of demagoguery, not a lot of arm-waving, not a lot of rhetoric comes from this desk in front of me—but leadership and resolve and taking care of business on behalf of the United States of America.

Before he was a Congressman, THAD COCHRAN was a successful young lawyer, and before that, he was a member of the Navy. He served our country well. Before that, he was perhaps the most outstanding law student with per-

haps the highest grade point average ever in the history of the “Ole Miss” law school. So he has made us proud in so many ways.

Although I was not able to be on the floor at the moment when Senator MCCONNELL made this recognition, I did want to come, now that I have a moment or two, and add my words of encouragement and congratulations to THAD COCHRAN, but also my words of appreciation on behalf of a grateful State and a grateful Nation for the many ways in which THAD COCHRAN has made us a better and a stronger country.

Thank you, Madam 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. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUNT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO JOYCE MCCOMBS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I have been coming to the floor for the past several weeks to highlight my State and the great people who live in it. As the Presiding Officer and everybody in this room and those watching on TV probably know, Alaska is a breathtaking place. In fact, there is no place like it in the world—mountain ranges that seem to go on for eternity, salmon-filled waters and rivers, streams, massive glaciers. People save up their whole lives to come to visit my State. We welcome them. We want them all to come.

As I have also been saying, it is the people who make Alaska truly special, the Alaskans, people throughout my State banding together to form warm communities in cold climates. In Alaska, where the conditions are often extreme, we depend on each other—communities do—sometimes even for survival.

Today I would like to recognize Joyce McCombs, the director of the community library in Delta Junction, AK, as the Alaskan of the Week. On March 9, Joyce will be celebrating 30 years as the library director—30. She was also recently named by the Alaska Library Association the Audrey P. Kolb Public Library Service Award winner and received the Public Library Roundtable Certificate of Appreciation for her “significant, innovative activities” to improve her library. That award is named after Audrey Kolb, who is a legend in the library world in Alaska, and Joyce has that award as well as our award.

Delta Junction, where she lives, is a beautiful community of about 1,000 residents, surrounded by 3 spectacular mountain ranges. The community is about 150 miles from Fairbanks, in Alaska's interior. It gets cold there in the winter. As a matter of fact, this

morning in Delta Junction, it was 26 below zero. And it is home to Fort Greely, which is the cornerstone of our Nation's entire missile defense system, protected by 300 brave soldiers, part of the Alaskan National Guard.

For many in Delta Junction, the library—recognized by the Library Journal as one of the best in the State—is the place where people converge and find warmth and community. It is open 6 days a week, and it only closes when it gets below 40 below zero. They are tough people in Delta Junction.

Joyce, with the support of so many in Delta Junction, including Fort Greely, which supports the library, has made sure that this library stays one of the best in the State and in the country. In her words, Delta's library is the “community living room.” In a small town like Delta Junction, such spaces are rare and, indeed, special. Joyce brings all sorts of services and learning to the library, including bands, authors, cooking classes—“what the community wants and needs,” she said. Sometimes those needs entail sitting someplace warm and reading a book. Sometimes it means Skyping a spouse who might be serving overseas in Afghanistan or Iraq or applying for a job or getting the right form to file their tax returns. Joyce said: “We're open 6 days a week serving everybody from nursery schools to nursing homes.”

One Delta resident told Joyce on Facebook:

Your assistance to the literary education of now two generations of children has been an invaluable contribution to our community that will be paying dividends for years to come. This statewide honor is only a larger recognition of what we already know here in Delta—that you are a great librarian.

After 30 years as the director of the library, Joyce still loves her job, saying she learns something every day from her patrons. Thankfully for all of us, she has no plans to leave.

Congratulations on your award, Joyce. Happy birthday to your grandson, Trek. And thank you—and to the many librarians across our State and across our Nation—for your efforts to provide a warm learning space for all Alaskans and all Americans.

Mr. President, 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. 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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

THE CHABAD ORGANIZATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, with all the division and conflict in politics today, it would take something truly compelling to unite all 100 Senators, including Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals. Well, it has happened. This week I sent to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson a letter, signed by all 100 Senators, asking that it be conveyed to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The letter supports the decades-long quest by Agudas Chasidei Chabad of the United States to recover from Russia its collection of sacred religious texts and manuscripts.

Chabad was established in the 18th century in Russia and is today the largest Hasidic Jewish organization in the world. The organization's past leaders, or rebbes, accumulated this collection of sacred texts, which includes a library and an archive and is central to Chabad's religious life. The Soviets took control of the library in 1920 and in 1927 arrested the sixth rebbe and sentenced him to death. He was allowed to leave Russia later that year but had to leave the library behind. In 1933, the sixth rebbe and the archive moved to Poland.

In 1940, after both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland, the sixth rebbe fled to the United States without the archive. It was confiscated, first by the Nazis and then by the Soviets. Chabad has since worked to reclaim both the library and the archive.

It is important to place the letter we sent this week in its full context because this is only the latest in a long series of actions by all three branches of the U.S. Government to support Chabad's quest. Members of Congress, for example, began calling for the return of these works in the 1930s. Just weeks before the Soviet Union dissolved on Christmas Day 1991, both President Mikhail Gorbachev and a state arbitration panel ordered that the library be returned to Chabad. On January 24, 1992, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe wrote President Boris Yeltsin, urging him to carry out the court's order and return the collection.

Unfortunately, both President Gorbachev's directive and the court's order were effectively nullified when the Russian Federation replaced the Soviet Union. Within a few months, however, the U.S. State Department expressed "strong support" for returning the full collection to Chabad. On May 31, 1992, all 100 Senators signed a letter to President Boris Yeltsin urging the collection's "quick release."

On February 20, 2005, all 100 Senators signed a letter to President Putin, again urging that the collection be returned to Chabad. The letter said this: "The religious texts that Chabad seeks to retrieve consist of rare and irreplaceable books, archives and manuscripts on Chabad philosophy, Jewish religious law, prayer and tradition. . . . We urge you to return these sacred re-

ligious texts, archives, and manuscripts to Chabad, which would be a significant example of your government's commitment to justice, human rights, and religious freedom."

Chabad filed suit against Russia in Federal court. During this litigation, the United States filed statements of interest reiterating its "strong support" for returning the collection to Chabad. On July 30, 2010, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ordered Russia to return both the library and the archive to Chabad.

I am truly grateful to all of my colleagues for your support of Chabad and their effort to recover this important component of their religious life. As striking as this unity is, I hope my colleagues also see it as part of a much longer story of extraordinary faith and commitment in the face of loss and persecution. I hope and pray that such efforts will be successful and that Russia will respond favorably to Chabad's request. It would indeed be a demonstration of their commitment to justice, human rights, and religious freedom.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the 1992, 2005, and 2017 Senate letters to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, May 31, 1992.

Hon. BORIS YELTSIN,
President of the Russian Republic,
Moscow, Russia.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We understand that you have personally committed yourself to secure the return of the Lubavitch texts, and we appreciate your having taken a stand on behalf of an act of justice.

When the Senate was in recess, the U.S. State Department issued a statement (copy attached), with which we now wish to associate ourselves. In particular, it is our hope and expectation that you will fulfill your commitment decisively through the quick release of the Schneerson-Agudas Chabad collection.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, February 24, 2005.

Hon. VLADIMIR PUTIN,
President, Russian Federation.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We, the undersigned members of the United States Senate, respectfully request your assistance in returning the Schneerson collection from the Russian State Library and the Russian State Military Archive, to its rightful owners in the United States: Agudas Chasidei Chabad of United States (hereafter referred to as "Chabad").

The religious texts that Chabad seeks to retrieve consist of rare and irreplaceable books, archives and manuscripts on Chabad philosophy, Jewish religious law, prayer and tradition. The first portion of the Schneerson collection was seized by the former USSR around the time of the Bolshevik revolution and placed in the Russian State Library, where it remains to this day.

The second portion of the Schneerson collection is in storage at the Russian State Military Archive. It had been assumed that this portion of the collection had been de-

stroyed or captured by Nazi Germany during the holocaust and Nazi occupation of Warsaw, Poland in World War II. Chabad recently learned that the Soviet Army captured this portion of the Schneerson collection from the Nazis and transferred it to the Russian State Military Archive.

Chabad has worked tirelessly to secure the release of these texts, archives, and manuscripts that comprise the sacred heritage of an entire community. On May 31, 1992, the entire United States Senate collectively appealed to then-President Boris Yeltsin to honor his own commitment to return the Schneerson collection. A copy of this appeal is enclosed. Since 1992, however, a mere eight volumes have been released.

We urge you to return these sacred religious texts, archives, and manuscripts to Chabad, which would be a significant example of your government's commitment to justice, human rights, and religious freedom.

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, February 27, 2017.

President, VLADIMIR PUTIN,
Russian Federation,
Moscow, Russia.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing respectfully to reaffirm our support and request for the return of the Schneerson collection of sacred texts from the Russian State Library and the Russian State Military Archive to its rightful owners, Agudas Chasidei Chabad of United States ("Chabad").

On May 31, 1992, all one hundred members of the United States Senate appealed to then-President Boris Yeltsin to honor Russia's commitment to return the collection to Chabad. On February 24, 2005, all one hundred members of the United States Senate again signed an appeal for your assistance in returning the collection. Copies of these letters are attached hereto. Since 1992, eight volumes of the collection have been returned to Chabad. We hereby respectfully request your assistance in seeing the return of the entire collection.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

REMEMBERING BERTA CACERES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to call the Senate's attention to the fact that it has now been 1 year since the assassination of Berta Caceres, a renowned indigenous Honduran environmental activist who devoted her life—and ultimately lost her life—defending the land, water, and other natural resources of the Lenca people.

After an initial attempt by the Honduran police and even some high-ranking officials to falsely portray the murder as a crime of passion, which is a not uncommon ploy to cover up official complicity in such cases, eight men have been arrested, including one active-duty and two retired military officers.

Although Honduran officials have denied any government involvement in Ms. Caceres's murder and downplayed the arrest of Major Mariano Diaz who was promptly discharged from the army, there are reasons to be skeptical.

Diaz, a decorated special forces veteran, was appointed chief of army intelligence in 2015, and at the time of the murder he was reportedly on track

for promotion to lieutenant colonel. Another suspect, Lieutenant Douglas Giovanni Bustillo, reportedly joined the military on the same day as Diaz. They served together and apparently remained in contact after Bustillo retired in 2008.

It is particularly noteworthy and troubling that, according to press reports, both Diaz and Bustillo may have received military training from the United States.

A third suspect, Sergeant Henry Javier Hernandez, was a former special forces sniper who had worked under the command of Diaz. He may also have worked as an informant for military intelligence after leaving the army in 2013.

According to press reports, First Sergeant Rodrigo Cruz, a former army officer who deserted after Caceres's death and remains in hiding, said the Honduran military high command gave a hit list with the names and photographs of activists to eliminate to the commander of the Xatruch multi-agency taskforce, to which Cruz's unit belonged, and that Caceres's name was on the list. It sounds a lot like the death squads in El Salvador in the 1980s.

Five civilians with no known military record have also been arrested. They include Sergio Rodriguez, a manager for the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam that Berta Caceres had long opposed.

That project is being led by Desarrollos Energeticos SA, Desa, with international financing and the strong backing of the Honduran Government. According to press reports, the company's president, Roberto David Castillo Mejia, is a former military intelligence officer, and its secretary, Roberto Pacheco Reyes, is a former justice minister. Desa employed former Lieutenant Bustillo as head of security between 2013 and 2015.

Ms. Caceres had reported multiple death threats linked to her campaign against the dam, including several from Desa employees. The Honduran Government largely ignored her requests for protection, and Desa continues to deny any involvement in the murder.

It is inconceivable to anyone who knows Honduras that this outrageous crime was carried out by these individuals without orders from above. The question is whether the investigation will identify the intellectual authors, which almost never happens in Honduras. In fact, as Global Witness, the U.S. Department of State, and others have documented, there have been scores of killings of environmental activists in Honduras that have never been credibly investigated and for which no one has been punished.

I have no doubt that one of the reasons this case has progressed at all is because U.S. law enforcement experts, supported by the U.S. Embassy, have assisted in the investigation, and because of the efforts of Honduran Attorney General Oscar Fernando Chincilla.

However, as I have said before, in Honduras where impunity is the norm, a case of such domestic and international importance should also be the subject of a parallel independent investigation. The obvious entities to convene such an inquiry are the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, MACCIH; yet the Honduran Government continues to reject such an inquiry.

The United States and Honduras have a troubled history; yet we and the Honduran people share many interests. We want to continue to help Honduras address the deeply rooted poverty, inequality, violence, and impunity that have caused so much suffering and hardship and contributed to the migration of tens of thousands of Hondurans, including children, to the United States.

But for this Senator, that requires solving the Berta Caceres case and undertaking credible investigations and prosecutions of the shocking number of assassinations of other social activists, journalists, and human rights defenders in recent years. It means Honduran officials publicly affirming and defending the legitimate role of such activists, who in the past have been ignored, threatened, and treated as legitimate targets. Only then will it be clear that the Honduran Government is committed to justice and that our assistance will achieve lasting results.

The Department of State needs to thoroughly and transparently investigate whether Major Diaz and Lieutenant Bustillo were in fact trained by the United States. If so, the Congress and the Honduran people deserve to know how they were selected, what training they received, and any steps taken to improve the process of screening potential trainees and to monitor the conduct of those who have received U.S. training.

Finally, as I have said before, as long as the Agua Zarca project and others like it continue over the objections of indigenous people whose livelihoods and cultures are intrinsically linked to the rivers that are impacted, the confrontations and violence will continue. The Honduran Government, like other governments in that region, needs to change its way of doing business in areas where the rights and interests of indigenous people have long been violated and ignored.

Given the shameful history of the Agua Zarca project it should be cancelled. Other hydroelectric and extractive projects in indigenous territories should be reconsidered by the Honduran Government and allowed to proceed only after a transparent process based on the free, prior, informed consent of affected communities.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship's rules for the 115th Congress be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE RULES—115TH CONGRESS

JURISDICTION

Per Rule XXV(1) of the Standing Rules of the Senate:

(1) Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to which committee shall be referred all proposed legislation, messages, petitions, memorials, and other matters relating to the Small Business Administration;

(2) Any proposed legislation reported by such committee which relates to matters other than the functions of the Small Business Administration shall, at the request of the chairman of any standing committee having jurisdiction over the subject matter extraneous to the functions of the Small Business Administration, be considered and reported by such standing committee prior to its consideration by the Senate; and likewise measures reported by other committees directly relating to the Small Business Administration shall, at the request of the Chair of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, be referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship for its consideration of any portion of the measure dealing with the Small Business Administration and be reported by this committee prior to its consideration by the Senate.

(3) Such committee shall also study and survey by means of research and investigation all problems of American small business enterprises, and report thereon from time to time.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

GENERAL

All applicable provisions of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Senate Resolutions, and the Legislative Reorganization Acts of 1946 and of 1970 (as amended), shall govern the Committee.

MEETINGS

(a) The regular meeting day of the Committee shall be the first Thursday of each month unless otherwise directed by the Chair. All other meetings may be called by the Chair as he or she deems necessary, on 5 business days notice where practicable. If at least three Members of the Committee desire the Chair to call a special meeting, they may file in the office of the Committee a written request therefor, addressed to the Chair. Immediately thereafter, the Clerk of the Committee shall notify the Chair of such request. If, within 3 calendar days after the filing of such request, the Chair fails to call the requested special meeting, which is to be held within 7 calendar days after the filing of such request, a majority of the Committee Members may file in the Office of the Committee their written notice that a special Committee meeting will be held, specifying the date, hour and place thereof, and the Committee shall meet at that time and place. Immediately upon the filing of such notice, the Clerk of the Committee shall notify all Committee Members that such special meeting will be held and inform them of

its date, hour and place. If the Chair is not present at any regular, additional or special meeting, such member of the Committee as the Chair shall designate shall preside. For any meeting or hearing of the Committee, the Ranking Member may delegate to any Minority Member the authority to serve as Ranking Member, and that Minority Member shall be afforded all the rights and responsibilities of the Ranking Member for the duration of that meeting or hearing. Notice of any designation shall be provided to the Chief Clerk as early as practicable.

(b) It shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless an electronic copy of such amendment has been delivered to the Clerk of the Committee at least 2 business days prior to the meeting. Following receipt of all amendments, the Clerk shall disseminate the amendments to all Members of the Committee. This subsection may be waived by agreement of the Chair and Ranking Member or by a majority vote of the members of the Committee.

QUORUMS

(a)(1) A majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for reporting any legislative measure or nomination.

(2) One-third of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of routine business, provided that one Minority Member is present. The term "routine business" includes, but is not limited to, the consideration of legislation pending before the Committee and any amendments thereto, and voting on such amendments, and steps in an investigation including, but not limited to, authorizing the issuance of a subpoena.

(3) In hearings, whether in public or closed session, a quorum for the asking of testimony, including sworn testimony, shall consist of one Member of the Committee.

(b) Proxies will be permitted in voting upon the business of the Committee. A Member who is unable to attend a business meeting may submit a proxy vote on any matter, in writing, or through oral or written personal instructions to a Member of the Committee or staff. Proxies shall in no case be counted for establishing a quorum.

NOMINATIONS

In considering a nomination, the Committee shall conduct an investigation or review of the nominee's experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity to serve in the position to which he or she has been nominated. In any hearings on the nomination, the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to his or her nomination for office. To aid in such investigation or review, each nominee may be required to submit a sworn detailed statement including biographical, financial, policy, and other information which the Committee may request. The Committee may specify which items in such statement are to be received on a confidential basis.

HEARINGS, SUBPOENAS, & LEGAL COUNSEL

(a)(1) The Chair of the Committee may initiate a hearing of the Committee on his or her authority or upon his or her approval of a request by any Member of the Committee. If such request is by the Ranking Member, a decision shall be communicated to the Ranking Member within 7 business days. Written notice of all hearings, including the title, a description of the hearing, and a tentative witness list shall be given at least 5 business days in advance, where practicable, to all Members of the Committee.

(2) Hearings of the Committee shall not be scheduled outside the District of Columbia

unless specifically authorized by the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member or by consent of a majority of the Committee. Such consent may be given informally, without a meeting, but must be in writing.

(b)(1) Any Member of the Committee shall be empowered to administer the oath to any witness testifying as to fact.

(2) The Chair and Ranking Member shall be empowered to call an equal number of witnesses to a Committee hearing. Subject to Senate Standing Rule 26(4)(d), such number shall exclude any Administration witness unless such witness would be the sole hearing witness, in which case the Ranking Member shall be entitled to invite one witness. The preceding two sentences shall not apply when a witness appears as the nominee. Interrogation of witnesses at hearings shall be conducted on behalf of the Committee by Members of the Committee or such Committee staff as is authorized by the Chair or Ranking Minority Member.

(3) Witnesses appearing before the Committee shall file with the Clerk of the Committee a written statement of the prepared testimony at least two business days in advance of the hearing at which the witness is to appear unless this requirement is waived by the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member.

(c) Any witness summoned to a public or closed hearing may be accompanied by counsel of his or her own choosing, who shall be permitted while the witness is testifying to advise the witness of his or her legal rights. Failure to obtain counsel will not excuse the witness from appearing and testifying.

(d) Subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses or the production of memoranda, documents, records, and other materials may be authorized by the Chair with the consent of the Ranking Minority Member or by the consent of a majority of the Members of the Committee. Such consent may be given informally, without a meeting, but must be in writing. The Chair may subpoena attendance or production without the consent of the Ranking Minority Member when the Chair has not received notification from the Ranking Minority Member of disapproval of the subpoena within 72 hours of being notified of the intended subpoena, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Subpoenas shall be issued by the Chair or by the Member of the Committee designated by him or her. A subpoena for the attendance of a witness shall state briefly the purpose of the hearing and the matter or matters to which the witness is expected to testify. A subpoena for the production of memoranda, documents, records, and other materials shall identify the papers or materials required to be produced with as much particularity as is practicable.

(e) The Chair shall rule on any objections or assertions of privilege as to testimony or evidence in response to subpoenas or questions of Committee Members and staff in hearings.

(f) Testimony may be submitted to the formal record for a period not less than two weeks following a hearing or roundtable, unless otherwise agreed to by the Chair and Ranking Member.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

(a) No confidential testimony taken by, or confidential material presented to, the Committee in executive session, or any report of the proceedings of a closed hearing, or confidential testimony or material submitted pursuant to a subpoena, shall be made public, either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless authorized by a majority of the Members. Other confidential material or testimony submitted to the Committee may be disclosed if authorized by the Chair with the consent of the Ranking Member.

(b) Persons asserting confidentiality of documents or materials submitted to the Committee offices shall clearly designate them as such on their face. Designation of submissions as confidential does not prevent their use in furtherance of Committee business.

MEDIA & BROADCASTING

(a) At the discretion of the Chair, public meetings of the Committee may be televised, broadcasted, or recorded in whole or in part by a member of the Senate Press Gallery or an employee of the Senate. Any such person wishing to televise, broadcast, or record a Committee meeting must request approval of the Chair by submitting a written request to the Committee Office by 5 p.m. the day before the meeting. Notice of televised or broadcasted hearings shall be provided to the Ranking Minority Member as soon as practicable.

(b) During public meetings of the Committee, any person using a camera, microphone, or other electronic equipment may not position or use the equipment in a way that interferes with the seating, vision, or hearing of Committee members or staff on the dais, or with the orderly process of the meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEES

The Committee shall not have standing subcommittees.

AMENDMENT OF RULES

The foregoing rules may be added to, modified or amended; provided, however, that not less than a majority of the entire Membership so determined at a regular meeting with due notice, or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE USS "HOUSTON"

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, yesterday marked the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the USS *Houston* (CA-30), the "flagship" of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, which fought bravely against the Imperial Japanese Navy Battle Fleet. During an engagement on March 1, 1942, the USS *Houston* and the Australian cruiser HMAS *Perth* were sunk at the Battle of Sunda Strait, suffering a combined loss of nearly 1,000 servicemen; the surviving sailors and marines became prisoners of war. After the war, it was revealed that they had been sent to Japan and then transferred to the mainland and used as slave labor for construction of the Thai-Burma Railway. Only 266 men from the *Houston's* complement of 1,008 and 214 of the *Perth's* complement of 681 returned home after the war.

The news of this horrific loss hit the Lone Star state hard, but with typical Texan gusto and determination, it prompted a mass recruiting drive for volunteers to replace the lost crew. On Memorial Day 1942, a crowd of nearly 200,000 witnessed 1,000 "Houston Volunteers" inducted into the Navy. An accompanying bond drive raised over \$85 million, enough to pay for a new cruiser and an aircraft carrier, the USS *San Jacinto*. This historic event speaks to the American spirit and grit as well as our enduring alliance with Australia.

In honor of this occasion, we remember the brave men of Texas, and all of those from the Greatest Generation, who gave so much to preserve freedom

in the Pacific and fight for America. They fought for country and liberty in the face of impossible odds. These sailors, soldiers, and marines represent America's unbeatable determination.

REMEMBERING EDWARD "ED" GARVEY

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of my friend Edward "Ed" Garvey. Ed spent his lifetime fighting for equality, justice, and fairness for all Wisconsinites and Americans and did so with passion, joy, and a great Irish wit.

Ed was born in 1940 in Burlington, WI, to Edward and June Garvey. His legacy of leadership and service began at a young age. He emerged as a young leader in Wisconsin through Badger Boys State and as student body president at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Ed's lifelong commitment to social justice and racial equality began in college. As a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Council, Ed traveled to the South to join the African American civil rights movement. Following 2 years serving our Nation in the Army, Ed attended the University of Wisconsin Law School, graduating in 1969.

Thereafter, Ed joined the Minneapolis law firm Lindquist and Vennum and worked for the newly formed National Football League Players Association—NFLPA. For 12 years, Ed fought for labor rights for NFL players and workers, first as the NFLPA's attorney and eventually as its first executive director. He won greater freedom and economic fairness for the players, securing a fair share of profits for players who at the time needed second jobs to supplement their \$35,000 salaries.

Ed was never shy or deferential. He spoke truth to power and challenged the system anywhere he found an injustice. He loved a good fight, and he took great pleasure in the battles, but he was always respectful and driven by the progressive values that guided him. In moments of the greatest conflict, Ed would often use humor to disarm others while making a point. Even his greatest adversaries appreciated his principled positions and enjoyed his wit and intellect.

After more than a decade with the NFL, Ed returned home and was named Wisconsin Deputy Attorney General, where he took on big polluters and fought for environmental protections. He ran for the Senate twice, and in his bid for Governor in 1998, Ed not only fought for campaign finance reform, he led by example because he has always been deeply committed to changing a system where powerful interests have too much influence over public policy. While Ed came up short in his campaigns, he never gave up his fight for the "little guy" as a respected lawyer and as a leading progressive voice in our State.

Ed understood how important it is to pass on to the next generation our proud, progressive tradition in Wisconsin. He founded "Fighting Bob Fest" to honor the legacy of former progressive Wisconsin Governor and U.S. Senator Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette. Each year, Ed brought progressives together from across the country to share this tradition and give people a voice.

Ed's list of accomplishments and successes is long and has one thing common: He was committed to something bigger than he was. If you asked him, he would say his greatest accomplishment was his family. He spent more than five wonderful decades filled with adventures with his wife, Betty, and their three daughters, Pam, Kathleen, and Lizzy. In recent years, his four grandchildren were his greatest joy. I know that their wonderful memories of him will stay with them always.

I feel so privileged to have known and worked with Ed since my early years in public service. Ed lived his life and pursued his work with persistence and purpose. He loved Wisconsin and stood up for people from different walks of life because he wanted to make a difference in people's lives.

Perhaps most important, Ed inspired generations of young people to enter politics and law, to engage in our democracy, to let their voices be heard, and to never be intimidated by those of wealth, power, and privilege. I am a better person for having fought with him in support of a more progressive Wisconsin, and I am honored to work to continue his important legacy. "Forward!"

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES EDWARD GRAY

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize 17-year-old Charles Edward Gray for his service to his community. Charles is a member of the Montana Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 214, out of Helena, MT.

On November 16, 2016, Charles was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout at his Eagle board review. Charles' Eagle Scout Service Project involved the planning, building, and installation of three wheelchair ramps at the YMCA Camp Child where children and families grow, learn new skills, and have fun in Montana's outdoors. He made the ramps out of treated lumber and composite planks and installed them at the camp's main lodge and in the girls' and boys' respective shower houses. The installation of these ramps will provide access to those with disabilities for many years to come, making Camp Child a more inclusive place.

Charles is a shining example of what it means to be a local servant leader and is using his skills to better his own community. Charles, thank you for ris-

ing to the challenge of serving Montana. I look forward to seeing what great things await your future.●

TRIBUTE TO TY LANTIS

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Ty Lantis, a distinguished Montana craftsman with deep roots along the Yellowstone Valley. Ty grew up not too far from where the Powder River joins the Yellowstone River. During his adolescent years, Ty's family operated a saw mill south of Terry. He grew up building barns, garages, sheds, and many other structures. It is no surprise that Ty learned to make good use of his own talents and Montana's abundance of trees in order to become a successful homebuilder.

Shortly after graduating from Terry High School in Prairie County, Ty moved west along the Yellowstone Valley and started building homes in the Billings area. He helped build his first home when he was 19 years old. After a few more years of honing his craft, Ty teamed up with Greg Schmidt, and they launched their own company in 2003. Ty's Montana work ethic helped him to discover, develop, and deploy his talents in a way that literally helped to build a better community. In recent years, his company's craftsmanship has been honored in the Billings Parade of Homes, selected as the "Builder of the Year" in Billings, and recognized by the Yellowstone Valley People's Choice Award for homebuilding. In 2013, Ty's company built the house for the St. Jude Dream Home Giveaway, with the proceeds of this effort going to benefit children's medical research. The following year Ty served as the president of the Home Builders Association in Billings.

Despite the positive recognition from the community and from others in his industry, Ty remains a humble man who doesn't seek the attention that comes with a job well done. Ty prefers to go about his business and do quality work, but ultimately the quality of Ty's work speaks for itself. Today is my chance to say a simple thank you to Ty for the work he has done and will continue to do to build a Montana that is a treasure to all of us.●

TRIBUTE TO KIMBERLY LAWSON

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a dear friend and tireless champion of justice for working people, Kimberly Lawson. Kim's dedication to workers and their families spanned more than 30 years.

A proud daughter of northwest Indiana—Gary—and the industrial working class, Kim grew up witnessing firsthand the destruction of the industrial Midwest as corporate greed destroyed the steel industry and manufacturing jobs and decimated good-paying union jobs that built the middle class. Daughter of a union factory worker, Kim attended Purdue University, where she met the love of her life, Will Kohr.

Upon graduation, Kim began her long career in the labor movement, moving to California in 1986 to work as a journalist and an organizer with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union, UFW.

Kim and Will moved to Upper Jay, NY, where their daughter Emma was born and raised. Six, often seven days a week, Kim, an International Representative for the fiercely independent and democratic United Radio, Electrical and Machine Workers of America, UE, would drive hours in every direction from her family's cabin in Upper Jay, NY, to help workers, often against great odds, form their own unions and bargain contracts.

For two decades, Kim has done the hardest and some of the most important work anyone can do. Because of her, thousands of people have gained the courage to stand up and speak for themselves and for what is right. Because of her, many, many thousands of people, in Vermont and across the country, live measurably better lives.

Kim Lawson led the effort to successfully organize workers at workplaces in Vermont, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Counseling Services of Addison County, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, NHVAC, Berlin Health and Rehabilitation Center, Hunger Mountain Co-op, City Market Co-op, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, and the University of Vermont; and in New Hampshire, Grafton County New Hampshire Nursing Home and Public Employees, and the National Visa Center; and in New York, Adirondack Community Action Program. At a time when the wages and living standards of most people were under attack, Kim helped people organize collectively for a better life.

Kim was also a founder of the Vermont Workers Center and for years staffed the Workers Rights Hotline which, free of charge, has helped many thousands of workers learn and protect their rights under the law. She has trained, mentored, and led countless young organizers and workers who, inspired by her quiet, steadfast and relentless example, carry on her pursuit of justice.

In whatever task she set for herself, Kim worked with her whole heart and a deep sense of solidarity for her fellow humanity. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Kimberly Lawson for her tireless work on behalf of our communities and citizens.●

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT "BOB" G. SMITH

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and honor Robert "Bob" G. Smith, CEO of Goodwill Industries of Lower South Carolina—GWILSC—for 35 years of serving our great State.

Bob's dedication and passion has been a true testament to GWILSC's mission to "helping people reach their full potential through the dignity and

power of work." He has inspired and instilled confidence by promoting essential job training programs that have encouraged individuals to meet their goals.

His service has touched many people all over the South Carolina community, and his initiative to orchestrate a collaborative environment has helped to expand services that has transformed lives.

For more than three decades, Bob has worked tirelessly to serve others, and his contributions will continue to live on in the generations of South Carolinians he has been able to positively impact, and we are grateful for everything Bob has done to assist our communities. Therefore, I would like to recognize Robert "Bob" G. Smith for epitomizing the very best of the Palmetto State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:22 a.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 and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 998. An act to provide for the establishment of a process for the review of rules and sets of rules, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 83. Joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness".

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6913, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China: Mr. WALZ of Minnesota and Ms. KAPTUR of Ohio.

The message further announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group: Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. SLAUGHTER of New York, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. DEFazio of Oregon.

The message also announced that pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 2702, the Minority Leader reappoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Mr. John A. Lawrence of Washington, DC.

At 4:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1004. An act to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of information relating to pending agency regulatory actions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1009. An act to amend title 44, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to review regulations, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 998. An act to provide for the establishment of a process for the review of rules and sets of rules, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1004. An act to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of information relating to pending agency regulatory actions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1009. An act to amend title 44, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to review regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC-925. A communication from the Acting Commissioner of Social Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the awarding of a sole-source contract to obtain wage information from payroll data providers for the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance programs; to the Committee on Finance.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. HATCH for the Committee on Finance.

*Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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. PORTMAN (for himself, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BURR):

S. 489. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to participant votes on the suspension of benefits under multiemployer plans in critical and declining status; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 490. A bill to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction

of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 491. A bill to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving Clark Canyon Dam; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 492. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow members of the Ready Reserve of a reserve component of the Armed Forces to make elective deferrals on the basis of their service to the Ready Reserve and on the basis of their other employment; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 493. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 494. A bill to improve transparency regarding the activities of the American Red Cross; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 495. A bill to provide incentives for investment in research and development for new medicines, to enhance access to new medicines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. YOUNG, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 496. A bill to repeal the rule issued by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. BLUNT, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

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; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 498. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense to use only human-based methods for training members of the Armed Forces in the treatment of severe combat injuries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 499. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to address needs in the agriculture sector by establishing a voluntary, short-term conserving use program for participating farmers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 500. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 501. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 502. A bill to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 503. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make publicly available certain regulatory records relating to the administration of the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the use of an alternative depreciation system for taxpayers violating rules under the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 504. A bill to permanently authorize the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Travel Card Program; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 505. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an energy equivalent of a gallon of diesel in the case of liquefied natural gas for purposes of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund financing rate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 506. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure from the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 507. A bill to sustain economic development and recreational use of National Forest System land in the State of Montana, to add certain land to the National Wilderness Preservation System, to designate new areas for recreation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 508. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 509. A bill to improve the control and management of invasive species that threaten and harm Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. TESTER, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MERKLEY,

Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. UDALL, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. KING, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 510. A bill to protect a woman's right and ability to determine whether and when to bear a child or end a pregnancy by limiting restrictions on the provision of abortion services; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MANCHIN:

S. 511. A bill to provide for the sealing of records relating to Federal nonviolent criminal offenses related to substance use disorders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 512. A bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 513. A bill to designate the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area in the State of Oregon; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 514. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 515. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas, to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans, and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 516. A bill to provide grants to assist States in developing and implementing plans to address cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. ERNST, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. SASSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 517. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to the ethanol waiver for Reid vapor pressure limitations under such Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 518. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 519. A bill to amend the Safe Water Drinking Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish maximum contaminant levels for

certain contaminants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 520. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to reform payment to States under the Medicaid program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 521. A bill to make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at a discount to veterans; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 522. A bill to establish a 5-year ban on individuals appointed to Executive Schedule positions and Members of Congress engaging in lobbying activities at the Federal level; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. NELSON, Mr. KING, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HASSAN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 523. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a stewardship fee on the production and importation of opioid pain relievers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 524. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent certain provisions of the Heartland, Habitat, Harvest, and Horticulture Act of 2008 relating to timber; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 525. A bill to require the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP code for particular communities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCOTT, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 526. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to provide for expanded participation in the microloan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. BLUNT:

S. 527. A bill to improve access to emergency medical services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SASSE (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. INHOFE):

S.J. Res. 26. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. DAINES):

S.J. Res. 27. A joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. MORAN, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S.J. Res. 28. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Administrator of the Envi-

ronmental Protection Agency relating to accidental release prevention requirements of risk management programs under the Clean Air Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S.J. Res. 29. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Office of Natural Resources Revenue of the Department of the Interior relating to consolidated Federal oil and gas and Federal and Indian coal valuation reform; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. LEAHY):

S.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution providing for the reappointment of Steve Case as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. YOUNG:

S.J. Res. 31. A joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, successor organizations, and associated forces; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. Res. 78. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate recognizing 3 years of Russian military aggression in Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. Res. 79. A resolution designating March 2, 2017, as "Read Across America Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. Res. 80. A resolution designating March 3, 2017, as "World Wildlife Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CARDIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Con. Res. 7. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that tax-exempt fraternal benefit societies have historically provided and continue to provide critical benefits to the people and communities of the United States; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. Con. Res. 8. A concurrent resolution clarifying any potential misunderstanding as to whether actions taken by President Donald J. Trump constitute a violation of the Emoluments Clause, and calling on President Trump to divest his interest in, and

sever his relationship to, the Trump Organization; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 27

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 27, a bill to establish an independent commission to examine and report on the facts regarding the extent of Russian official and unofficial cyber operations and other attempts to interfere in the 2016 United States national election, and for other purposes.

S. 141

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 141, a bill to improve understanding and forecasting of space weather events, and for other purposes.

S. 200

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 200, a bill to prohibit the conduct of a first-use nuclear strike absent a declaration of war by Congress.

S. 232

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 232, a bill to terminate the EB-5 Visa Program and to reallocate the employment creation visas to the other employment-based visa classifications.

S. 236

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 236, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 317

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 317, a bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes.

S. 341

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 341, a bill to provide for congressional oversight of actions to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 356

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 356, a bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to improve access to, and the delivery of, children's health services through school-based health centers, and for other purposes.

S. 372

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) 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. 405

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 405, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide an exclusion from income for student loan forgiveness for students who have died or become disabled.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) 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. 413

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 413, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA-PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies.

S. 445

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 446

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 446, a bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

S. 455

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 455, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count resident time spent in a critical access hospital as resident time spent in a nonprovider setting for purposes of making Medicare direct and indirect graduate medical education payments.

S. 461

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cospon-

sor of S. 461, a bill to allow Homeland Security Grant Program funds to be used to safeguard faith-based community centers across the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 469

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the importation of affordable and safe drugs by wholesale distributors, pharmacies, and individuals.

S. 473

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 473, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make qualification requirements for entitlement to Post-9/11 Education Assistance more equitable, to improve support of veterans receiving such educational assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 487

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 487, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S.J. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 12, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration relating to the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 490. A bill to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Montana is the fifth largest producer of hydropower in the Nation, with 23 hydroelectric dams contributing one-third of all electricity production in Montana. The Gibson Dam project near Augusta,

Montana will provide fifty to one hundred years of stable tax revenue for the state and local counties, reduce carbon emissions, create good-paying jobs, and will provide clean, reliable electricity to Montana. This bill would reinstate and provide a six-year extension of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license, allowing Montana to continue to be a leader in clean, hydropower electricity.

I thank Senators TESTER and RISCH for joining me on introducing this bill and I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation.

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. 490

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

SECTION 1. REINSTATEMENT AND EXTENSION OF TIME FOR FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT INVOLVING GIBSON DAM.

Notwithstanding the time period specified in section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) that would otherwise apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project numbered 12478-003, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (referred to in this section as the "Commission") shall, at the request of the licensee for the project, after reasonable notice, and in accordance with the good faith, due diligence, and public interest requirements of, and the procedures of the Commission under, that section, reinstate the license and extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence construction of the project for the 6-year period that begins on the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 491. A bill to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving Clark Canyon Dam; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, hydropower is a critical component of an all of the above energy portfolio that provides a reliable and affordable source of electricity for hard-working Montana families. Clark Canyon Dam hydropower project near Dillon, MT will power over 1,000 homes annually in the region, create good-paying jobs, reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and produce hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax revenue for Montana. This bill would reinstate and provide a 3-year contract extension of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license, allowing Montana to continue to be a leader in clean, hydropower electricity.

I thank Senators TESTER, RISCH and CRAPO for joining me on introducing this bill, and I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation.

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. 491

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF TIME FOR A FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT INVOLVING CLARK CANYON DAM.

Notwithstanding the time period described in section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) that would otherwise apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project numbered 12429, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (referred to in this section as the “Commission”) shall, at the request of the licensee for the project, and after reasonable notice and in accordance with the procedures of the Commission under that section, reinstate the license and extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence construction of project works for the 3-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 492. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow members of the Ready Reserve of a reserve component of the Armed Forces to make elective deferrals on the basis of their service to the Ready Reserve and on the basis of their other employment; to the Committee on Finance.

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. 492

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 “Service-member Retirement Improvement Act”.

SEC. 2. ELECTIVE DEFERRALS BY MEMBERS OF THE READY RESERVE OF A RESERVE COMPONENT OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 402(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(9) ELECTIVE DEFERRALS BY MEMBERS OF READY RESERVE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified ready reservist (other than a specified Federal employee ready reservist) for any taxable year, the limitations of subparagraphs (A) and (C) of paragraph (1) shall be applied separately with respect to—

“(i) elective deferrals of such qualified ready reservist with respect to the Thrift Savings Fund (as defined in section 7701(j)), and

“(ii) any other elective deferrals of such qualified ready reservist.

“(B) SPECIAL RULE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES IN THE READY RESERVE NOT ELIGIBLE TO MAKE ELECTIVE DEFERRALS TO A PLAN OTHER THAN THE THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN.—In the case of a specified Federal employee ready reservist for any taxable year—

“(i) the applicable dollar amount in effect under paragraph (1)(B) for such taxable year shall be twice such amount (as determined without regard to this subclause), and

“(ii) for purposes of paragraph (1)(C), the applicable dollar amount under section

414(v)(2)(B)(i) (as otherwise determined for purposes of paragraph (1)(C)) shall be twice such amount (as determined without regard to this subclause).

“(C) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph—

“(i) QUALIFIED READY RESERVIST.—The term ‘qualified ready reservist’ means any individual for any taxable year if such individual received compensation for service as a member of the Ready Reserve of a reserve component (as defined in section 101 of title 37, United States Code) during such taxable year.

“(ii) SPECIFIED FEDERAL EMPLOYEE READY RESERVIST.—The term ‘specified Federal employee ready reservist’ means any individual for any taxable year if such individual—

“(I) is a qualified ready reservist for such taxable year,

“(II) would be eligible to make elective deferrals with respect to the Thrift Savings Fund (as defined in section 7701(j)) during such taxable year determined without regard to the service of such individual described in clause (i), and

“(III) is not eligible to make elective deferrals with respect to any plan other than such Thrift Savings Fund during such taxable year.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 503. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make publicly available certain regulatory records relating to the administration of the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the use of an alternative depreciation system for taxpayers violating rules under the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act. This bill is a necessary step to restoring public information on animal cruelty that was removed from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s, USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS, website under the Trump administration.

On February 3, 2017, APHIS removed information from its website related to oversight and enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, AWA, and Horse Protection Act, HPA, including animal inspection and licensing reports for more than 9,000 licensed facilities that use animals—facilities like commercial dog breeding operators, animal research labs, roadside zoos, and horse show participants. Since 2009, APHIS has made this information public to increase transparency and hold violators of these animal cruelty laws accountable. This information is now hidden from the public and is only available through a Freedom of Information Act Request, which can take months and sometimes even years for an agency to respond.

The Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act restores trans-

parency by requiring APHIS to once again make AWA and HPA inspection reports accessible to the public. In my view, transparency is key when it comes to giving animal lovers and consumers information about whether their pets or the products they buy are the result of heartbreaking beginnings. These inspection reports also help law enforcement officials track and understand trends in animal welfare violations.

Preventing animal cruelty starts with getting facts out to consumers. By shedding light on AWA and HPA violations, the Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act holds accountable puppy mill operators and other businesses that use animals for breeding, research, and testing.

To ensure that taxpayers are not paying for entities that violate animal welfare laws, the Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act also prohibits businesses that are found to be in violation of the AWA or HPA from collecting certain tax benefits.

Under current tax and accounting rules, companies can write off the value of breeding and working animals on their taxes using accelerated depreciation, as if those animals are machinery. They keep that preferential and valuable tax benefit, even if they violate animal cruelty laws. The Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act puts an end to this practice and holds companies accountable for breaking the law by prohibiting businesses found to have violated AWA or HPA from claiming accelerated depreciation for tax purposes for five years.

The Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act is a much needed step to restore transparency in animal cruelty and to hold companies accountable for violating the law.

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. 503

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 “Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act”.

SEC. 2. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF REGULATORY RECORDS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall maintain and promptly make available to the public in an online searchable database in a machine-readable format on the website of the Department of Agriculture information relating to the administration of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) and the Horse Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 1821 et seq.), including—

(1) the entirety of each report of any inspection conducted, and record of any enforcement action taken, under—

(A) either of those Acts; or

(B) any regulation issued under those Acts;

(2) with respect to the Animal Welfare Act—

(A) the entirety of each annual report submitted by a research facility under section 13 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 2143); and

(B) the name, address, and license or registration number of each research facility, exhibitor, dealer, and other person or establishment—

(i) licensed by the Secretary under section 3 or 12 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 2133, 2142); or

(ii) registered with the Secretary under section 6 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 2136); and

(3) with respect to the Horse Protection Act, the name and address of—

(A) any person that is licensed to conduct any inspection under section 4(c) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 1823(c)); or

(B) any organization or association that is licensed by the Department of Agriculture to promote horses through—

(i) the showing, exhibiting, sale, auction, or registry of horses; or

(ii) the conduct of any activity that contributes to the advancement of horses.

SEC. 3. USE OF ALTERNATIVE DEPRECIATION SYSTEM FOR TAXPAYERS VIOLATING CERTAIN ANIMAL PROTECTION RULES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 168(g)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (D), by inserting “and” at the end of subparagraph (E), and by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following new subparagraph:

“(F) any property placed in service by a disqualified taxpayer during an applicable period.”

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 168(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(8) DISQUALIFIED TAXPAYER; APPLICABLE PERIOD.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(F)—

“(A) DISQUALIFIED TAXPAYER.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘disqualified taxpayer’ means any taxpayer if such taxpayer—

“(I) has been assessed a civil penalty under section 19(b) of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2149(b)) or section 6(b) of the Horse Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 1825(b)) and either the period for seeking judicial review of the final agency action has lapsed or there has been a final judgment with respect to an appeal of such assessment, or

“(II) has been convicted under section 19(d) of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2149(d)) or section 6(a) of the Horse Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 1825(a)) and there is a final judgment with respect to such conviction.

“(ii) AGGREGATION RULES.—All persons treated as a single employer under subsection (a) or (b) of section 52, or subsection (m) or (o) of section 414, shall be treated as one taxpayer for purposes of this subparagraph.

“(B) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—The term ‘applicable period’ means, with respect to any violation described in subparagraph (A), the 5-taxable year period beginning with the taxable year in which the period for seeking judicial review of a civil penalty described in subparagraph (A)(i) has lapsed or in which there has been a final judgment entered with respect to the violation, whichever is earlier.”

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The last sentence of section 179(d)(1) is amended by inserting “or any property placed in service by a disqualified taxpayer (as defined in section 168(g)(8)(A)) during an applicable period (as defined in section 168(g)(8)(B))” after “section 50(b)”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to property placed in service in taxable years beginning

after the date of the enactment of this section.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 513. A bill to designate the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area in the State of Oregon; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing a bill honoring two Oregon legends—Frank and Jeanne Moore—who have spent their lives together on the North Umpqua River as fishers, stewards of the land, and hosts to visitors from across the world at the famous Steamboat Inn.

The North Umpqua River runs through the Umpqua National Forest in Southwest Oregon. The river is a destination for rafters and kayakers, and is home to some of the best steelhead runs in the world, making it a fly-fishing haven. Frank and Jeanne Moore founded the Steamboat Inn in 1957, and spent years introducing visitors to the beauty of the Umpqua National Forest and the North Umpqua River. Frank, a decorated WWII veteran and a recent inductee into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, was the fishing guide for the Inn's visitors, and has now been fishing this river for 70 years. The Steamboat Inn's website paints a wonderful picture of how Frank and Jeanne welcomed visitors to the North Umpqua River:

“Each night, Jeanne Moore cooked evening meals for as many as sixty road construction crew members, who ate in shifts, before turning her attention to feeding her lodge guests. Frank pitched in, helped with the cooking, and also made a policy decision that would henceforth guide the Fisherman's Dinner: From then on, anglers could fish until the last light disappeared on the river. Dinner would be served one half hour after sunset!”

In the 1960's, the river and its tributaries experienced significant degradation, and Frank Moore has worked tirelessly ever since to rehabilitate the river and the steelhead populations. Frank served on the State of Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and has received the National Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year award and the Wild Steelhead Coalition Conservation Award. He works with his neighbors and local organizations to monitor the river, and just about everyone he comes across on his drives along the river knows his name and knows his work. Frank and Jeanne have opened their door to visitors and have taken great care of this Oregon treasure.

The Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area will stand as a tribute to the Moore's and their dedication to protecting this special place in Oregon and preserving the hard work they've put in to ensure that Oregonians and visitors alike will have a healthy river, full of steelhead, to visit for decades to come.

It is my honor to reintroduce this bill today with my colleague from Oregon, Senator JEFF MERKLEY, on behalf of these extraordinary Oregonians.

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. 513

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 “Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area Designation Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) Frank Moore has committed his life to family, friends, his country, and fly fishing;

(2) Frank Moore is a World War II veteran who stormed the beaches of Normandy along with 150,000 troops during the D-Day Allied invasion and was awarded the Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor for his bravery;

(3) Frank Moore returned home after the war, started a family, and pursued his passion of fishing on the winding rivers in Oregon;

(4) as the proprietor of the Steamboat Inn along the North Umpqua River in Oregon for nearly 20 years, Frank Moore, along with his wife Jeanne, shared his love of fishing, the flowing river, and the great outdoors, with visitors from all over the United States and the world;

(5) Frank Moore has spent most of his life fishing the vast rivers of Oregon, during which time he has contributed significantly to efforts to conserve fish habitats and protect river health, including serving on the State of Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission;

(6) Frank Moore has been recognized for his conservation work with the National Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year award, the Wild Steelhead Coalition Conservation Award, and his 2010 induction into the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame; and

(7) in honor of the many accomplishments of Frank Moore, both on and off the river, approximately 99,653 acres of Forest Service land in the State of Oregon should be designated as the “Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area”.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MAP.—The term “Map” means the map entitled “Frank Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area Designation Act” and dated June 23, 2016.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(3) SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA.—The term “Special Management Area” means the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area designated by section 4(a).

(4) STATE.—The term “State” means the State of Oregon.

SEC. 4. FRANK AND JEANNE MOORE WILD STEELHEAD SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA, OREGON.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The approximately 99,653 acres of Forest Service land in the State, as generally depicted on the Map, is designated as the “Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area”.

(b) MAP; LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the

Secretary shall prepare a map and legal description of the Special Management Area.

(2) **FORCE OF LAW.**—The map and legal description prepared under paragraph (1) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in the map and legal description.

(3) **AVAILABILITY.**—The map and legal description prepared under paragraph (1) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(c) **ADMINISTRATION.**—Subject to valid existing rights, the Special Management Area shall be administered by the Secretary—

(1) in accordance with all laws (including regulations) applicable to the National Forest System; and

(2) in a manner that—

(A) conserves and enhances the natural character, scientific use, and the botanical, recreational, ecological, fish and wildlife, scenic, drinking water, and cultural values of the Special Management Area;

(B) maintains and seeks to enhance the wild salmonid habitat of the Special Management Area;

(C) maintains or enhances the watershed as a thermal refuge for wild salmonids; and

(D) preserves opportunities for recreation, including primitive recreation.

(d) **FISH AND WILDLIFE.**—Nothing in this section affects the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State with respect to fish and wildlife in the State.

(e) **ADJACENT MANAGEMENT.**—Nothing in this section—

(1) creates any protective perimeter or buffer zone around the Special Management Area; or

(2) modifies the applicable travel management plan for the Special Management Area.

(f) **WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT.**—Nothing in this section prohibits the Secretary, in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies, as appropriate, from conducting wildland fire operations in the Special Management Area, consistent with the purposes of this Act, including the use of aircraft, machinery, mechanized equipment, fire breaks, backfires, and retardant.

(g) **VEGETATION MANAGEMENT.**—Nothing in this section prohibits the Secretary from conducting vegetation management projects within the Special Management Area in a manner consistent with—

(1) the purposes described in subsection (c); and

(2) the applicable forest plan.

(h) **PROTECTION OF TRIBAL RIGHTS.**—Nothing in this section diminishes any treaty rights of an Indian tribe.

(i) **WITHDRAWAL.**—Subject to valid existing rights, the Federal land within the boundaries of the Special Management Area river segments designated by subsection (a) is withdrawn from all forms of—

(1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;

(2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(3) disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S.J. Res. 29. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Office of Natural Resources Revenue of the Department of the Interior relating to consolidated Federal oil and gas and Federal and Indian coal valuation re-

form; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth-generation Montanan and having spent 18 years in the private sector, I know how important it is to receive your fair share in any deal. However, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue Consolidated Federal oil and gas and Federal and Indian coal valuation reform rule does not protect the taxpayers' fair share of mineral royalties as finalized. The rule as finalized creates high uncertainty and, at worst, could cause many energy operators across the country to shut-in what is already very capital-intensive production, placing our Nation's energy and infrastructure security and good-paying energy jobs at risk. The rule could leave the taxpayer at a net loss in royalties. This resolution would halt implementation of the final ONRR valuation rule, a rule whose implementation is already postponed due to litigation, allowing the States and producers to work with the Department of the Interior to reform valuation in a common-sense way.

I thank Senators HATCH and KENNEDY for joining me on introducing this resolution, and I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S.J. RES. 29

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Office of Natural Resources Revenue of the Department of the Interior relating to "Consolidated Federal Oil & Gas and Federal & Indian Coal Valuation Reform" (published at 81 Fed. Reg. 43337 (July 1, 2016)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 78—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE RECOGNIZING 3 YEARS OF RUSSIAN MILITARY AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.:

S. RES. 78

Whereas, according to conservative estimates from the United Nations, approximately 10,000 people have been killed, over 20,000 wounded, and nearly 2,000,000 internally displaced since the current conflict in Ukraine began in 2014;

Whereas, March 1, 2014, marks 3 years since the Government of the Russian Federation authorized military forces to illegally annex the Crimean region of Ukraine;

Whereas the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances signed by the Russian Federation in December 1994 provided security assurances against the threats or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine;

Whereas the United States and other countries stated in a letter to the United Nations that the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and thus was a breach of the Budapest Memorandum;

Whereas, in September 2014, the Russian Federation signed the Minsk I Protocol, which called for an immediate ceasefire and effective monitoring by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);

Whereas, in February 2015, the Russian Federation signed the Minsk II Protocol, which again called for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and effective monitoring by the OSCE;

Whereas Russian, Ukrainian, and European representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the Minsk agreements at the 2017 Munich Security Conference;

Whereas Secretary of State Rex Tillerson recently stated that the United States expects "Russia to honor its commitments to the Minsk agreements and work to de-escalate violence in Ukraine";

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation, despite its commitments to these peace accords, continues to destabilize Ukraine through a variety of military and political maneuvers;

Whereas OSCE observers still do not have full, unimpeded access to the Ukrainian-Russian border;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation continues to supply weapons, equipment, and personnel to separatists intent on undermining the sovereignty of Ukraine and who recently relaunched a campaign of aggression in January 2017;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has yet to withdraw its heavy weapons from Ukraine and continues its sabotage and subversion efforts;

Whereas Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an order recognizing passports issued by separatist rebels in Eastern Ukraine;

Whereas the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-272) authorized increased military and economic assistance for Ukraine;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation continues to engage in a campaign of disinformation about the conflict in both Ukraine and the West;

Whereas the defense minister of the Russian Federation recently announced the formation of "information warfare troops";

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has mobilized up to 100,000 troops to Belarus' border with Lithuania and Poland, reminiscent of actions taken at the Ukrainian border in 2014; and

Whereas it is long-standing policy of the United States Government not to recognize territorial changes effected by force alone: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns continued Russian military intervention in the sovereign state of Ukraine;

(2) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately cease all activity that seeks to normalize or recognize the Russian-backed rebel separatists in Eastern Ukraine;

(3) affirms that sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation for destabilizing the international order in Eastern Europe should not be lifted until the Russian Federation complies with all terms of the Minsk agreements and ceases its illegal attempts to annex Ukraine's Crimea; and

(4) calls on the United States Government, United States allies in Europe, the United Nations, and international partners to continue to pressure the Government of the Russian Federation to uphold its international obligations.

SENATE RESOLUTION 79—DESIGNATING MARCH 2, 2017, AS “READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 79

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success and a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and providing additional resources for reading assistance, including through the programs authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and through annual appropriations for library and literacy programs; and

Whereas more than 50 national organizations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to designate March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel (commonly known as “Dr. Seuss”), as a day to celebrate reading: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2017, as “Read Across America Day”;

(2) honors—

(A) Theodor Geisel (commonly known as “Dr. Seuss”) for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading; and

(B) the 20th anniversary of Read Across America Day; and

(3) encourages—

(A) parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of the commitment of the Senate to building a country of readers; and

(B) the people of the United States to observe Read Across America Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 80—DESIGNATING MARCH 3, 2017, AS “WORLD WILDLIFE DAY”

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 80

Whereas wildlife has provided numerous economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits during the course of human history and wildlife conservation will secure these gifts for future generations;

Whereas plant and animal species play an important role in the stability of diverse ecosystems around the world and the conservation of this biodiversity is critical to maintain the delicate balance of nature and keep complex ecosystems thriving;

Whereas observation of wild plants and animals in their natural habitat provides individuals with a more enriching world view and a greater appreciation of the wonders of the natural environment;

Whereas tens of millions of individuals in the United States strongly support the conservation of wildlife, both domestically and abroad, and wish to ensure the survival of species in the wild, such as rhinoceroses, tigers, elephants, pangolins, turtles, seahorses, sharks, ginseng, mahogany, and cacti;

Whereas the trafficking of wildlife, including timber and fish, comprises the fourth

largest global illegal trade after narcotics, the counterfeiting of products and currency, and human trafficking and has become a major transnational organized crime with an estimated worth of as much as \$19,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas increased demand in Asia for high-value illegal wildlife products, particularly elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns, has recently triggered substantial and rapid increases in poaching of these species, particularly in Africa;

Whereas trafficking of wildlife is a primary threat to many wildlife species, including elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, pangolins, and sharks;

Whereas many different kinds of criminals, including some terrorist entities and rogue security personnel, often in collusion with corrupt government officials, are involved in wildlife poaching and the movement of ivory and rhinoceros horns across Africa;

Whereas wildlife poaching presents significant security and stability challenges for military and police forces in African nations that are often threatened by heavily armed poachers and the criminal and extremist allies of those poachers;

Whereas wildlife poaching negatively impacts local communities that rely on natural resources for economic development, including tourism;

Whereas penal and financial deterrents can improve the ability of African governments to reduce poaching and trafficking and enhance their capabilities of managing their resources;

Whereas assisting institutions in developing nations, including material, training, legal, and diplomatic support, can reduce illegal wildlife trade;

Whereas wildlife provides a multitude of benefits to all nations and wildlife crime has wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social impacts;

Whereas the African elephant population has declined by 27 percent in the last decade, primarily as a result of poaching, and only approximately 415,000 such elephants remain in Africa;

Whereas, from 2007 to 2012, the number of elephants killed in Kenya increased by more than 800 percent, from 47 to 387 elephants killed;

Whereas, as a result of poaching, forest elephant populations in Minkébé National Park in Gabon have declined by 78 to 81 percent;

Whereas the number of forest elephants in the Congo Basin in Central Africa declined by approximately ⅓ between 2002 and 2012, placing forest elephants on track for extinction in the next decade;

Whereas the number of rhinoceroses killed by poachers in South Africa—

(1) increased by more than 9,000 percent between 2007 and 2014, from 13 to more than 1,200 rhinoceroses killed; and

(2) was 1,175 in 2015;

Whereas fewer than 4,000 tigers remain in the wild throughout all of Asia;

Whereas pangolins are often referred to as the most trafficked mammal in the world;

Whereas all 8 pangolin species spanning Africa and Asia are faced with extinction because pangolin scales are sought after in the practice of traditional Chinese medicine and pangolin meat is considered a delicacy;

Whereas approximately 100,000,000 sharks are killed annually, often targeted solely for their fins, and unsustainable trade is the primary cause of serious population decline in several shark species, including scalloped hammerhead sharks, great hammerhead sharks, and oceanic whitetip sharks;

Whereas the United States is developing and implementing measures to address the criminal, financial, security, and environmental aspects of wildlife trafficking;

Whereas Congress has allocated specific resources to combat wildlife trafficking and address the threats posed by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade;

Whereas, in December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 3 as World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the wild fauna and flora around the world;

Whereas March 3, 2017, represents the fourth annual celebration of World Wildlife Day;

Whereas, in 2017, the theme of World Wildlife Day is “Listen to the Young Voices”; and

Whereas, in 2017, World Wildlife Day commemorations will encourage young people, as the future leaders and decision makers of the world, to act at both local and global levels to protect wildlife and to rally together to address the ongoing overexploitation and illicit trafficking of wildlife: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 3, 2017, as “World Wildlife Day”;

(2) supports raising awareness of the benefits that wildlife provides to people and the threats facing wildlife around the world;

(3) supports escalating the fight against wildlife crime, including wildlife trafficking;

(4) applauds the domestic and international efforts to escalate the fight against wildlife crime;

(5) commends the efforts of the United States to mobilize the entire Government in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner for dramatic progress in the fight against wildlife crime; and

(6) encourages continued cooperation between the United States, international partners, local communities, nonprofit organizations, private industry, and other partner organizations in an effort to conserve and celebrate wildlife, preserving this precious resource for future generations.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 7—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT TAX-EXEMPT FRATERNAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES HAVE HISTORICALLY PROVIDED AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CRITICAL BENEFITS TO THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CARDIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 7

Whereas the fraternal benefit societies of the United States are long-standing mutual aid organizations created more than a century ago to serve the needs of communities and provide for the payment of life, health, accident, and other benefits to their members;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies represent a successful, modern-day model under which individuals come together with a common purpose to collectively provide charitable and other beneficial activities for society;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies operate under a chapter system, creating a nationwide infrastructure, combined with local energy and knowledge, which positions fraternal benefit societies to most efficiently address unmet needs in communities, many of which the government cannot address;

Whereas the fraternal benefit society model represents one of the largest member-

volunteer networks in the United States, with close to 8,000,000 people of the United States belonging to nearly 25,000 local chapters across the country;

Whereas research has shown that the value of the work of fraternal benefit societies to society is more than \$3,800,000,000 per year, accounting for charitable giving, educational programs, and volunteer activities, as well as important social capital that strengthens the fabric, safety, and quality of life in thousands of local communities in the United States;

Whereas, in 1909, Congress recognized the value of fraternal benefit societies and exempted those organizations from taxation, as later codified in section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies have adapted since 1909 to better serve the evolving needs of their members and the public;

Whereas the efforts of fraternal benefit societies to help people of the United States save money and be financially secure relieves pressure on government safety net programs; and

Whereas Congress recognizes that fraternal benefit societies have served their original purpose for over a century, helping countless individuals, families, and communities through their fraternal member activities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the fraternal benefit society model is a successful private sector economic and social support system that helps meet needs that would otherwise go unmet;

(2) the provision of payment for life, health, accident, or other benefits to the members of fraternal benefit societies in accordance with section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is necessary to support the charitable and fraternal activities of the volunteer chapters within the communities of fraternal benefit societies;

(3) fraternal benefit societies have adapted since 1909 to better serve their members and the public; and

(4) the exemption from taxation under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 of fraternal benefit societies continues to generate significant returns to the United States, and the work of fraternal benefit societies should continue to be promoted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8—CLARIFYING ANY POTENTIAL MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO WHETHER ACTIONS TAKEN BY PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF THE EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE, AND CALLING ON PRESIDENT TRUMP TO DIVEST HIS INTEREST IN, AND SEVER HIS RELATIONSHIP TO, THE TRUMP ORGANIZATION

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BENNETT, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following concurrent resolution;

which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. CON. RES. 8

Whereas article I, section 9, clause 8 of the United States Constitution (commonly known as the “Emoluments Clause”) declares, “No title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.”;

Whereas, according to the remarks of Governor Edmund Randolph at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, the Emoluments Clause “was thought proper, in order to exclude corruption and foreign influence, to prohibit any one in office from receiving or holding any emoluments from foreign states”;

Whereas the issue of foreign corruption greatly concerned the Founding Fathers of the United States, such that Alexander Hamilton in *Federalist No. 22* wrote, “In republics, persons elevated from the mass of the community, by the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, to stations of great pre-eminence and power, may find compensations for betraying their trust, which, to any but minds animated and guided by superior virtue, may appear to exceed the proportion of interest they have in the common stock, and to overbalance the obligations of duty. Hence it is that history furnishes us with so many mortifying examples of the prevalence of foreign corruption in republican governments.”;

Whereas the President of the United States is the head of the executive branch of the Federal Government and is expected to have undivided loyalty to the United States, and clearly occupies an “office of profit or trust” within the meaning of article I, section 9, clause 8 of the Constitution, according to the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice;

Whereas the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice opined in 2009 that corporations owned or controlled by a foreign government are presumptively foreign states under the Emoluments Clause;

Whereas President Donald J. Trump has a business network, the Trump Organization, that has financial interests around the world and negotiates and concludes transactions with foreign states and entities that are extensions of foreign states;

Whereas the very nature of a “blind trust,” as defined by former White House Ethics Counsels Richard Painter and Norm Eisen in an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* entitled, “Trump’s ‘blind trust’ is neither blind nor trustworthy”, dated November 15, 2016, and the Congressional Research Service report “The Use of Blind Trusts By Federal Officials”, is such that the official will have no control over, will receive no communications about, and will have no knowledge of the identity of the specific assets held in the trust, and that the manager of the trust is independent of the owner;

Whereas on January 11, 2017, President-elect Donald J. Trump and his lawyers held a press conference to announce that he would be placing his assets in a trust and turning over management of the Trump Organization to his two adult sons, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump, and executive Allen Weisselberg; that there will be no communication with President Trump and no new overseas business deals; that an ethics advisor will be appointed to the management team to fully vet any new proposed domestic deals; and that the Trump Organization will donate any profits from any foreign governments that use Trump hotels to the Department of the Treasury;

Whereas this arrangement is not sufficient because of its utter lack of independent accountability and transparency, such that the director of the Office of Government Ethics has stated that “[t]he plan the [President] has announced doesn’t meet the standards that the best of his nominees are meeting and that every president in the last four decades have met”;

Whereas the director of the Office of Government Ethics has characterized the promise to limit President Trump’s direct communication about the Trump Organization as “wholly inadequate” because President Trump would still be well-aware of the specific assets held and could receive communications about and take actions to affect the value of those assets, especially when those running the business are his own children, whom Trump will see often;

Whereas the promise that no new overseas business deals will be agreed to by the Trump Organization fails to explain what constitutes a deal, and whether expansions to existing properties, licensing or permitting fee agreements, or loans from foreign banks like Deutsche Bank AG would qualify as “deals”;

Whereas the promise that the Trump Organization will donate profits from any foreign governments that use Trump hotels does not include Trump golf courses and other properties; does not explain whether the promise covers foreign government officials who register under their own names or third-party vendors hired by foreign governments to do business with the Trump Organization; does not explain whether foreign organizations signing tenant agreements with domestic Trump businesses, such as the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, which is Trump Tower’s biggest tenant, qualifies; does not define what constitutes “profits”; does not address the fact that revenue received by a failing business still provides value to that business even if there is no net profit; and has no mechanism for the public to verify that the promise is being fulfilled;

Whereas President Trump’s lawyer claimed that “it would be impossible to find an institutional trustee that would be competent to run the Trump Organization” when there are dozens if not hundreds of highly qualified trustees who handle complicated business situations like the disposition of the Trump Organization;

Whereas, at the January 11, 2017, press conference, President-elect Trump’s lawyer implied that the only reason people have raised the Emoluments Clause is over “routine business transactions like paying for hotel rooms” and claimed that “[p]aying for a hotel room is not a gift or a present, and it has nothing to do with an office. It’s not an emolument.”;

Whereas a comprehensive study of the Emoluments Clause written by Richard Painter, Norman Eisen, and Lawrence Tribe, two of whom are former ethics counsels to past Presidents, has concluded that “since emoluments are properly defined as including ‘profit’ from any employment, as well as ‘salary,’ it is clear that even remuneration fairly earned in commerce can qualify”;

Whereas numerous legal and constitutional experts, including several former White House ethics counsels, have also made clear that the arrangement announced on January 11, 2017, in which the President fails to exit the ownership of his businesses through use of a blind trust or equivalent, will leave the President with a personal financial interest in businesses that collect foreign government payments and benefits, which raises both constitutional and public interest concerns;

Whereas Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George

W. Bush have set the precedent of using true blind trusts, in which their holdings were liquidated and placed in new investments unknown to them by an independent trustee who managed them free of familial bias;

Whereas the continued intermingling of the business of the Trump Organization and the work of government has the potential to constitute the foreign corruption so feared by the Founding Fathers and to betray the trust of America's citizens;

Whereas, on January 20, 2017, President Trump swore an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, the rights, privileges and limitations of which are defined and guarded by the Federal judiciary of the United States; and

Whereas Congress has an institutional, constitutional obligation to ensure that the President of the United States does not violate the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution, Federal law, or fundamental principles of ethics, and is discharging the obligations of office based on the national interest, not based on personal interest: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) finds the promised actions outlined by President Donald J. Trump at his January 11, 2017, press conference wholly inadequate and insufficient to ensure compliance with the Emoluments Clause of the United States Constitution;

(2) calls upon President Trump to follow the precedent established by prior Presidents and convert his assets to simple, conflict-free holdings, adopt blind trusts managed by an independent trustee with no relationship to Donald J. Trump or his businesses, or take other equivalent measures;

(3) calls upon President Trump not to use the powers or opportunities of his position as President of the United States for any purpose related to the Trump Organization; and

(4) regards, in the absence of express affirmative authorization by Congress, dealings that Donald J. Trump, as President of the United States, may have through his companies with foreign governments or entities owned or controlled by foreign governments as potential violations of the Emoluments Clause.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I have five requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate Thursday, March 2, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 2, 2017, during the first scheduled vote on the Senate floor, tentatively scheduled for 10 a.m., in S-216, the President's Room of the United States Capitol.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the ses-

sion of the Senate on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 10:30 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled "Venezuela: Options for U.S. Policy."

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 2 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND THE INTERNET

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet Subcommittee is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 2, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in room G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to hold a hearing titled "Exploring the Value of Spectrum to the U.S. Economy."

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 64, adopted March 5, 2013, appoints the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 115th Congress: JAMES RISCH of Idaho (Republican Administrative Co-Chairman), THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi (Republican Co-Chairman), LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina (Republican Co-Chairman), MARCO RUBIO of Florida (Republican Co-Chairman), BOB CORKER of Tennessee, JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona, ROY BLUNT of Missouri, JAMES INHOFE of Oklahoma, and BEN SASSE of Nebraska.

The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and upon the recommendation of the majority leader, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, appoints the following Senator as chairman of the Senate Delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group Conference during the 115th Congress: the Honorable THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi.

The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99-93, as amended by Public Law 99-151, appoints the following Senators as members of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: the Honorable DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California, the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, and the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota.

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 79, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 79) designating March 2, 2017, as "Read Across America Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 79) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 80, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 80) designating March 3, 2017, as "World Wildlife Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 80) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m., Monday, March 6; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 37; further, that the time until 6 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form; finally, that all debate time on H.J. Res. 37 expire at 6 p.m. Monday.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous

order, following the remarks of Senator KLOBUCHAR.

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

The Senator from Minnesota.

CALLING FOR AN INDEPENDENT, NONPARTISAN COMMISSION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep concern about this administration's ties to the country of Russia. We are just 3 months into the 115th Congress, and I have come to the Senate floor multiple times to discuss inappropriate contact between Trump administration officials and the Russian Government. This is truly unprecedented.

Our Constitution was set up to guarantee that our democracy would be free of influence from foreign powers. For months, U.S. intelligence agencies have said that Russia used covert cyber attacks, espionage, and propaganda to try to undermine our democracy. Reports show it, and the facts prove it. As I learned from my trip at the end of the year with Senator MCCAIN and Senator GRAHAM to the Baltics, Georgia, and Ukraine, this is not unique to our country and our elections and our democracy. This is something that has gone on for years—where Russia shut down the internet in the little country of Estonia simply because they had the audacity to move a bronze statue to a public square in Lithuania where they invited members of the Ukrainian Parliament who were in exile from Crimea in Kiev and invited them to Lithuania to celebrate their 25th anniversary of independence from Russia, and then they attempted to hack into the computers of the members of the Parliament in Lithuania.

As Senator MARCO RUBIO noted, this is not just about one party or one candidate or even about one country; this is an assault on democracies across the world. Last month, we learned that the very day President Obama imposed sanctions on Russia, with unprecedented attacks on our democracy, General Flynn, a member of the Trump transition team, spoke to a senior Russian official regarding those sanctions. The National Security Adviser, the person charged with the most sensitive matters of U.S. national security, then misled the Vice President of the United States and then, in turn, the American people. He resigned, as did the former chairman of the Trump campaign; he resigned.

Now we have learned that Attorney General Sessions met with the Russian Ambassador. Fine, Members meet with Ambassadors; we know that happens. But in fact, he met with the Russian Ambassador only 3 days after then-President Obama was at the G20 Summit. He was at the G20 Summit, and he met with Vladimir Putin himself. He told him to stop the cyber attacks, but he also told him that America was not going to back down from the sanctions. In fact, President Obama told the

whole world that day in a press conference that we were not going to roll over and back down on the sanctions imposed against Russia because of their illegal invasion of Ukraine.

What happened 3 days later? Then-Senator Sessions, now our Attorney General, in fact, met with the Russian Ambassador.

Senator Sessions was then asked about contacts with the Russians from Trump officials during his hearing. I was there. I serve on the Judiciary Committee. Senator FRANKEN posed some of those questions, in addition to Senator LEAHY, who has noted that, at best, the answer was misleading.

That is why I feel so strongly that a press conference today is not enough and that Senator Sessions must come before the Judiciary Committee and answer under oath the questions that we now have.

What are those questions?

What was actually said at the meeting? Were sanctions discussed? Remember, 3 days—this meeting occurred 3 days after President Obama had said he would not roll back the sanctions. Were the sanctions discussed? Why did the Russian Ambassador, by the way, not meet with many other Members that day? We may not have a full accounting, but it appears that many of the Armed Services Committee members did not meet with the Russian Ambassador that day.

No. 2, what were the discussions with the Trump administration, then-campaign officials back in September, before that meeting occurred between Senator Sessions and the Russian Ambassador? What were the discussions leading into it? What were the discussions after the meeting? Those are things we truly need to know.

For weeks, Senator Sessions could have corrected the record—for weeks, during the time in which this Russian issue and the contact with the Trump administration were discussed thoroughly. For weeks, I have been calling on Senator Sessions, now Attorney General Sessions, to recuse himself from any investigation into Russia.

There are clear Department of Justice guidelines about conflicts of interest, and, as I have said for weeks, when you read those rules, there is a clear conflict of interest. Today, Attorney General Sessions agreed to a partial recusal. He recused himself on the part of the investigation that relates to the Presidential campaign. Well, the American people deserve a full recusal.

Think about it. The meeting between General Flynn and the Russian Ambassador took place after the campaign ended. The meeting that we just learned about today between the President's son-in-law and Russian officials happened after the campaign ended. We need a full recusal and an independent counsel to manage the investigation of contacts between the Russian Government, the Trump campaign, and the Trump administration.

I believe, as I have noted earlier, that Attorney General Sessions must come

before the Senate Judiciary Committee under oath and answer these questions:

Were sanctions discussed? What were his discussions leading into that meeting with the Russian Ambassador? What were the discussions afterwards? And I am sure my other colleagues on the Judiciary Committee have many, many other questions.

I know when I asked about Russia at Senator Sessions' nomination hearing, I asked him very specifically if he had any reason to doubt the evidence put forward by our 17 intelligence agencies that there had, in fact, been an attempt by a foreign government, the country of Russia, to influence our election. He said he had no reason to doubt those findings. He had no reason to doubt those findings, so he clearly understood when you read that report how important this is—the \$200 million spent in propaganda by Russian TV, as well as the hacking, as well as the attempts to influence the election.

So we have these facts. We know that meeting took place just 3 days after the President, our then-President Obama, met with Vladimir Putin at the G20 Summit. We know that is a time when Putin was told by the President of the United States to stop undermining the U.S. election system with cyber attacks. This was back in September before the election even occurred. We saw Paul Manafort resign from the campaign over Russia. We saw General Flynn step down over his contacts with the Russian Ambassador, and then we have that meeting. To me this seems like a pattern, and I want to not only see the facts through the investigations that are ongoing but also hear from the Attorney General himself.

That is why I am calling for the Department of Justice inspector general to investigate the actions of the Attorney General and whether the ongoing investigation into the Trump campaign and administration contacts with the Russian Government has been compromised in any way.

We know that Russia attempted to interfere with our election. Russia tries to undermine our democracy. This is not fake news. This is as real as it gets.

Aides and surrogates of this administration during the campaign and the transition were in contact with officials from a foreign government that was actively working to bring our democracy down. They were actively working to influence our elections. As Senator RUBIO has noted, one time it is one candidate and one political party, and the next time it will be the other candidate and the other political party, unless we all come together in a bipartisan fashion to get to the bottom of the facts.

So how do we do that beyond the recusal and the independent counsel and having Senator Sessions come back before the Judiciary Committee to thoroughly answer my questions and the questions of my colleagues? Well,

the other way we do it is by having an independent commission. That is why I introduced, along with Senators CARDIN, LEAHY, FEINSTEIN, and CARPER, the bill that was announced by Senator CARDIN and me, with ADAM SCHIFF and ELIJAH CUMMINGS, that would create an independent, nonpartisan commission to uncover all the facts and make sure that future elections and political campaigns are safeguarded from foreign interference. Remember that this commission can go alongside the Intelligence Committee investigation—not to replace it but to be in addition to it—because this committee and experts appointed by this Congress from both sides of the aisle, just like the 9/11 Commission so successfully did, could actually not just uncover some facts that aren't known publicly, but, most importantly, they can make recommendations to make sure this doesn't happen again.

By the way, there are upcoming elections in Germany and in France, and getting that information out there doesn't just help our democracy, it also helps democracies in other parts of the world. We also need—and I touched on this earlier—an independent counsel, special prosecutor to look into all the contacts between the Trump administration and the campaign and have a full recusal.

What else can Congress do besides the independent commission? We have to make sure that the Intelligence Committee proceeds with its investigation. I am pleased that Senator BURR and Senator WARNER have come together and announced that they are going to do a full and thorough investigation. They will also be looking into the contacts with the campaign—incredibly important.

Now we have the issue of the sanctions. As I mentioned, the day that the Obama administration was imposing additional sanctions on Russia—and the Trump campaign, through General Flynn, was actually meeting during this transition day with the Russian Ambassador to perhaps undermine those sanctions—I was with Senators MCCAIN and GRAHAM in Eastern Europe. As I noted, when we were in the Baltics, we heard and met with leaders—Prime Ministers and Presidents of these countries in Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia, who have seen this movie before. We went to Ukraine. We went to Georgia. We heard from Ukraine—6,500 attempts to hack into their coun-

try's computer system alone, shutting down access in Estonia. Trolls, in a building in Moscow—nearly 1,000 people—who are now working and have been working to undermine democracies all around the world.

So this isn't just about defending our own democracy; it is about defending the world's democracies. It is about saying to a country that thinks they can just get us to roll over and say: Hey, you can influence our election. No, that is not right. That is why we worked for expanded sanctions; that is why we introduced on a bipartisan basis with Senator MCCAIN and Senator GRAHAM—and I was one of the original sponsors with Senator CARDIN and others—the Countering Russian Hostilities Act that would impose more sanctions on Russia. It would address cyber attacks, human rights violations, and its illegal annexation of land in Ukraine and Georgia.

Just this weekend, on Sunday afternoon, I met with my Ukrainian community. Hundreds of people showed up on a Sunday afternoon in Minnesota because they are so concerned about their friends and relatives and they so believe in our democracy. Right down the road from the Ukrainian Center, where we held our meeting and where I listened and answered questions from my constituents, is a deli called Kramarczuk's. It is owned by a Ukrainian immigrant family whose parents came over to our country having fled oppression, and they came over to our country and bought this deli. They put this beautiful mural across an entire wall, and it is a beautiful photo of our Statue of Liberty, that beacon of democracy.

Because of the Kramarczucs—they believe in our country. They believe in America. They believe in a country that is going to stand up for freedom of the press, that is going to stand up for freedom of religion, and that is going to stand up for them and their rights as immigrants to be citizens in this country. They believe in it because they have seen the worst of it. They have seen dictatorships, they have seen oppression, and they came to our country. They expect our country, as they serve their Ukrainian food to the people all over Minnesota in front of the big mural of the Statue of Liberty—they believe that our country is going to stand up for democracy.

That was the message that Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRAHAM, and I

brought to the people of Ukraine. We not only, of course, met with the President and their official leaders, but we also went right to the frontline. On New Year's Eve, we were in Eastern Ukraine on the sea—cold, snow coming down—with hundreds and hundreds of Ukrainian troops, hearing the stories of a mother who was so young, who had just lost her son a week before to a Russian separatist sniper. We heard the stories of the 10,000 people killed just as this conflict began, standing up for democracy, just as we have stood up for our democracy.

So when all of these discussions go on about recusals and about who should resign and what should happen, let's remember what this is all about. This is about saving our democracy and making our democracy strong so we can continue to be the beacon that those Ukrainians put on their wall in their deli because they believe in this country so much. This isn't about partisan divides. This is simply about being a democracy and getting to the bottom of it. When something goes on and a foreign country is trying to influence things, you have to put your party aside. You have to say: You know what, I want to know what happened here. If I am a Democrat or Republican, I want to know what happened so it doesn't happen again. I want to be able to protect our citizens and our election system and our democracy. That is what this is about.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
MARCH 6, 2017, AT 2 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 2 p.m. on Monday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 6, 2017, at 2 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 2, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT

BENJAMIN S. CARSON, SR., OF FLORIDA, TO BE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

JAMES RICHARD PERRY, OF TEXAS, TO BE SECRETARY OF ENERGY.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF DR. SUDIP BOSE

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Sudip Bose for his service to our country and our nation's veterans. On the afternoon of March 2, 2004, al-Qaeda insurgents launched coordinated attacks on innocent civilians who were observing the Muslim holiday, the Day of Ashura. These bombings killed over 178 and injured another 500 people. Dr. Bose, a Captain in the United States Army deployed in Baghdad at the time, was serving as the only emergency physician at the scene of the massacre. Captain Bose and his team of medics from the First Cavalry Division provided immediate medical attention to the injured while simultaneously under attack from the chaotic crowd. For his actions that day, Dr. Bose was awarded the Combat Medical Badge.

Dr. Bose went on to serve one of the longest continuous combat tours by a military physician since World War II. During this tour, he saved countless lives, was selected as the physician to treat Saddam Hussein following his capture, and served as a shining example to his peers. For these efforts, Dr. Bose was awarded the Bronze Star and promoted to the rank of Major.

After his time in the Army, Dr. Bose continued serving his country by establishing The Battle Continues, a nonprofit that advocates and mobilizes resources for military veterans. Through The Battle Continues, Dr. Bose has used his experiences and knowledge to educate the public on the medical struggles veterans face when coming home. In addition, this organization assists in connecting veterans with physicians that can best address their specific medical needs at no cost to the veteran.

Looking ahead, Dr. Bose wants to continue to be a strong advocate for public health and veterans issues. Though March 2, 2004 was a tragic day, I am honored to recognize the anniversary of the actions of Dr. Bose and his team. I thank him for his service to our country.

IN HONOR OF JOSEPH DIGENOVA

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend and neighbor, the Honorable Joseph DiGenova.

Delaware, Ohio Councilman Joseph DiGenova has dedicated his life to quietly, but profoundly, serving his nation and community. As a young man, he answered his nation's

call, risking life and limb in service during the Vietnam War. Upon completing his military commitment, Joe returned home and devoted the next several decades to advocating for youth, veterans, local schools, and countless civic projects.

For decades, he and his beloved wife, Vonie, invested themselves in their local school district, creating new programs and fighting for improved facilities. Of special note, Joe co-founded a Youth-in-Government program that has introduced students to local and state governance for more than twenty years. Further, they have campaigned actively for land acquisitions, levy and bond issues, and athletics boosters. As a result of his unwavering support for local schools and students, Joe received the 2014 Friend of the District Award from the Delaware City Schools.

Knowing the value and challenges of military service firsthand, Joe selflessly sought new ways for central Ohio to honor its truest patriots. He led the charge toward a permanent veteran memorial to recognize veterans from every era of our history. In addition, he partnered with the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Vietnam Veterans Association to help fellow veterans receive the recognition, care and benefits they so richly deserve.

Joe's tireless work ethic and humble attitude garnered him the highest admiration of his neighbors. They saw fit to elect him to public office repeatedly for more than twenty-five years. As a city Councilman in Delaware, he spearheaded efforts to modernize infrastructure and spur the local economy. The resurgence of a vibrant downtown area is in no small measure a reflection of his dedication to making Delaware a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Joe has long maintained an eye on what the future will bring to Delaware. Today, Joe and Vonie can look fondly on all he has accomplished. I am confident that his impact will be lasting and his efforts cherished for generations to come.

I am deeply proud to recognize my dear friend and fellow Italian-American for his lasting friendship and innumerable contributions to central Ohio. It is with great pride that today I recognize, on behalf of the residents of Ohio's 12th Congressional District, the Honorable Joseph DiGenova.

HONORING OFFICER MICHAEL JOYCE, JR. UPON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 27 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNION POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine, Police Officer Michael Joyce, Jr. on his retirement

after 27 years of service to the Union Police Department on January 4, 2017.

Officer Joyce joined the Union Police Department in June 1989. He became a full-time officer by December of that year and was promoted to sergeant less than three years later. During his years on the force, Officer Joyce served as a field training officer, supervisor, bailiff, and City Hall security officer. Additionally, he has fulfilled a myriad of capacities including zoning enforcement, evidence cataloging/transport, video documentation, neighborhood watch, and scheduling among others. The knowledge and experience that Officer Joyce brought to the police force and the community was an invaluable asset.

Officer Joyce is known as a man of faith, integrity, compassion, and humor. As an active member of his community he has volunteered many hours to various organizations. He has served on the board of directors with the Franklin County Children and Families Community Resource Board, participated in Shop with a Cop, raised thousands of dollars for the Kops and Kids Canned Food Drive, and volunteered at Missouri Child Identification and Protection Program events. Officer Joyce also serves as an elder at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Throughout his life Officer Joyce has served as a role model and mentor to many, especially through his involvement with local schools, organizations, and clubs.

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program was created in part through Office Joyce's hard work. This program equips first responders with the necessary training to assist individuals that are dealing with mental health crises. Officer Joyce served as one of his department's first CIT officers and also held the position of Franklin County CIT Council Co-Chairman and CIT Training Chairman.

With this retirement Officer Joyce will now be able to spend more time with his lovely wife of 42 years, Jennifer. He will also enjoy more time with his children Hannah, Ethan, Noah, Warren, Faith, Connor, Moriah, and Naomi, as well as his nine grandchildren. As police officers and their families know, the most notable and award-worthy actions are often unseen by the general public and will never be awarded by anyone but God. Officer Joyce truly exemplifies the scripture that states, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9)

I ask you to join me in recognizing Officer Michael Joyce, Number 731, on his retirement. The commitment he has shown to the Union Police Department and to his community for 27 years is a commendable accomplishment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, during the roll call votes on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, I

• 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.

was absent due to my attendance and participation in a joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee to discuss the legislative priorities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

Had I been present, on roll call number 115, I would have voted No.

On roll call number 116, I would have voted No.

HONORING COLONEL BENTLEY
NETTLES

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Bentley Nettles, who is retiring after more than 30 years of service to our country in the United States Army.

Colonel Nettles served for 31 years as a commissioned officer in the United States Army, where he served peacekeeping tours of duty in Bosnia, and combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. In this capacity, Colonel Nettles served as Infantry Officer, Judge Advocate Officer, Information Operations Officer and Red Team Leader. He also served for 28 years in the Texas Army National Guard, where he was activated for support operations in response to hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and border security.

Over his military career, Colonel Nettles has been awarded 24 awards and badges. Such recognition includes: three Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Action Badge. In keeping with the spirit of the Warrior Ethos, he was awarded the Combat Action Badge, which provides special recognition to Soldiers who personally engage the enemy, or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations. Colonel Nettles has also been awarded the Legion of Merit, one of the United States Military's most prestigious awards. The medal is awarded for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's history is grounded in the efforts of our men and women who have served in uniform. We must continue to honor them after they have left the armed services by making sure that they have the access they need to educational, health, and career services. Colonel Nettles truly believes this; and so in 2014 I awarded Colonel Nettles the TX-17 Congressional Veterans Commendation. He received this recognition because beyond the medals and the stars, the pins and the ribbons, Colonel Nettles understands the meaning of giving back. He is a founding member and active supporter of the local Wounded Warriors chapter, which has raised tens of thousands of dollars to support our heroes wounded in the line of duty. He is also the Vice Chairman of Brazos Valley Cares, which works to provide financial support for veterans and their families.

I am also proud to call Colonel Nettles a fellow Former Student of Texas A&M University. He earned his bachelor's degree in business management and has embraced what it means to be an Aggie, especially the core values of excellence and selfless-service. In addition to his significant military service, Colonel Nettles has kept his ties to the university and

given back to the Aggie community. Through a large financial gift, he has helped ensure that Texas A&M maintains its global footprint and continues to influence students around the world.

Today, I have requested that a United States flag be flown over the United States Capitol to honor the many contributions of Colonel Bentley Nettles. As I close, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women who protect us from external threats, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

HONORING THE COMMUNITY AM-
BULANCE FOR 30 YEARS OF
SERVICE

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the COMM-Unity Ambulance. This volunteer ambulance service will be celebrating 30 years of service on March 18, 2017.

On April 27, 1987, COMM-Unity Ambulance began meeting the needs of residents of Cole, Osage, Miller, and Maries counties. This non-profit organization was originally dispatched from the Saint Elizabeth Care Center with a team of four nurses, four EMT's, and dedicated first responders who were committed to serving their community. The Meta Fire Department housed this organization prior to the completion of its building on May 19, 1988. By October 9, 1989, the volunteer ambulance service had grown to 16 EMT's, four nurses, and 19 first responders. In 1994, a necessary expansion to the building was completed and included a second ambulance bay, meeting/training room, and office.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the COMM-Unity Ambulance and their 30 years of dedicated service to the communities of Cole, Osage, Miller, and Maries counties. The commitment they have shown to the individuals in the counties they serve is a commendable accomplishment.

MOURNING THE PASSING OF CECIL
BOSWELL, WWII VETERAN

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the impressive and meaningful life of Cecil Boswell, a World War II Veteran from Gainesville, Georgia who sadly passed away on Sunday, February 19th at the age of 99.

Cecil has long been a resident of Gainesville, and will forever be remembered as a hero by his neighbors, his friends, and all those who looked up to him in our corner of Georgia. Having been part of the second wave invading Normandy on D-Day, Cecil exemplified the bravery, courage, and selflessness it takes to serve one's country, and these traits followed him throughout his life, allowing him

to touch the lives of all those who had the opportunity to sit and speak with him.

Northeast Georgia is home to thousands of men and women who have diligently and passionately served the United States. As a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, I feel strongly about our nation's need to meet its obligations to our service members, veterans, and their families, and to support the Americans who have sacrificed much for our freedom and way of life. I am proud of the relationship northeast Georgia has with our nation's bravest citizens, and Cecil Boswell was an important member of the veteran community back home, as well as the Gainesville community as a whole.

He often told of his time fighting in World War II to his friends at the Big Bear Cafe, where he ate breakfast and lunch almost daily. Cecil also walked in each Memorial Day parade along the square, donning his Army uniform as he waved to the crowds. It wasn't until last year's Memorial Day parade that he decided to ride in a car instead of walk, a testament to his unwavering strength and dedication.

Gainesville is better for the time Cecil Boswell gave it, and I am sure the life he led and the stories he told will live on for years to come. Northeast Georgia is blessed to have known Cecil Boswell, and he will be dearly missed.

HONORING STACEY BRESSLER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Stacey Bressler, whom the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce has named the 2017 Citizen of the Year. This award recognizes individuals in our community who foster community spirit through their volunteer efforts, and Ms. Bressler exemplifies this mission.

Ms. Bressler is involved in the leadership and day-to-day work of many of our community organizations. Before moving to St. Helena in 1999, Ms. Bressler earned a B.A. in Graphic Design and an M.S. in Library Science. She worked for twenty years in high technology sales and marketing as the Vice President of Business Development for CommerceNet, as well as in sales and marketing positions with Hewlett-Packard, NeXT and Apple Computer, Inc. Ms. Bressler now uses her management and logistics talents in running Bressler Vineyards and serving important community organizations.

Ms. Bressler serves on the Board of Directors for the St. Helena Farmers Market, where she educates community members on the health benefits of eating locally-grown food and donates produce to the St. Helena Food Bank. She also sits on the Board of the St. Helena Hospital Foundation where she raises funds to provide high-quality medical care to those in need. Through her service on the Board of Directors for Planned Parenthood Shasta, Ms. Bressler helps provide necessary and caring services to women and families. Ms. Bressler is also the current President of the Board of Directors for Friends of the Cameo Cinema, which maintains and preserves one of the oldest continuously running single-screen theaters in America.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Stacey Bressler is a hard-working leader and volunteer in our community. The St. Helena Chamber of Commerce has recognized her contribution to the health and vitality of our people and economy. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today and congratulate her on this well-deserved award.

HONORING DR. ALOIS KERTZ FOR RECEIVING THE MISSOURI DAIRY HALL OF HONORS' MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Alois Kertz on receiving the Missouri Dairy Hall of Honors' Meritorious Service Award.

Dr. Alois Kertz was born and raised in Bloomsdale, Missouri as one of six children to Andrew and Mathilda Kertz. He became passionate about the dairy industry through his time growing up on the family dairy farm. Dr. Kertz would go on to graduate from the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in Dairy Husbandry in 1967 and a master's degree in Dairy Cattle Nutrition in 1968. He then earned a Ph.D. in Animal Nutrition from Cornell University in 1973. Between earning his master's degree and his Ph.D., Dr. Kertz faithfully served in the United States Army as a Nutrition Research Officer in Natick, Massachusetts and then as a Platoon Leader/Food Supply Manager in Thailand during the Vietnam War. He earned the Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service in 1969 through 1970 for his dedicated service to our country.

From 1973 to 1975, Dr. Kertz was employed as a dairy nutritionist at Ralston Purina Company. He then worked for Purina Mills as the manager of dairy and ruminant research from 1975 until 1991, at which point, Dr. Kertz became the director of dairy applied research, nutritional consulting program, and technical services at Purina Mills. Dr. Kertz founded ANDHIL, LLC in 2001 as a tribute to his father's dairy herd through which, Dr. Kertz advises clientele from a variety of private companies, agencies, research institutions, dairy organizations, and publications. Throughout the years, Dr. Kertz has also traveled the world to places like Spain, Italy, South Korea, and Brazil to serve as an on-farm consultant and trainer. In the process of those travels he has become a world renowned leader and researcher in the dairy industry.

Dr. Kertz's work has been published in over thirty scientific journal articles. Additionally, he has written numerous articles and has presented to dairy producer groups here in the United States and around the world. He is an active member of the American Dairy Science Association, American Society of Animal Science, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Society for Nutrition, Dairy Calf and Heifer Association, the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists, and serves as a charter member/diplomat of the American College of Animal Nutrition. Recently, Dr. Kertz's expertise has been utilized by the Masaka Diocese in Uganda to start a dairy cow program that is de-

signed to help families in their community get out of poverty.

Dr. Kertz's lovely wife Molly and their four children, Julia, Emily, Nicholas, and Mary are thrilled that his years of hard work are being rewarded with this well-deserved honor. Dr. Kertz has always been known as an incredibly faithful, patient, and generous man. He is a devout Christian and active in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Webster Groves, Missouri.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Dr. Alois Kertz on this well-deserved award that honors his lifetime of service to the dairy industry.

JONES ACT ANNIVERSARY

HON. JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, I was elected to seek equality for the 3.4 million American citizens living in Puerto Rico. I am the sole elected representative for the island and I represent more constituents in my sole district than anyone in this House.

I rise today to honor the one hundredth anniversary of the enactment of the Jones Act which conferred American citizenship on Puerto Ricans, on this day in 1917.

Since then, more than 211,000 veterans have served proudly in the U.S. military where they are equal in war but not in peace.

In battle, the sacrifice, blood, and life of Puerto Ricans is equal to that of other Americans, but in peace, at home, Puerto Ricans are second class citizen, unless they move to the States, which more and more are choosing to do because of the disadvantages they face at home.

In addition to the defense of the United States, Puerto Ricans have contributed to our country in many other ways: Puerto Ricans have served as U.S. astronauts, entertainers, athletes, Supreme Court Justices, and even members of Congress.

From the Borinqueneers of the 65th Infantry Regiment to actors and entertainers of all types, the people of Puerto Rico have been making important contributions to the United States in every field you can imagine for over one hundred years.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize this important milestone, I urge my colleagues to take time to reflect on how decisions made in this chamber effect our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico.

For too long, the U.S. has treated Puerto Ricans as second-class citizens. The unequal treatment Puerto Rico receives under most federal programs is a primary cause of the economic and fiscal crisis the island currently faces.

Only by treating the residents of Puerto Rico as it does residents of the 50 states will the promises made by the U.S. government to Puerto Ricans one hundred years ago this day be fulfilled.

That's why I stand with the will of the People of Puerto Rico, to be incorporated to the United States, as the 51st State of the Union, as requested in the 2012 local Plebiscite by 61 percent of voters.

Let this House fulfill the promise that the United States of America is a nation of liberty and justice, for all of us.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL GANG INVESTIGATORS NETWORK 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN K. DELANEY

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Gang Investigators Network. MARGIN is a group of federal, state, and local law enforcement professionals, representing agencies throughout Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. who work together to promote officer and public safety by providing relevant gang information to law enforcement officers.

What started as an informal group of gang investigators, has turned into monthly meetings where MARGIN participants gather to exchange information on current investigations, gang structure, membership, and new trends and patterns. MARGIN helps our law enforcement successfully tackle the increasingly complex world of gang violence and keep our region safe. On behalf of my constituents, I'd like to thank the entire MARGIN membership for the work that they do to protect Marylanders.

CONGRATULATING MR. AND MRS. BRADLEY AND KATHERINE MORROW UPON THE BIRTH OF THEIR SON, FINNEGAN FOX MORROW

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor constituents of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Bradley and Katherine Morrow, on the birth of their son, Finnegan Fox Morrow. Bradley and Katherine are residents of Jefferson City, Missouri and welcome their new son into their family along with older brother Bennett.

Bradley and Katherine were married on September 15, 2012 and Finnegan was born on September 14, 2016, which made for a wonderful 4th wedding anniversary present. Bradley works for Division of Professional Registration with the State of Missouri and Katherine is a marketing designer for a Jefferson City magazine.

Many family members have been excited to welcome Finnegan, including maternal grandparents Milton and Cherie Barr, paternal grandparents Sally, Michael and Elizabeth Morrow, and paternal great-grandparent Joseph Morrow.

I ask you to join me in congratulating the Morrow family on this new addition to their family.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER

HON. DOUG LAMALFA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Placer County

Sheriff Ed Bonner after 42 dedicated years of service to Northern California with the Placer County Sheriff's Department.

I have been fortunate enough to call Ed a friend for some time, and I know firsthand that he has long been considered one of the most respected members of the community since becoming Sheriff in 1995. What truly makes him special is the praise and admiration he receives from his peers. According to those who have worked for him, he set a high standard for taking care of his own and is a man of great integrity and honor. In his 22 year career as Sheriff, he has earned the respect and admiration of Placer County and many others throughout the state of California.

Many talk about creating a family atmosphere at work, but few truly achieve it. As Sheriff, Ed Bonner made the families of his officers and staff a priority. He is with them from the best of times to the worst, from the births of their children to family tragedies. Ed cares about all of those who he worked with, and it showed. Under Ed Bonner's leadership, he made the Placer County Sheriff's office a close knit family and that is a rare achievement.

Ed has earned many professional certificates related to law enforcement, proof that he is truly dedicated to his craft, and he furthers that knowledge by teaching classes at Sierra College and the California Command College. He graduated from California, Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology in 1973, then returned to school to earn a Master's Degree in Management Science at Cal Poly, Pomona, in 1992. Before his law enforcement days, Ed Bonner was a gifted athlete who excelled at track and field, where he still holds multiple state high school records and was inducted into the Del Oro High School Athletics Hall of Fame in 2010. At the University of California, he became the first four year letterman for track and field in the school's history.

As an elected official and an outstanding community member, Ed Bonner is active in all things Placer County. He and his family are very active in the Loomis community, as well as the entire county. He helped found and lead Explorer Post 901, a co-ed youth program teaching vocational skills with an emphasis on law enforcement. He is the liaison between Scout Troop 12, where he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in 1965, and their chartering organization, the Loomis Lions Club. He also serves on advisory boards including Sutter Health, PRIDE Industries and the Boys and Girls Club of Auburn.

After a distinguished career which included serving as President of the California State Sheriff's Association in 2008, Sheriff Bonner's skills as a law enforcement administrator will be greatly missed by his community. His resume as a law enforcement officer is extensive, but more impressive is Ed Bonner as a man, a husband and a father. While the community he has protected for 42 years could not possibly replace his experience, it is now time for a much deserved retirement which he can spend with his loving family, his wife, Jeanne, his two adult sons, Andrew and Matthew, his daughter-in-law Holly and grandson Mason. It has been a pleasure to work with Sheriff Bonner during my time in public office and I would like to wish him a peaceful and happy retirement as he moves on to embark on a new journey in life.

I thank him for his friendship and service.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF BROWNSVILLE

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Rotary Club of Brownsville for their 100th year of service.

Located in South Texas, the Rotary Club of Brownsville was founded in 1916. Since its formation, the club has lived up to its promise of service above self. For 100 years, its members have dedicated time, money and energy to helping those who need it most.

The accomplishments of the Rotary Club include opening the city's first hospital, Mercy Hospital, in 1923; forming a Boy Scout troop; funding the Brownsville Endowment for Teaching Excellence Program; and establishing an Adoption Awareness program. Their achievements have extended beyond the region as this club joined Rotary members throughout the world to fund the Polio Plus Project, a \$120 million effort to wipe the disease from the face of the earth.

The Rotary Club of Brownsville has made a lasting, positive impact in our community, and they will continue to play a critical role in the development of South Texas. I rise today to congratulate them for their century of success.

IN HONOR OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RAVENSWOOD FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the awe-inspiring Ravenswood Family Health Center upon the 15th Anniversary of its founding. This clinic is a key provider of quality affordable, integrated healthcare services in the southern cities of my district. Sixteen thousand residents are served annually by its newly-opened, state-of-the-art facility located in the beautiful city of East Palo Alto.

Ravenswood opened as South County Community Clinic in 2000 with 13 employees. It currently has a staff of 182 full and part-time employees and contractors. It employs 25 full or part-time medical providers including physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, and nurses, six full and part-time dentists, and four behavioral health providers. Seventy-one percent of the clinic's patients are served in their native language, including Spanish and Tongan. Ninety-seven percent of the patients are ethnic minorities.

The center's goal is to provide culturally-competent, sensitive primary and preventive care offering dignity to all patients. Often, the ability of a healthcare provider to do his or her job depends upon knowing how the patient's culture will influence the provider's recommendations. It is essential that the whole patient be treated with respect and offered dignity so that their illness or life situation can be competently assessed.

The clinic offers a comprehensive scope of care including family practice, adult medicine,

teen health, prenatal health, dentistry, women's health, integrated behavioral health, optometry, pharmacy, mammography, ultrasound, x-ray, lab, and health education. Ravenswood partners with Stanford's adult and children's hospitals, the San Mateo County Medical Center and clinics, and Sutter Health.

As of 2014, 98 percent of the clinic's patients lived at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, which for a family of four is about \$24,300. Forty percent of its patients were uninsured, and 51 percent had Medi-Cal coverage. Our community counts on the Ravenswood Family Health Center to provide care to our most vulnerable residents, and 39 percent of the clinic's patients were children. Five percent of patients were homeless and, also as of 2014, 63 of those patients were children. Nearly 25 percent of all East Palo Alto residents are patients, as are nearly 18 percent of all residents of Belle Haven.

The Ravenswood Family Health Clinic provides valuable training opportunities for young physicians and allied professionals, and an opportunity to practice cutting-edge community healthcare, most notably chronic disease management, in part through grants from the federal government. While many in America struggle to pay for prescription drugs, the advent of the Affordable Care Act coupled with the clinic's discount pharmacy provides affordable prescriptions to both the insured and the uninsured.

The vision of the Ravenswood Family Health Center is also one of stressing control over one's destiny. The vision is: Educated, engaged and empowered patients actively managing their health and becoming advocates for healthy living within their family and the community, inspiring others to value that good health is true wealth.

Not surprisingly, philanthropic support of the Ravenswood Family Health Center has been enormous, with tens of millions donated through its capital and operating campaigns. Much of this philanthropic support is due to the outstanding staff led by the clinic's energetic and visionary Chief Executive Officer, Luisa Buada. From its earliest days, Luisa Buada has assembled a team to take on big goals.

Starting in trailers with a limited number of services, her team has a stellar record of both expanding services and taking on new challenges. To build on the old saying, it takes a village to take care of the health needs of a community and Luisa has assembled her staff village so that no member of the clinic's community goes without access to needed healthcare services. The clinic's board of directors has steadfastly supported the dream of being more than just a community clinic and to instead become a beacon of hope and advanced medicine. Luisa, her staff, and the board have succeeded.

Mr. Speaker, when the history of our era is written it will be noted that America engaged in a decade or more of debate about how best to provide Americans affordable, quality healthcare. What history will not reveal, but what is true, is that the riddle was answered at the Ravenswood Family Health Center. After fifteen years it is a stunning success. Despite its relative youth, the entire organization is very much an adult institution, with adult responsibilities, and an impact that touches and improves the lives of tens of thousands. We

wish the staff and patients of the Ravenswood Family Health Center a long and healthy future.

HONORING SOROPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL OF ST. HELENA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Soroptimist International of St. Helena, the recipient of the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce Non-profit of the Year Award.

Founded in 1921 in Oakland, California, Soroptimist International is a worldwide volunteer service organization for women who work to improve the lives of other women and girls in local communities and throughout the world. The organization seeks equality, peace, and international goodwill for women. Over 95,000 members in more than 125 countries and territories worldwide contribute time and financial support to community-based and international projects.

The St. Helena Chapter of Soroptimist International was founded in 1954. Since then, the chapter has raised and distributed more than a million dollars in local scholarships and grants. This money was entirely raised by volunteers, many of whom also work full-time. Their fundraising has helped send numerous St. Helena students to college and summer camps, as well as educational trips to national parks and Washington, D.C.

The organization also provides support and stability to single parents in our community with education and career opportunities. Dozens of mothers throughout the Napa County region have been able to return to school or complete vocational training with the help of Soroptimist professional grants.

Mr. Speaker, Soroptimist International of St. Helena has worked to make our community and our world a more equitable place for over five decades. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor the organization here today and congratulate the group on this well-deserved accolade.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALL-
EN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER SER-
GEANT (SGT) ROBERT SHANE
PUGH

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Sergeant (SGT) Robert Shane Pugh who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on March 3, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. SGT Pugh was a combat medic with the Mississippi Army National Guard's 155th Brigade Combat Team. He was mortally wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Iskandariyah, Iraq also wounding Sergeant First Class Ellis Martin. SGT Pugh posthumously received the Silver Star, the third-

highest decoration for valor in combat, as well as the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Mississippi Medal of Valor.

SGT Pugh's Silver Star citation states, "Although in extreme pain, Sergeant Pugh directed treatment instructions to the members of his platoon for both himself and Sergeant First Class Martin. He remained calm and continued to give instructions until the medical evacuation helicopter arrived. Sergeant Pugh passed away on route to the hospital; however his courage and disregard for his own welfare resulted in saving the life of a fellow comrade who was severely wounded."

SGT Pugh was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, headquartered in McComb, Mississippi. He enlisted in the Army in 1999 because he wanted to be a combat medic. In the civilian world, SGT Pugh was a licensed paramedic and worked as a phlebotomist for United Blood Services in Meridian.

SGT Pugh's mother, Wilma Allen, said her son was her pride and joy. "I am very proud of him. He was happy, outstanding, and outgoing. He would do anything for anybody," said his mother.

In a fitting tribute to this brave and caring soldier, the National Guard Readiness Center in Morton has been named in his honor.

SGT Pugh is survived by his parents, Glen and Wilma Pugh, his stepfather, Gary Allen, and his siblings Tiffany Johnson, April Pearson, Jennifer Reed, Brad Allen, and Dale Allen.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for roll call votes 116 and 121 on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay on roll call votes 116 and 121.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ED
GARVEY

HON. MARK POCAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Ed Garvey, a progressive icon in Wisconsin who founded the Fighting Bob Festival, championed the underdog and fought the good fight for equality, justice and true representative democracy.

Ed Garvey's unwavering support of working people was evident in his career as a labor attorney, including early years as executive director of the National Football League Players' Association. Before that he was a civil rights crusader as president of the National Student Association, who in the 1960s traveled south with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In his legal work, his advocacy, his writings and speeches, Ed championed progressive causes from women's rights to environmental

protection to LGBT rights to protecting voting access and getting big money out of politics. He sought, in founding Fighting Bob Fest, to bring together groups from diverse walks of life that shared in common our values and beliefs, so we could all see we are more alike than different. Bob Fest always offered the chance to talk, debate, socialize, argue and, at the end of the day, join together to take on the powers-that-be.

He united progressive causes with a populist bent, a dry wit and a rabble-rousing spirit. He laid out an admirable path for all of us who believe in fighting for the underdog and staying involved in our democracy as informed and vocal citizens.

Ed Garvey kept the spirit of Fightin' Bob LaFollette alive and passed it along so generations of Wisconsinites will continue to honor that Wisconsin legacy.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize the life of Mr. Ed Garvey today.

FAREWELL TO MICHAEL L.
HARRISON

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, please allow me to note the retirement of my Chief Counsel on my House Administration Committee staff, Michael L. Harrison. After 32 years of service to the House of Representatives, half of them with the Committee, Mike has decided to close out his Capitol Hill career in favor of other pursuits in the Sunshine State. His staff colleagues and I will greatly miss him, his experience and especially his clever sense of humor, which enlivened many meetings and discussions.

Mike first appeared in these precincts in 1980 as an undergraduate intern for one of his home-state senators. To this day, he often refers to the Senate as the Upper Chamber. I'm told that as a teenager, Mike harbored plans to study law and eventually run for a seat. He was reportedly the only resident of his college dormitory with a mail subscription to the Congressional Record.

While working as a Senate intern, Mike had lots of spare time which he put to good use. He explored the Capitol and the capital city thoroughly. Among his other discoveries during the winter of 1980, Mike was fortunate to find another intern, whose good looks and willingness to take a chance led to their eventual marriage which endures to this day. Everybody who knows his wife, Laurie, agrees that she is a saint with a great sense of humor of her own.

Following law school in St. Louis, Mike returned to Washington in pursuit of a career not as a senator but on the staff. Mike served three House committees, one joint committee, and three individual Members. He worked on budget-process, reconciliation, campaign-finance reform and on a measure to clarify when a President can use the pocket veto. At the House Administration Committee, Mike worked on sundry legislation and oversight of the Government Publishing Office, the U.S. Capitol Police, the Architect of the Capitol and the Library of Congress.

Mike, an ardent Democrat by birth, worked in the majority and, to his chagrin, the minority. But whether in the majority or minority,

Mike sought every day to serve the interests and uphold the traditions of this institution and its members. We need more like him, Mr. Speaker, and must find ways to attract and retain them.

While Mike's thoughts will undoubtedly turn elsewhere in the years ahead, I will not be surprised if his name appears once again on the list of Congressional Record subscribers. I urge all Members to join me in wishing Mike Harrison a long, healthy and prosperous retirement.

HONORING THE CLIF FAMILY WINERY

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Clif Family Winery, the recipient of the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce 2017 Business of the Year Award. The St. Helena Chamber of Commerce awards businesses dedicated to outstanding customer service, environmentally conscious practices, and commitment to giving back to the local community.

Gary Erickson and Kit Crawford, the founders and owners of Clif Bar & Co., started the Clif Family Winery in 2004. Their winery focuses on making environmentally-sustainable, high-quality wines while increasing awareness of organic and sustainable farming.

Clif Family Winery operates a popular tasting room and regularly hosts community functions. In the past year, Clif has held numerous fundraising events for local community groups, including the St. Helena Food Pantry, the St. Helena Public School Foundation, the Napa Bike Coalition, the Napa Valley Land Trust, and the Soroptimist Sunrise Club. For the past four years, Clif has held its signature Sip & Support event, which brings together citizens and community partners for an evening of socializing and learning about volunteer opportunities. Each event features a Clif Family Winery community partner to connect local non-profits with the communities they serve.

The winery embodies what we value in our Napa Valley. It not only produces high-quality wines, but also brings together the people who make our community stronger. The Clif Family Winery provides good jobs, supports local businesses and resources whenever possible, and gives back to our community and important social causes.

Mr. Speaker, the Clif Family Winery exemplifies socially responsible and community-focused business practices. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor Clif Family Winery here today and congratulate the winery on this well-deserved accolade.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER PRIVATE (PV2) BARRY WAYNE MAYO

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of U.S. Army Private

(PV2) Barry Wayne Mayo who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation March 5, 2007, during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. PV2 Mayo lost his life when an improvised explosive device detonated near his unit in Baqubah, Iraq. Also killed were Specialist Blake Harris and Specialist Ryan D. Russell.

PV2 Mayo, an Ecu native, was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. PV2 Mayo attended North Pontotoc High School and one semester at Northeast Mississippi Community College prior to enlisting in the Army.

During the procession from the Tupelo Regional Airport to the United Funeral Home in New Albany, dozens of people lined highway overpasses, waved flags and saluted the convoy.

PV2 Mayo's was just 21-years-old when he died. His devotion to our nation will always be remembered.

HONORING MARCH 2017 AS NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor March 2017 as National Eye Donor Month. This is a month dedicated to promoting awareness of the need to register as an eye donor, recognize donors as well as their families, and celebrate the lives of donor recipients.

Since President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first National Eye Donor Month in 1983, the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) and each of its 86 member eye banks across the U.S., have designated March to recognize over one million corneal tissue recipients who have regained their sight. In 2015 alone, EBAA member eye banks recovered 118,752 corneas from 66,065 donors and provided 74,173 corneas for transplant in the U.S. and around the world. Also in 2015, my home state of New York provided 2,835 corneas for transplant and 715 for research and education by six eye banks statewide.

Eye banks have a special significance in the 7th Congressional District of New York, the Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration (EBSR) in my district was the first eye bank in the world. Since its inception in 1944 by Dr. Townley Paton, EBSR has given the gift of sight to over 63,000 men, women and children.

On this special occasion, I commend the Eye Bank Association of America and the eye banks across the country for their great work. I encourage my colleagues to support efforts that urge all Americans to give the gift of sight by registering to become eye, organ and tissue donors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN K. DELANEY

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote on roll call vote No. 121. Had I

been present to vote on roll call vote No. 121, I would have voted "NO."

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE HON. ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Congressman Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, American Samoa's longest serving Delegate to the House of Representatives.

Congressman Eni F. H. Faleomavaega was a patriot and a leader who personified the highest ideals of our nation.

Eni dedicated his entire life to service. He was a proud Army veteran, and long before he held elected office, he worked as a staffer, including a time in the office of San Francisco Congressman Phil Burton.

For 26 years, Congressman Faleomavaega brought outspoken and effective leadership for American Samoa to the House of Representatives.

Eni was a relentless champion for the rights and advancement of his constituents. His life and leadership powerfully spotlighted the immense contributions of Americans from U.S. territories. May it comfort his family and friends that so many join in their sorrow at the passing of this extraordinary man.

HONORING JAMES ALLEN ADAMS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor James "Jimmy" Allen Adams, whom the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce has named Employee of the Year in its annual Community Service Awards. This award recognizes individuals in our community who embody the industry and innovation which makes them exceptional employees. Mr. Adams is highly deserving of this award.

Mr. Adams has been a remarkable employee with Sunshine Foods for 12 years. He is a respected and well-liked coworker and an indispensable employee. Mr. Adams is a Navy Veteran, partner to Jim Villanueva for the past 23 years and the owner of two miniature schnauzer dogs.

Outside of his work with Sunshine Foods, Mr. Adams is a member of the Bay Area Stage Theater Group the On the Fringe acting group. He enjoys gardening and auditioning for different acting roles. He recently worked on the new Selena Gomez Netflix television show, 13 Reasons Why.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jimmy Adams is a diligent, hardworking employee in our business community and the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce has rightly recognized his great contributions. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today and congratulate him on this well-deserved award.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY CORPORAL (CPL) ROBERT TAYLOR McDAVID, III

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Corporal (CPL) Robert Taylor McDavid, III who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on March 10, 2008, during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. CPL McDavid died from wounds he sustained when a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device. Also killed were Staff Sergeant Ernesto G. Cimarrusti, Staff Sergeant David D. Julian, Sergeant First Class Shawn M. Suzch and Corporal Scott A. McIntosh. The soldiers were killed while on patrol in central Baghdad. Three other soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter were injured in the explosion.

CPL McDavid was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia. He enlisted in the Army in 2005 and was deployed to Iraq two years later.

CPL McDavid attended Starkville Academy and Starkville High School. He earned his associate's degree in accounting from Northeast Mississippi Community College. He also attended Mississippi State University.

CPL McDavid was described by his wife, Tiffany, as a true American hero. Prior to his funeral, hundreds of residents lined Starkville's Main Street to pay tribute to one of their own. His funeral was on the same day as the fifth anniversary of the U.S. war in Iraq. CPL McDavid's devotion to protecting the freedoms we all enjoy will always be remembered.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I missed the following votes:

Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on this motion; H. Res. 156, Rule providing for consideration of both H.R. 1004 and H.R. 1009. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on this motion.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RFS REFORM ACT OF 2017

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to provide relief from an onerous mandate that has been placed upon the backs of the American people for over 10 years. The mandate I'm referring to is none other than the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), a mandate requiring that increasingly

larger volumes of corn-based ethanol be blended into our gasoline. The RFS mandates that 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels be part of our nation's fuel supply by 2022.

After 10 years, it is clear that the federal government's ethanol mandate is not working, and Congress must have a serious conversation about continued market-distorting ethanol promotion. One of the big drivers of ethanol prices and supply is an artificial market created by the federal government.

The federal government's creation of an artificial market for the ethanol industry has quite frankly resulted in a domino effect that is hurting consumers. This year over 35 percent of the U.S. corn crop will be used for ethanol production. With increasing food and feed stocks being diverted into fuel, we are seeing volatility in the marketplace which negatively impacts livestock and food producers.

While the RFS is causing instability in food prices, it has not provided its intended relief for consumers at the pump. It is a known fact that ethanol-blended gasoline has a lower energy density than that of traditional gasoline. Therefore, Americans are forced to buy more fuel to make up the difference. In fact, some studies show that drivers in the U.S. pay at least \$10 billion more each year because of the RFS. The RFS is causing unintended and negative consequences for American consumers, energy producers, livestock farmers, and food manufacturers and retailers. It is clear that the RFS needs fundamental reform. That's why I am introducing legislation to accomplish this task, and I am pleased to have the support of Reps. COSTA, WELCH, and WOMACK in introducing this bipartisan bill.

The RFS Reform Act will eliminate the corn-based ethanol requirements, cap the amount of ethanol that can be blended into conventional gasoline at 10 percent, require the EPA to set cellulosic biofuel levels that reflect industry production levels, and decrease the total volume of renewable fuel that must be contained in gasoline sold or introduced into commerce for years 2017 through 2022.

The RFS Reform Act has the support of a broad range of agriculture producers, consumer groups, energy manufacturing, retailers, environmental, and taxpayer organizations. I am a proponent of renewable fuels when they compete fairly in the marketplace, but the current policy needs fundamental reform. I ask my colleagues to support meaningful reform of the current status quo and advance this bipartisan legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY STAFF SERGEANT (SSG) WILLIAM S. RICKETTS

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Staff Sergeant (SSG) William "Seth" Ricketts who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on February 27, 2010, during Operation Enduring Freedom III. SSG Ricketts was killed by a sniper when his unit was ambushed by insurgents at Bala Murghab, Afghanistan. Before SSG Ricketts was fatally injured, he was

assisting a fellow soldier who was wounded during the attack.

Bill Ricketts, SSG Ricketts's father, says his son followed in the footsteps of his great-grandfather, grandfather, and uncles who all served in the military. When terrorists attacked our country on September 11, 2001, SSG Ricketts joined the Army the next day. At the time of his death, SSG Ricketts was assigned to Company B, Battalion, 508th Parachute Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC.

More than 3,000 people attended his funeral held in Corinth. Bill Ricketts says people lined the streets to pay their respects all along the two-and-a-half mile procession. It was led by members of the Patriot Guard Riders.

SSG Ricketts is survived by his wife, Rosie Jones Ricketts and his sons, Aiden, Cullen, and Seth Wesson. He is also survived by his parents, Bill and Sandi Ricketts and his siblings, Benjamin Ricketts and Tiffany Ricketts Sneed.

IN HONOR OF THE PREGNANCY ASSISTANCE CENTER NORTH

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the Pregnancy Assistance Center North (PACN) for more than three decades of dedicated work to empower women and men to choose life-affirming healthcare options, address health issues for medically underserved women, and build healthy families in the northern Houston suburbs.

In January of 1986, a small group banded together with the common goal of helping families struggling with unplanned pregnancies. Members of this group poured out their compassion on those families, and demonstrated their willingness to serve by donating tools for education, support, and resources to the new ministry.

PACN served its first clients in February of 1987. These families were welcomed into donated office space and later, Sunday school classrooms of partnering churches. From that early network of eight churches, support has now grown to include over seventy-five church partners and nearly one-thousand financial supporters.

The organization, which started with just \$100, now operates two full-service medical clinics totaling almost 15,000 square feet and provides top-notch well-woman care on an annual budget of just over \$1.25 million, all without a single tax-payer dollar.

In its early years, PACN served just 360 clients each year. Today, an average of 7,000 clients visit the clinics annually, receiving pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, STI testing and treatment, women's health exams, post-abortion support, and material assistance for those who choose to give birth and raise their children.

By placing their focus on empowerment through education, PACN's education and counseling programs provide clients with the tools they need to break free from past decisions, chart a new path for their lives, and begin building strong family legacies.

Each week, over 130 volunteers give their time to PACN. They are the backbone of this

organization, each one possessing their own story of why they choose to invest in The Cause for Life. Their assistance to this organization's mission cannot be overstated.

I am proud to recognize PACN's mission to bring about positive change in northern Houston by providing a community of support, which allows women and men to confidently choose life.

IN RECOGNITION OF CRONIG'S
MARKET

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Cronig's Market on Martha's Vineyard, which on March 10th will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary.

The Cronig Brothers grocery store was opened in 1917 by the four Cronig Brothers, Sam, Ed, Theodore or "Tebby", and Henry Cronig, first generation immigrants from Lithuania. Sam Cronig, the oldest son of ten siblings, came to the United States in 1904 and arrived on Martha's Vineyard in 1905 to work on a farm in Eastville. He soon moved on to work for several established grocery stores up until 1917, when he and his three brothers opened the Cronig Brothers grocery store.

Though the store experienced the trials and tribulations of a small retail business of that era, by 1923, the Cronigs had 51 employees on their payroll. Through the early years of business, it has been referred to as Cronig Bros. Public Market, The Public Market and Vineyard Haven Public Market. It continued its rapid expansion from a store front to occupying an entire building by 1940.

1957 marked the end of an era. Sam Cronig retired and handed over operational control to his sons, Robert and David Cronig. A decade later, Jeffrey and Donald Cronig had also

joined the store. Robert and David then went on to add a second supermarket to the growing business, eventually handing over management to Steve Bernier in 1986.

Today, Cronig's has expanded to three locations, the larger Down-Island Cronig's, the cozy Up-Island Cronig's, and Healthy Additions, a two floor health food and supplement store. A pillar in the Martha's Vineyard community, Cronig's has remained committed to its customers by providing fresh, local ingredients and has led the way with several eco-friendly initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Cronig's Market on this joyous occasion. I ask that my colleagues join me in commemorating the Market's centennial year and look forward to a future of continued prosperity.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RENEW-
ABLE FUEL STANDARD ELIMI-
NATION ACT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to eliminate a well-intentioned, but deeply flawed, policy that has negatively impacted every family and business in the country. The policy I'm referring to is none other than the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), a mandate requiring that increasingly larger volumes of corn-based ethanol be blended into our gasoline. The RFS mandates that 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels be part of our nation's fuel supply by 2022.

Since the implementation of the RFS, Americans have seen increased costs at the grocery store, larger bills on their restaurant receipts, and higher prices at the gas pump. Corn is used in 75 percent of the food we buy, yet a great deal of corn is now being diverted from food products and into the gasoline tank.

It's no surprise that ethanol has caused instability in the corn market. As for fuel, ethanol-blended gasoline has a lower energy density than that of traditional gasoline; therefore, Americans are forced to buy more fuel to make up the difference. In fact, some studies show that drivers in the U.S. pay at least \$10 billion more each year because of the RFS.

Unfortunately, the high cost of the RFS is not limited to food and gasoline. Ethanol is known to be harmful to the small engines found in lawn mowers and leaf blowers and even motorcycles and all-terrain-vehicles. As a result, owners of these devices are forced to spend more to repair the damage caused by the ethanol-infused gasoline that they were forced to buy.

So, what benefits do Americans in your district and mine receive for all of these extra costs? There are certainly few benefits of an environmental nature. Environmental groups have expressed concerns about the impact of the RFS on the air we breathe and have stated that the conversion of high volumes of land into corn fields is detrimental to the environment. In fact, I can find no benefit to the hard working Americans who are paying the cost of the RFS.

It is time for Congress to recognize that this policy has failed and remove this mandate from the backs of the American people. That is why I am introducing the Renewable Fuel Standard Elimination Act, which will totally eliminate the RFS. Washington has created this artificial demand for ethanol that is distorting the market, and it is our responsibility to provide relief from its unintended consequences. This legislation is a common sense solution to ensure that renewable fuels compete fairly in the marketplace and avoid causing unintended and negative consequences for American consumers, livestock farmers, and food manufacturers. I hope my colleagues will join me in working to reverse this policy by supporting this legislation in the 115th Congress.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Senate confirmed the nomination of James Richard Perry, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1545–S1587

Measures Introduced: Thirty-nine bills and eleven resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 489–527, S.J. Res. 26–31, S. Res. 78–80, and S. Con. Res. 7–8. **Pages S1576–78**

Measures Passed:

Read Across America Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 79, designating March 2, 2017, as “Read Across America Day”. **Page S1585**

World Wildlife Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 80, designating March 3, 2017, as “World Wildlife Day”. **Page S1585**

Measures Considered:

Federal Acquisition Regulation Rule—Agreement: Senate began consideration of H.J. Res. 37, disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration relating to the Federal Acquisition Regulation. **Pages S1564–71**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 51 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. 80), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to consideration of the joint resolution. **Page S1563**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 2 p.m., on Monday, March 6, 2017, Senate resume consideration of the joint resolution; that the time until 6 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form; and that all debate time on the joint resolution expire at 6 p.m. **Page S1585**

Appointments:

Senate National Security Working Group: The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 64, adopted March 5, 2013, appointed the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 115th Congress: Senators Risch (Republican Administrative Co-Chairman), Cochran (Republican Co-Chairman), Graham (Republican Co-Chairman), Rubio (Republican Co-Chairman), Corker, McCain, Blunt, Inhofe, and Sasse. **Page S1585**

British-American Interparliamentary Group Conference: The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, appointed the following Senator as Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group Conference during the 115th Congress: Senator Cochran. **Page S1585**

United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99–93, as amended by Public Law 99–151, appointed the following Senators as members of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: Senators Feinstein, Whitehouse, and Heitkamp. **Page S1585**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 58 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. EX. 77), Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. **Pages S1548, S1587**

By 62 yeas to 37 nays (Vote No. EX. 79), James Richard Perry, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy. **Pages S1563, S1587**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 62 yeas to 37 nays (Vote No. 78), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1548**

Messages from the House: **Page S1576**

Measures Referred: **Page S1576**

Executive Communications: **Page S1576**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1576**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1578–79**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:
Pages S1579–85

Additional Statements: **Pages S1575–76**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1585**

Record Votes: Four record votes were taken today. (Total—80) **Pages S1548, S1563**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6 p.m., until 2 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1587.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

CYBER STRATEGY AND POLICY

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine cyber strategy and policy, after receiving testimony from Craig I. Fields, Chairman, and James N. Miller, Member, and former Under Secretary for Policy, both of the Defense Science Board, Department of Defense; General Keith B. Alexander, USA (Ret.), IronNet Cybersecurity; and Matthew C. Waxman, Columbia University Law School.

VALUE OF SPECTRUM TO U.S. ECONOMY

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine the value of spectrum to the United States economy, after receiving testimony from Scott Bergmann, CTIA, Dave Heiner, Microsoft Corporation, and Tom Stroup, Satellite Industry Association, all of Washington, D.C.; Roger Entner, Recon Analytics LLC, Dedham, Massachusetts; and Pat LaPlatney, Raycom Media, Montgomery, Alabama, on behalf of the National Association of Broadcasters.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Finance: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services.

VENEZUELA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Venezuela, focusing on options for United States policy, after receiving testimony from David Smilde, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana; Shannon K. O'Neil, Council on Foreign Relations Civil Society, Markets, and Democracy Program, New York, New York; and Mark Feierstein, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 63 public bills, H.R. 1299–1361; and 7 resolutions, H. Res. 164–170 were introduced. **Pages H1526–32**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1532–33**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 1004, to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of information relating to pending agency regulatory ac-

tions, by a recorded vote of 246 yeas to 176 noes, Roll No. 126. **Pages H1469–84**

Rejected the Jayapal motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with amendments, by a recorded vote of 189 yeas to 232 noes, Roll No. 125.

Pages H1481–83

Agreed to:

Farenthold (No. 2 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–21) that requires the Executive agency to display a list of any regulatory actions that duplicate or

overlap with agency regulatory action (by a recorded vote of 263 ayes to 145 noes, Roll No. 123).

Pages H1476–77, H1480–81

Rejected:

Jackson Lee amendment (No. 1 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–21) that sought to clarify the terms “propaganda”, “publicity”, and “advocacy”, within the rule’s prohibited communications, to mean any information, statements or claims that are unsupported by science or empirical data (by a recorded vote of 180 ayes to 234 noes, Roll No. 122); and

Pages H1474–76, H1479–80

Jackson Lee amendment (No. 3 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–21) that sought to exempt from the rule’s prohibited communications any communication that is protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America (by a recorded vote of 189 ayes to 232 noes, Roll No. 124).

Pages H1477–79, H1481

H. Res. 156, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1004) and (H.R. 1009) was agreed to yesterday, March 1st.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Monday, March 6th. **Pages H1488, H1526**

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure—Communication: Read a letter from Chairman Shuster wherein he transmitted copies of eight resolutions to authorize leases included in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Construction, Long Range Capital Plan. The resolutions were adopted by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on February 28, 2017.

Pages H1490–H1524

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1479–80, H1480–81, H1481, H1482–83 and H1483. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Committee Meetings

OVERVIEW OF MILITARY REVIEW BOARD AGENCIES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled “Overview of Military Review Board Agencies”. Testimony was heard from Francine Blackmon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Review Boards); Robert Woods, Assistant General Counsel for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; and Mark S. Teskey, Director, Air Force Review Boards Agency.

MEMBERS’ DAY

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Members’ Day”. Testimony was heard from Representatives Beatty, Visclosky, Hartzler, Walker, Turner, Posey, Wilson of South Carolina, Kildee, Franks of Arizona, Connolly, McGovern, and Cicilline.

EXAMINING FDA’S GENERIC DRUG AND BIOSIMILAR USER FEE PROGRAMS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled “Examining FDA’s Generic Drug and Biosimilar User Fee Programs”. Testimony was heard from Janet Woodcock, M.D., Director, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF THE JUDGMENT FUND

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice held a hearing entitled “Oversight of the Judgment Fund”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

TRANSPARENCY AT TSA

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Transparency at TSA”. Testimony was heard from Huban A. Gowadia, Acting Administrator, Transportation Security Administration; John Roth, Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security; Carolyn Lerner, Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY: IDEAS TO STRENGTHEN AND MODERNIZE THE HUBZONE PROGRAM

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce held a hearing entitled “Learning from History: Ideas to Strengthen and Modernize the HUBZone Program”. Testimony was heard from William Shear, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, Government Accountability Office; Hannibal “Mike” Ware, Acting Inspector General, Small Business Administration; and public witnesses.

BUSINESS MEETING

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a business meeting on the committee’s views and estimates. The committee adopted its views and estimates. This meeting was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY,
MARCH 6, 2017**

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

2 p.m., Monday, March 6

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

4 p.m., Monday, March 6

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 37, Federal Acquisition Regulation Rule, and vote on passage of the joint resolution at approximately 6 p.m.

House Chamber

Program for Monday: House will meet in a Pro Forma session at 4 p.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Brady, Kevin, Tex., E271
 Brady, Robert A., Pa., E269
 Collins, Doug, Ga., E266
 Conaway, K. Michael, Tex., E265
 Delaney, John K., Md., E267, E270
 Flores, Bill, Tex., E266

González-Colón, Jenniffer, Puerto Rico., E267
 Goodlatte, Bob, Va., E271, E272
 Green, Al, Tex., E271
 Gutiérrez, Luis V., Ill., E269
 Keating, William R., Mass., E272
 Kelly, Trent, Miss., E269, E270, E271, E271
 LaMalfa, Doug, Calif., E267
 Luetkemeyer, Blaine, Mo., E265, E266, E267, E267

O'Rourke, Beto, Tex., E265
 Pelosi, Nancy, Calif., E270
 Pocan, Mark, Wisc., E269
 Speier, Jackie, Calif., E268
 Thompson, Mike, Calif., E266, E269, E270, E270
 Tiberi, Patrick J., Ohio, E265
 Vela, Filemon, Tex., E268
 Velázquez, Nydia M., N.Y., E270



Congressional Record

printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at www.govinfo.gov, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202-512-1800, or 866-512-1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, contactcenter@gpo.gov. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000, or phone orders to 866-512-1800 (toll-free), 202-512-1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202-512-2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.