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No. 21

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 4, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ALEXANDER X. MOONEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:
We give You thanks, O merciful God, for giving us another day.

There have been many prayers this day rising to You from those engaged in the political discourse of this Nation. We give You thanks for those who were able to gather at the National Prayer Breakfast and those across this land who joined their prayer intentions with the many who attended.

Bless the Members of this people's House now as they gather to do the legislative work they are called to do. May their prayers this day be authentic and heard by You, the living God.

May their work be fruitful and beneficial to those whom You favor—the poor—and may all they do be done in humility and charity, knowing that we are all earthen vessels through whom Your spirit might shine forth.

And, finally, may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. STEFANIK 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 PRO TEMPORE

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

HONORING EDWARD ROBB "TED" BARRETT

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of Edward Robb "Ted" Barrett.

Ted was born on September 14, 1991, and passed away on January 30, 2016—far, far too early. Ted was a loving son, a brother to six, and a loyal friend to countless more in our community. Ted had a unique ability to light up any room he entered. His lighthearted, joyful spirit uplifted everyone he met.

A graduate of Christian Brothers Academy in Syracuse, of Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, and of Hamilton College, Ted thrived as an athlete and always looked for ways to give back to those less fortunate. He had a passion and a deep admiration for America's heroes and valued Team

Red, White, and Blue's great work in enriching the lives of veterans in need.

I had the great privilege of knowing Ted personally and was inspired by his kindness, his humor, and his love for his family and country. Ted will always be remembered as an honorable young man who touched many lives, having a lasting positive impact on all who knew and loved him.

May his name forever be remembered in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and in the great United States of America.

AMERICAN HEROES COLA ACT

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge the swift consideration of H.R. 677, the American Heroes COLA Act.

This bill includes two of my bills, H.R. 2691, the Veterans' Survivors Claims Processing Automation Act, and H.R. 732, the Veterans Access to Speedy Review Act.

The claims and appeals backlog that is plaguing veterans in my district and across the Nation is unacceptable. The Veterans' Survivors Claims Processing Automation Act will allow veterans' surviving families to mourn their loss and grieve without unnecessary bureaucratic steps in the benefit claims process.

The Veterans Access to Speedy Review Act will allow veterans to voluntarily use video conferencing technology to accelerate the appeals process. Veterans and their families deserve to have their claims reviewed and to receive the benefits that they have earned and deserve in a timely and efficient manner.

I came to Washington to fight for pragmatic solutions to meet our Nation's most pressing needs. These two bills are pragmatic solutions for our veterans.

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

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



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H569

Mr. Speaker, join me in honoring our veterans by bringing this legislation to a vote.

INVASIVE SPECIES SUMMIT

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

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, from Lake George to the Saint Lawrence Seaway to the pristine waters of Lake Champlain and all of the beautiful mountains and maple trees that run between, my district is home to many ecological treasures.

Many of these natural wonders have fallen under siege to invasive species that threaten the health and beauty of these natural habitats. Our environment is our lifeblood in upstate New York, and we must protect it from these predators so as to boost our economy and ensure we protect our environment for future generations.

This Friday, I will be proud to join with stakeholders, who have been working tirelessly on this issue across my district and across New York State, at an Invasive Species Summit in Clayton, New York. Together, we will explore best practices and information sharing as well as to work on innovative new solutions to stop this epidemic.

By working together at the Federal, State, and local levels, I know we can preserve our natural treasures for generations to come.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF VERNON J. ALSTON, UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER

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

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Vernon J. Alston, a U.S. Capitol Police Officer for 20 years and a constituent of mine from Delaware. Sadly, Mr. Alston left us far too soon, at the age of 44.

Vernon Alston came from a military family and, from a young age, was drawn to the service of our country. In 1991, he joined the U.S. Army Reserve, and, in 1996, he began working as a Capitol Police Officer. He spent the rest of his life protecting the Capitol and those who work here. Mr. Alston commuted each day from Magnolia, Delaware.

I speak for every one of my colleagues and staff who walk through these doors each day when I say to Mr. Alston, "Thank you." Vernon Alston put his life on the line for us, and we owe him a debt of gratitude.

Our hearts and prayers go out to Mr. Alston's wife, Nicole, and his five children. Mr. Alston's neighbors in Delaware and his family here on Capitol Hill share in their grief. Vernon Alston leaves a legacy of service to country that serves as an inspiration to us all.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF JIM TRULL

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of a respected constituent of mine whom I was proud to have called a dear friend.

James Trull was the kind of leader who could be depended on to bring people together and advance solutions on behalf of their communities. He was passionate about water issues. It was his life's work. He served as the district manager of the Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District for 34 years. He understood the complicated western water law like no one else. Jim was a valued leader in our community. He was kind and was loved by those who knew him.

While Jim will be missed by many, we can honor his legacy by striving to follow the kind of leadership he embodied in his life.

As we remember Jim, the passage from the Prophet Isaiah comes to mind: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground . . ."

I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering my friend, Jim Trull.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PHIL NEIGHBORS

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Phil Neighbors.

Phil was a pillar in the San Angelo community, and I had the pleasure of working with him frequently over the last 10 years. Phil dedicated his life to three things: to God, to his family, and to his community.

He and his wife, Susan, had two children together and four grandchildren. It was not uncommon for Phil to run straight to a city event from his grandsons' ball games. He always made time for both his family and the city of San Angelo.

A graduate of Angelo State University, he led the San Angelo Chamber of Commerce for the last 10 years. He was the bridge between the Goodfellow Air Force Base and the San Angelo community, helping to create a strong and lasting bond. He loved our military and was always willing to support our military in any way that he could.

As a deacon in the Baptist church, Phil led the church's college program and many mission trips to Mexico. He was a selfless servant, a trait that extended beyond the city's, State's, and country's borders.

We lost Phil far too soon, just days after his 64th birthday. San Angelo lost a truly great leader yesterday. Please join me in remembering the extraordinary life of my friend, Phil Neighbors.

COMBATING THE DRUG EPIDEMIC IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

(Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last month, I received notice from Michael Botticelli, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, that, after a year of hard work from Federal, State, and local officials, Jefferson County, West Virginia, was designated as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. This designation will bring critical resources to Jefferson County to combat the drug epidemic that is ravaging our communities and way of life.

I would like to thank a few people for helping secure this designation:

Tom Carr, the executive director of the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA Bureau. Tom was kind enough to even go down to Romney, West Virginia, to participate in a roundtable discussion I led with local officials.

Jefferson County Sheriff Pete Dougherty, who leads Jefferson County law enforcement in combating drug trafficking every day and who worked hard on this HIDTA application.

U.S. Attorney Bill Ihlenfeld, who prosecutes dangerous drug dealers and who also gave his invaluable input to the HIDTA application.

I thank the entire West Virginia delegation for helping to lock in this designation: Senators CAPITO and MANCHIN and my colleagues Congressmen MCKINLEY and JENKINS.

Every American needs to do his part to fight back against the drug addictions that are plaguing our country.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 4, 2016.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 4, 2016 at 9:06 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 907.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 3033.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION CUSTOMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in

which to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous materials on the bill, H.R. 766, to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other purposes.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 595 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. 766.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1013

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. 766) to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other purposes, with Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia 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 Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

□ 1015

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

I am proud to offer H.R. 766, Mr. Chairman. It is a bipartisan piece of legislation that provides transparency and accountability among Federal banking regulators and the Department of Justice.

This legislation comes in response to the abuse of authority by DOJ, FDIC, and other banking agencies under the action called Operation Choke Point, an initiative which seeks to deny legally operating businesses the financial services they need to operate and survive.

The notion that Operation Choke Point is limited to payday lenders or the banks serving them is far from the truth. This initiative has spread across many industries, including tobacco shops, gun manufacturers and dealers,

pawnbrokers, even a coal mine and an auto dealer. Even attorneys and data companies that serve these industries have been impacted.

While regulators will tell you this activity has stopped, Operation Choke Point remains a very live issue. For more than a year, I have asked Americans impacted by this initiative to submit their story at our email address of chokepointstory@mail.house.gov.

Just this week I heard from a payday lender in Missouri who recently received account termination notices from his financial institution. Gregory Bone, whose businesses have served borrowers in Branson, Pineville, and Neosho, has operated since 1998 and is registered with both the State of Missouri and the U.S. Treasury Department. On January 21st, there is a similar story from a credit bureau in California and, before that, a tobacco shop in Florida.

The underlying problem here cannot be overstated. The Federal Government should not be able to intimidate financial institutions into dropping entire sectors of the economy as customers based not on wrongdoing, but purely on personal and political motivations and without due process.

We have the internal DOJ and the FDIC memos that prove these motives that are driving Operation Choke Point. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform did a fantastic job of putting together two reports that take the different agencies' own emails and show what is actually going on and the motivation for those actions.

This program sets a dangerous precedent that shouldn't be permitted under any administration. William Isaac, the former chairman of the FDIC, appointed to the board by President Carter and named chairman by President Reagan, stated in committee that Operation Choke Point is the most dangerous government program he has seen in his 45-year career as a banker, a bank consultant, and as a regulator.

H.R. 766 offers a straightforward approach to a complicated problem. First, it dictates that banking regulators cannot suggest, request, or order an institution to terminate a banking relationship unless the regulator has a material reason beyond reputational risk.

The bill also strikes the word "affecting" in FIRREA and replaces it with "by" or "against." This modest change will help ensure that broad interpretations of the law are limited and that the intent of the statute, penalizing fraud against or by financial institutions, is restored.

It is essential that DOJ and financial regulators maintain the ability to pursue bad actors, and I fully support these efforts. This is something they must continue to do. But the checks and balances in this legislation would ensure accountability and would not hinder the ability to pursue those suspected of fraudulent activity.

The provisions contained in H.R. 766 are reasonable. In fact, the FDIC used its authority to already put them in place. Agency policy now requires staff to track and document account termination orders, which must be made in writing and cannot rely on reputational risk. The willingness of the FDIC to put these standards into place tells other regulators that they can and should follow suit.

I am proud the House is working in a bipartisan fashion to address this issue, including the passage of limitation amendments by voice votes in the 113th and 114th Congresses.

Republicans and Democrats alike have talked to regulators about the dangers of such a program. Many of my friends on the other side of the aisle have expressed their concerns to me privately as well. This bipartisan legislation takes a responsible approach to curbing the malpractice we have seen.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Chairman HENSARLING for his outstanding support as we have gone through this 2½ year process.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 766.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman and Members, if you listen carefully to my colleague on the opposite side of the aisle, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, you would think that the major point of this bill is the Choke Point controversy.

Considerable time was spent by my colleague on the opposite side of the aisle talking about Choke Point. Well, I do not want that discussion to obscure the real problem with this very bad legislation.

H.R. 766 eliminates core provisions of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act, or FIRREA, that the Justice Department has used to investigate and prosecute bank fraud. This is what this discussion should be about: bank fraud.

FIRREA has proven to be the Justice Department's most effective tool for holding Wall Street accountable. We hear a lot of talk about Wall Street. We went through 2008 and the subprime meltdown, the bailout, and all of that.

Most of the Members on both sides of the aisle agree that we had to rein in the practices of Wall Street. Here we have a bill today that would basically protect them and take away the very tool that is used in order to make them accountable.

After using FIRREA to secure historic settlements against Wall Street, including a \$7 billion settlement against Citibank, a \$5 billion settlement against Goldman Sachs, a \$13 billion settlement against JPMorgan Chase, and a historic \$16 billion settlement against Bank of America, now H.R. 766 seeks to stifle the Justice Department's investigative powers over financial fraud. In fact, there are still ongoing settlement negotiations with

banks like Wells Fargo and Goldman Sachs that were announced just this week.

Without investigatory powers and an extended statute of limitations granted to the Justice Department by FIRREA, it would be impossible for us to identify and rectify the fraudulent activity that set us up for a crisis 10 years ago.

Apparently, H.R. 766 supporters believe that actually holding banks accountable for fraud was too much of a burden for them, replacing our system of too big to jail with one where our biggest banks are now too frail to fine.

H.R. 766 also invites the next crisis by imposing burdensome requirements—listen to this—imposing burdensome requirements on the Justice Department's ability to investigate bank fraud, allowing fraud schemes to continue at the expense of consumers and the financial system.

The Justice Department's ability to identify and rout out fraud would be critical in averting future crises, and H.R. 766 would be a free pass to banks that make their money by breaking the law.

That would include banks like Plaza, Commerce West, and Four Oaks, all of which knowingly aided fraudsters, despite the many red flags raised by their financial activities.

At Commerce West in particular, the bank admitted fraud for failing to file suspicious activity reports with regulators even after the bank's own employees determined that one of their customers was routinely submitting fraudulent checks to the bank.

According to the Justice Department's complaint, the bank also failed to heed the warning of other banks that pointed out to Commerce West that some of their customers were fraudulent businesses.

Furthermore, H.R. 766's account closure provisions are a solution in search of a problem as regulators are now forcing financial institutions to close customer accounts.

Every Federal banking regulator has been clear, except for rare cases involving national security or systemic risks. The responsibility for closing accounts is a decision for financial institutions.

Some financial institutions are simply deciding that they would rather lose a customer than invest in the resources needed to ensure that our financial system is not being used for money laundering or other criminal activity.

In order to protect our economy from the next financial crisis, regulators have to have the necessary tools to prevent fraud and protect consumers.

Americans are still reeling from the effects of the financial crisis. We should be in the business of seeking ways to continue to hold banks more accountable for their misconduct, not rolling back the Federal Government's most effective tool for protecting consumers, investors, and taxpayers from bank fraud. Banks that break the law don't deserve get-out-of-jail-free cards.

The administration will veto H.R. 766. I urge my Democratic colleagues to oppose H.R. 766.

I just want to say that, despite yesterday when we had five bills that had been rolled into one that I warned our Members of Congress about because of what they literally did, particularly in terms of allowing corporations to not have to disclose information about the stock that they were giving to their employees, and I talked about how bad that was.

This is worse. This is worse because we are able to call names and to point out banks because we have the information. It is real.

We are able to point out how the Justice Department has been affected in making these banks accountable. So why in the world would we want to take away the Justice Department's tool that is FIRREA? Why would we want to prevent the Justice Department from going after these banks who know they are dealing with crooks and fraudsters?

I would ask for a "no" vote on this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY), the cosponsor of the bill.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I thank my friend from Missouri. We have been working on this now 2½ to 3 years.

The bill is fairly simple, Mr. Chairman, in what it actually does. It just takes a second to read the operative line that an appropriate banking Federal agency may not formally or informally request or order a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account without a really good reason.

I want people to think about that, Mr. Chairman. The fact that we have to actually debate this frightens me. The fact that we have to bring a bill to the floor of the United States House that says the Federal Government regulators cannot force a bank to close an account without a good reason should frighten people.

I heard Mr. LUETKEMEYER talk about many of the companies that have been impacted: gun manufacturers, pawnshops. It has now spread, Mr. Chairman, to individuals.

We are hearing reports that individuals engaged in legal businesses—every single one of the victims are engaged in legal activity.

We are hearing now that individuals who happen to engage in legal poker playing in Las Vegas, Nevada, which is a completely legal endeavor—you may not like it—are having their bank accounts shut off by the Federal Government.

My dad told me when I got to this job: The difference between the government when I was your age and the government that you are going into is that I was never afraid of my government. Your children will grow up afraid of their government because of things exactly like this.

We are debating a bill on the floor of the House that says the government can't force banks to shut down legal business banking accounts. It is outrageous, but it is real, and it has happened for a long time.

It has happened, by the way, Mr. Chairman, because this administration has not been able to accomplish their agenda through legislative process. So they are doing it now through regulation.

There is a report that our committee put out. It is an excellent report. I commend it to everybody. There are emails from within the regulators. I will read one.

It says:

I have never said this to you, but I am sincerely passionate about this. I literally cannot stand payday lending. They are abusive, fundamentally wrong, hurt people, and do not deserve to be in any way associated with banking.

It is a completely legal business, Mr. Chairman.

I hope that we have bipartisan support for this. We have had cosponsors on both sides. I encourage wholehearted support of this so we can get the Federal Government out of making decisions like this.

□ 1030

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman and Members, I would simply like to point out that Mr. MULVANEY just continued in the vein that Mr. LUETKEMEYER started out in, obscuring the real point of this bill.

They are going to keep telling you it is all about Choke Point. What they are not going to talk about is taking away the Justice Department's ability to use FIRREA to go after these banks that are committing crimes.

I don't want the Members to be misled. Ask them why they are refusing to talk about the main point of this bill.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I want to thank the ranking member and the chair of the committee. I would also like to say that this is a situation where there are—and I have even seen myself—some closures of accounts, which I think were not adequately justified, but this bill doesn't just solve that problem. It solves a whole lot of problems that are not problems.

So they take what could be a legitimate issue, and then they use that little hole in the tent to push in a whole bunch of other stuff that will literally weaken the whole system.

My good friend from South Carolina, if that was all the bill said, it wouldn't be that bad of a problem, but that is not only what it says. In fact, it weakens financial protections and lets bad actors in the system off the hook. If we are concerned about small accounts being closed, we should focus on that issue, but this particular bill goes way beyond that.

As Members contemplate how they want to vote on this bill, they had better think about and read this bill carefully because it goes far beyond just

simply calling for a justification for arbitrarily closing accounts. That is why I oppose the bill.

I oppose the bill, the Financial Institution Customer Protection Act, H.R. 766. This bill would do the opposite of what is asserted in the title. H.R. 766 would not protect customers of financial institutions actually. Instead, it would make it more difficult to hold financial institutions accountable, and it will achieve that goal in a bait-and-switch way by acknowledging what may be, in some cases, a legitimate issue of arbitrary account closures, but then coming in, sneaking in the back door, all this other stuff, to weaken the financial system.

Many Americans, including those who saw the movie "The Big Short," cannot understand how so few people went to jail for the schemes that caused the financial crisis. People made loans they knew would fail, sold those bad loans to investors, and caused the financial crisis that cost our economy \$14 trillion.

Twelve million people lost their jobs, and 11 million people lost their homes. Who went to jail for all this mortgage fraud? Well, I think there is only one person I have been able to find. I would be happy to find anyone else. Teresa Giudice from "The Real Housewives of New Jersey," football player Irving Fryar, and straw buyers in Michigan, those are the only people I could find who went to jail for this. Other people who committed massive fraud, they paid fines, but they walked away.

I am incredibly frustrated by the fact that the Department of Justice has not pursued more criminal prosecutions of people at the multinational corporations who caused the financial crisis. But the answer to that problem is stronger enforcement, not to take away the most important tool Federal prosecutors have to pursue financial fraud.

There is this thing called FIRREA. I know people watching C-SPAN are like, what is that? These Congress people always speak in acronyms. It is the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act. FIRREA was specifically designed to hold bankers accountable for destabilizing the financial system with their fraudulent activity. This bill weakens that.

In an Orwellian twist, it says that FIRREA cases cannot be brought when fraud is committed against a bank instead of by a bank. I will say it again. If this bill passes today, FIRREA cases can only be brought when fraud is committed against a bank and not by a bank. That is bad.

It also limits law enforcement's subpoena power. Don't we want to be able to subpoena these guys? Why would we want to be able to weaken that?

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. NEWHOUSE). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. ELLISON. It eliminates the bankers' regulators' ability to ensure

safety and soundness of the financial system. We need to enforce the law, not wink at it.

Members, they are dangling a shiny, little object in front of you by saying they are going to stop arbitrary account closures. This bill is way more than that. I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER).

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Missouri for his work on this very important bill.

The Constitution is clear: the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed, yet time and time again, this administration has attempted to circumvent the constitutional rights of Americans to further their political agenda.

Today, under the guise of protecting consumers, the Department of Justice and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are targeting payment companies to choke off credit for certain businesses they deem high risk, including ammunition and firearms stores, lending institutions, and other lawful businesses as well.

Instead of protecting consumers, this initiative is restricting consumer choice and crippling legitimate businesses. This policy makes financial service providers responsible for policing their customers. That is not fair to either banks or their consumers.

This commonsense legislation we are considering today will protect consumer access to banking services and restrict the administration from using the highly substantive notion of reputational risk to undercut constitutional rights and terminate the accounts of lawful businesses. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), a valued member of the Committee on Financial Services.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Chair, as a fellow Washingtonian, might I just observe that you make that dais look good.

I actually counterintuitively want to start out by thanking my friend, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), for taking this issue on.

We had a problem in a lot of communities around the country with businesses getting access to the banking system, and I know he worked this very hard last year. He investigated; he talked to banks, businesses, and regulators; and he actually negotiated a solution with the FDIC that he had pushed and pushed until they actually adopted it.

It was a good solution. In fact, part of this bill would essentially codify that. What it would say is, you can't use FIRREA to go after whole sectors of the economy. It has to be specifically and individually based. You have to have a reason to believe that an individual business was engaged in fraud if you were going to use the banking

system to get at them. Good solution, constructive solution. My hat is off to you, sir.

Unfortunately, this bill, as has been suggested earlier, goes farther. Section 3 makes it a lot harder for the Department of Justice to investigate financial solutions because, as has been suggested, it takes direct and specific aim at the powers under FIRREA, as the gentleman from Minnesota had indicated. It puts limits on them as to when subpoenas can be issued. To me, frankly, that is a solution in search of a problem.

FIRREA has been the key statute in going after fraud that, in fact, helped lead to the Great Recession and the crisis, and the wiping out of \$13 trillion in net worth. Frankly, I am one of those people who believes we need more prosecutions, not fewer, for all the damage and harm done to Americans throughout this land.

I am very reluctant to embrace any language that substantially weakens or obstructs FIRREA's ability to investigate fraud. I do agree with my friend that investigations and our oversight of them could be improved by requiring a paper trail. I worked with him to see if we could find a compromise that did that, but we couldn't. So ultimately, we had to disagree, and this is a disagreement that I will characterize as being a very strong one.

The truth of the matter is, in the last two calendar years alone, FIRREA was the operative statute which led to \$40 billion in fines and recoveries being levied. Truth be told, it is very, very unlikely, if not highly unlikely, that any of those \$40 billion in fines or restitution could have been recovered if the language of this legislation had been in effect; \$20 billion of which was restitution to harmed parties, people who lost their homes inappropriately because they had had fraud perpetuated upon them.

I don't think that is what the American public wants right now. I think the American public is still eager for some accountability for the actions and behavior that led to the Great Recession.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. HECK of Washington. So I join in the chorus of my colleagues who suggest that this bill is actually not just a step backward but two giant steps backward. There is an issue here that could be worked on. This is not the right solution; and, I might add, it is not going to become law because it has already been indicated by the executive branch this probably isn't going anywhere.

I would entreat you—in the spirit of trying to find a solution to a real problem—please, let us set aside, vote "no," and not enact that which is a solution in search of a problem that doesn't exist and, in fact, does considerable

harm to the American public and to our ability to hold people accountable.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Chairman, it is certainly rewarding and heartwarming to see that the ladies and gentlemen on the other side of the aisle continue to support our bill from the standpoint they recognize that where there is a problem, Operation Choke Point exists, that our bill is the solution. The only thing they seem to have problems with is the part that we try and do something with the DOJ with regards to FIRREA.

To settle that and enlarge on that discussion, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), our Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee chairman who will provide some information with regard to that very thing.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the chairman yielding. I am grateful for Chairman LUETKEMEYER's work on this important issue.

Our financial systems are the bedrock of our economy. When financial systems work, our economy works. And we have seen when our financial system doesn't work, things come crashing down. To make sure our financial system is safe and sound, we have empowered regulators to keep an eye over it, to make sure we don't do things that are too risky that can endanger the financial system and then, therefore, the economy.

One of the problems, though, is that those regulators have stepped outside that traditional role and have tried to impact policy decisions that should be made in this institution by rules and regulations that come out from their oversight capacity.

I look at the liberals, or it might be the progressives, inside the FDIC who, in line with the administration, said: I don't like gun dealers, I don't like ammunition manufacturers. Who cares about the Second Amendment? I don't like them.

Now, if you don't like guns and you don't like ammunition and you don't like short-term lenders, if you want to get rid of those things, have a debate about it. Have an argument. Introduce a bill, and let's vote on it. Let the American people see it. But the administration knows they will lose because most Americans like their guns, they like their Second Amendment.

So instead of going through this institution, they very craftily thought: Wow, just think, if we were able to, as regulators, put pressure on banks so banks would stop banking legal businesses that we don't like—guess what happens if they can't bank? They will go out of business, and we will have less guns, less ammunition, and we will have less short-term lending. That is exactly what they have done.

But we didn't empower the FDIC to make policy decisions. We said, hey, keep the banking system safe and sound. But like so many corners of this administration, they have expanded that authority to advance their liberal, progressive agenda.

I know my friends across the aisle, who I like very much and are friends of mine, are trying to focus on big banks and Wall Street. But, Mr. Chairman, to the ranking member I would say: Listen, big banks aren't being affected by Choke Point. It is the smallest, little businesses in our communities that don't have the power to stand up and fight back and push back. They are the ones that are affected.

□ 1045

Big banks on Wall Street don't get hit by this. It is the little guy. This is a bill that Mr. LUETKEMEYER crafted that stands up for the little guy—the little one that doesn't have the lobbyist and the money to come to town to talk to Members of Congress—who is being affected by this liberal progressive agenda today that they know can't be get passed by law, so they do it by regulation.

This is one more horrible example of how your government isn't working and how this institution isn't representing the people that we were sent here to represent.

This is a great bill. Let's pass it. Let's join together and let's stop Operation Choke Point.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, my friends on the opposite side of the aisle will talk about guns. They will talk about Choke Point. They will talk about unfairness to businesses based on a bank's ability to close accounts. They will talk about everything except the real point of this legislation.

I don't know why, I don't know where it came from, and I don't know who can convince a serious public policymaker that somehow you are to take away the investigative power of the Justice Department, a Justice Department that has proven that it could use FIRREA—that is the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act—to investigate banks that are guilty of fraud. I don't know where this would come from. Given what we have gone through in this country, starting in 2008, I don't know why any serious public policymaker would want to do that.

What have we witnessed in this country, based on the predatory practices of banks? We have seen whole communities devastated. We have seen foreclosures and people lose their homes. We have seen homes underwater. We have increased homelessness. We have seen the targeting of some of the most vulnerable communities in our country, based on the fraudulent practices of banks.

The Justice Department has a tool, and they are using this tool. Why would any credible Member of Congress want to take away the Justice Department's ability to investigate and to fine these institutions?

No, ladies and gentlemen, this is not about Choke Point. This is not about

guns. This is not about any of that other stuff that they are trying to make you believe you should pay attention to.

Every legislator and every public policymaker should ask themselves: Do I want to be a part of ever allowing this institution to once again revert back to the practices that caused people to lose their homes, that threw this country into a recession, that still has us reeling from the negative impacts of those decisions by a bank?

Why would anybody want to take away the Justice Department's investigative powers? In addition to that, this bill will not even allow the Justice Department to exercise its authority to subpoena. Why do you want to do that? It doesn't make good sense.

Again, you can talk about Choke Point all night long. You can describe it as being unfair to businesses, you can talk about what we need to do, but that is not what this is about.

I know why you don't want to talk about it because you have got to be ashamed of it. You have got to be ashamed of the fact that you are leading this institution to do away with investigative powers of the Justice Department.

Let me just say this. The Department of Justice has relied heavily on the powers granted under FIRREA to pursue billions of dollars of mortgage fraud cases since the financial crisis. In these cases, financial firms defrauded the government by knowingly selling faulty mortgages while representing them as high quality.

Without FIRREA, investigations would have stalled and taxpayers would have been left on the hook for even more losses. FIRREA powers were also instrumental in securing the historic \$25 billion mortgage servicing settlement.

As many of our colleagues know, there are still many more problems in the mortgage servicing industry, and eliminating this tool would encourage fraudulent practices by mortgage servicers that end up wrongfully kicking Americans out of their homes.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time is remaining on each side, please.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The gentleman from Missouri has 19 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from California has 9 minutes remaining.

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

I just want to make a few comments here. It seems that the ranking member, as eloquently as she has spoken, continues to deflect from the bill we are talking about with regard to talking about mortgage servicing assets, the mortgage crisis that we had a few years ago. That is not in this bill.

We are talking about Operation Choke Point, which is recognized by the Department of Justice. The Oversight and Government Reform Committee has a report from their own

email showing that within their own agency there was a discussion among the legal staff, believing they didn't have the ability to do what they do. They thought it was illegal themselves to do what they were doing, and yet they did this.

Mr. Chairman, for anybody who is listening and watching today, it should send a chill down their spine when you sit here and have the leading law enforcement agency in this country believe and know that they are doing something wrong and still do it. That, Mr. Chairman, cannot happen.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS), a cosponsor of the bill and a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Chairman, want to thank Chairman LUETKEMEYER for introducing this legislation which prohibits the Department of Justice from cutting off financial support to law-abiding businesses through its Operation Choke Point.

Created under the guise of a program to root out banking fraud and money laundering, Operation Choke Point has morphed into an instrument used by administration bureaucrats to pressure and force banks to end relationships with the legitimate businesses the administration considers to be a "reputational risk."

This country is made up of all walks of lives and all walks of entrepreneurs and small businesses, yet this administration has targeted these small and legitimate businesses.

I have a cigar retailer back home who was told by his bank that he could no longer do business there. I have a gun store owner who was told the same thing. I have a pawnshop that was told the same thing.

These targeted business owners do not receive a note from the bank stating: "Due to Operation Choke Point, we regretfully must end our financial relationship with your business." No. They are just discontinued from doing any banking relationship, without any notice whatsoever.

If what we have done with the Department of Justice and the FDIC is empower them with the ability to deny a fundamental right of constitutional due process, then yes, we need to correct it. We have that obligation.

As the chairman points out, we ought to be outraged over these administrators doing this to our legitimate businesses.

This legislation, introduced by my colleague, will prohibit any Federal banking agency from suggesting, requesting, or ordering a depository institution to terminate a customer account or prohibiting an institution from maintaining a banking relationship with specific customers unless the agency has a material reason to do so, and that reason is not solely based on reputational risk.

This bipartisan, commonsense legislation passed the Financial Services

Committee by a vote of 35-19. In voting to pass H.R. 766 today, I will be voting to rein in this out-of-control administration and its assault on small, legal businesses not only in Florida, but across the country.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me draw Members' attention to what is being attempted on the opposite side. They keep talking about Choke Point and how they want to save payday lenders and rent-to-own and pawnshops and all of that. I may have some issues with some of that, but that is not what this is about today. Today, this is about the fact that they refuse to tell you what is really in this bill.

They cannot stand up and defend why in the world they would be taking away the Justice Department's ability to investigate bad banks. They cannot tell you why they are ignoring the lessons of 2008 and predatory lending and what the Justice Department has been able to do using FIRREA and investigating and fining and getting settlements.

They cannot tell you why they would ignore the fact that many innocent middle class folks who work every day and who fought hard to make down payments and signed on the dotted line for mortgages didn't know that they were being tricked into signing mortgages that they could never really keep up with and that the interest rates would reset and go higher and higher and they were going to lose their homes.

They cannot defend the predatory lending practices. They cannot defend the fraud. They cannot defend the undermining of the average American family. They cannot defend the fact that Americans lost their homes. So they are going to keep talking about Choke Point and how they have got to protect payday lenders and how they have got to protect pawnshop owners and how they have got to protect rent-to-own and all those businesses they hold so dearly and want to protect.

This really doesn't have anything to do with that. If they want to have a real discussion about Choke Point, we are willing to do that; but, this is not the time to do it.

This is not the time to use this to hide behind the fact that you want to protect the big banks. As a matter of fact, this is so outrageous, it basically says that, instead of the Justice Department or anyone going after the banks, it would protect the banks by saying that you can't go after the banks and you have to protect them and you can't go against them.

I am simply saying over and over again that I don't care how many Members they call up and I don't care how many Members come and talk about Choke Point, somebody needs to tell us why they can't talk about taking away the investigatory powers and the power to subpoena from the Justice Department, a Justice Department that has

proven that it is willing to use its investigatory powers in order to deal with these big banks.

So listen very carefully and listen to all this Choke Point stuff that they are trying to ram down your throats. Listen and look them in the eye and see if they can look you back in the eye and defend what they are doing.

Don't allow them to mislead you, Members of this Congress, into thinking that this bill is all about protecting payday lenders and rent-to-own and pawnshop owners and all these businesses that they care so much about.

This is about stripping the Department of Justice of their power to investigate and subpoena. This is about pulling the rug out from under the citizens of this country who have tried to own homes and who have not been protected by their own government until we had reform. This is about saying they don't care what the Justice Department has been able to do to rein in these practices. They are going to come here today with a bill and tell you it is all about Choke Point.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON), an outstanding member of the committee.

Mr. TIPTON. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, we found some common ground. The ranking member was just talking about listening to Operation Choke Point. I think that is important for every American, because we are talking about freedom. We are talking about reining in an out-of-control bureaucracy. We are talking about actually preserving freedom in this country, to take it back for the American people and for businesses as well.

I want to applaud Chairman LUETKEMEYER for his leadership on this issue. It prevents Federal banking issues from pressuring banks and credit unions to terminate customer accounts with legal businesses.

Although it is important to be able to prevent fraud in the banking system, Operation Choke Point has largely been abused by the agencies and their regulators, pressuring and manipulating financial institutions based on personal prejudices of Federal bureaucrats.

In my district and many others across the U.S., legitimate businesses have found themselves shut out of the banking system after years of long-standing relationships with banks and credit unions. Oftentimes, this derisking means that these legal businesses are further shunned by other financial institutions fearful of civil and criminal liability as well as greater regulatory scrutiny.

Thankfully, this legislation puts commonsense restraints on regulators that have been running amok. By requiring Federal banking agencies to provide a material reason other than reputational risk for terminating a customer account, this bill establishes

necessary, clear standards to avoid further abuses.

□ 1100

Instead of relying on implicit or explicit threats from regulators, this legislation requires written justification of any request to terminate or restrict customer accounts.

It is clear that, despite several letters, hearings, and warning by Congress, financial institutions continue to face unwarranted pressure from the regulators. These requirements provide the necessary oversight to ensure banks, credit unions, and their customers are treated in a fair manner.

I am happy to lend my support to this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense measure. I again thank the gentleman from Missouri for his efforts on this legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), another outstanding member of our committee.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time.

I rise today to support H.R. 766, the Financial Institution Customer Protection Act of 2016.

As a small-business owner for 44 years, I have seen it all—or at least I thought I saw it all—and I am deeply troubled over a Federal Government program that I believe to be, at best, immoral and, at worst, illegal: Operation Choke Point.

The Obama White House has single-handedly granted itself the authority to cut off relationships between private financial institutions and the perfectly legitimate businesses which they serve. This Congress has not passed any legislation granting the executive branch such immense power.

Mr. Chairman, all of us here have bore witness to the Obama administration's willingness to bypass the law-making branch of our government, but this is a new low. Operation Choke Point is the worst example of the Obama White House telling Americans what is best for them, and there is no appeals process.

Mr. Chairman, this is the worst form of government intrusion I have ever seen and can think of. Operation Choke Point is another example of this administration's going around Congress to create laws rather than do their job, to enforce the laws we already have on the books.

As a second-generation small-business owner, I support H.R. 766, which will rein in this abuse of power. Operation Choke Point is un-American and deceiving. It is simply wrong.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and do away with Operation Choke Point once and for all. Let's save small business. Let's save Main Street America.

In God we trust.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman and Members, after the Justice Department finally began to use the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act that we refer to as FIRREA to create some semblance of justice for financial crisis-era bank fraud and misconduct, my Republican colleagues respond by restricting the Department of Justice's most powerful tool for holding banks accountable.

This is an interesting debate that we are having. We are sitting here wondering why it is that not one Member on the Republican side of the aisle who has taken to the floor to debate this bill will talk about FIRREA and will talk about the Justice Department and what you are doing in stripping away their powers.

I know why. Because you know that, if, in fact, you really got up and talked about what you were doing, you would lose all of the votes even on your side of the aisle. This is outrageous. So you are hiding behind Choke Point.

Not one Member on the opposite side of the aisle has the guts to get up and say: I can't do this. I am going to talk about what this bill is really about.

And so they continue to march down here, taking their orders to talk about Choke Point, Choke Point, Choke Point.

No. No. No. This is about stripping the Justice Department of its investigatory powers and its subpoena powers.

FIRREA is the last line of defense between consumers and investors and bank fraud. Central to the DOJ's ability to investigate fraud and to build cases against financial institutions is its subpoena power, power that H.R. 766 singles out for unprecedented and burdensome restrictions.

Instead of bolstering the Justice Department's ability to investigate mortgage fraud, H.R. 766 seeks to actually protect the banks and to insulate them from accountability. Wow. Wow.

Can you just imagine that anyone could go home to their constituents and say: I just voted for a bill that would actually protect banks and insulate them from accountability, I just voted for a bill to strip the Justice Department of its power to investigate?

Bank fraud should be met with the full force of the Federal Government. H.R. 766 is a dangerous step backwards for an economy still reeling from financial crisis-era fraud and misconduct.

Every regulator has been clear that account closures aren't the result of pressure from regulators, but from banks that have decided that, for some customers, they would rather lose their business than investigate any anti-fraud practices to protect our financial system from money laundering.

Look, you have got people who are willing to work on that part of public policy that you would like to see some changes in, but this is not it.

When you couple that discussion to overshadow what you are doing, to strip the Justice Department of its powers to investigate, what you are doing is you are setting up a situation to take us backwards and to harm so many people.

Have you forgotten the lessons already of 2008? Have you forgotten already what this country went through? Have you forgotten that the citizens of this country had to bail out the biggest banks to keep us from going into a depression?

We went into a recession. We tore up communities. We threw people out of their homes. We increased homelessness.

Now you want to come back and give the banks an opportunity to do what got us into trouble in the first place? Well, I can't imagine that you are prepared to defend that.

The common theme throughout H.R. 766 and many of the proposals that, unfortunately, cleared the Financial Services Committee is that, even in the aftermath of the financial crisis, my Republican colleagues would have you believe it is the big banks that are the ones in need of protection, protection from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

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

The Acting CHAIR. Members are reminded to please address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), one of the most knowledgeable members of our committee.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to address H.R. 766.

Before I talk about what my constituents have asked me to talk about, Mr. Chairman, which is the problems with Operation Choke Point, for I do take my instruction from my constituents at home, I do want to call my distinguished ranking member's concern to this report about this bill, which says, "or a Federally insured financial institution against an unaffiliated third person."

So I have to say, Mr. Chairman, I don't understand where the gentleman from California is coming from in terms of gutting FIRREA. It was certainly my privilege to serve at Treasury when FIRREA was negotiated with the Congress and enacted into law.

I rise today, though, to support H.R. 766, the Financial Institution Customer Protection Act, which helps to target and stop the egregious abuse of executive power in what has been known as Operation Choke Point.

Bank examiners want our commercial banks across the country to be conscious of reputation risk, something every institution, large and small, takes very, very seriously.

Our boards of directors of our banks understand that, just like credit risk, reputation risk is important. We don't

need to be lectured on the dangers of doing business with some high-risk customers.

But, in Operation Choke Point, we find subtle and not-so-subtle pressure from regulators to terminate business relationships rather than to expose that reputation risk.

I have heard from pawnbrokers in Arkansas, legally licensed State and Federally regulated businesses, that they are victims of Operation Choke Point by having their bank servicing limited or cut off.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HILL. Just last week, Mr. Chairman, not 2 years ago, a firearms dealer in my hometown of Little Rock was dumped by his payment processor and is now having to pay more in interest, having less control of his cash.

These are small, legitimate businesses that do business with our banks, and they are being penalized by the prejudiced, politicized agenda of this administration.

This is not the only example. It is reminiscent of the IRS targeting of conservative groups.

So, with great pleasure, I support my friend from Missouri's bill. It is a reasonable, targeted approach. I urge all my colleagues to support it.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, how much time is remaining, please?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER), my friend and chairman of our Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support H.R. 766, the Financial Institution Customer Protection Act of 2015, offered by my good friend from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER).

This legislation is critical to ensure small businesses across the country are able to access basic banking services without the threat of being targeted at the political or ideological whims of Washington bureaucrats.

As my colleagues have mentioned, H.R. 766 prohibits the Federal Government banking regulators from formally or informally prohibiting banks to serve lawful and legitimate businesses. Let me repeat that. It keeps them from prohibiting banks from serving lawful and legitimate businesses.

Over the last several years, we have seen an effort by the Department of Justice, in cooperation with the Federal banking regulators, to target certain categories of lawful merchants. These merchants include gun stores, short-term, small-dollar credit lenders, and others. This effort has been officially named Operation Choke Point.

Operation Choke Point has used a perverse interpretation of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery,

and Enforcement Act, currently referred to as FIRREA, to force banks to terminate banking relationships with certain categories of merchants even if its unlawful behavior isn't present.

Representative LUETKEMEYER's bill would clarify the original intent of FIRREA. Unfortunately, the minority leader and the ranking member of the committee have been spreading misinformation about the impact of H.R. 766. So I will spend the rest of my remarks outlining exactly what the bill will do and what it will not do.

It does not decriminalize any type of fraud. All of these criminal statutes comprising FIRREA's predicted offenses are untouched by this bill.

H.R. 766 does not prohibit the Department of Justice from holding financial institutions accountable. FIRREA tools are still available for the pursuit of any of the frauds committed by bank insiders against the bank.

Additionally, the bill expressly provides that FIRREA's civil tools also apply to fraud committed by the bank against an unaffiliated third party.

In other words, where a bank defrauds a purchaser of a mortgage-backed security, as was alleged by the big bank settlements, FIRREA's civil tools remain available to the Department of Justice.

H.R. 766 does prohibit the use of FIRREA tools where fraud is committed by a bank's account holder, but not by the bank itself.

This is the type of self-affecting fraud that the Department of Justice asserted that gave rise to Operation Choke Point. In other words, the fraud must be committed by the bank or against the bank for FIRREA to apply.

I hope everyone will read page 6, lines 21–25, of the bill.

Finally, H.R. 766 does limit the ability of the Attorney General to delegate issuance of FIRREA civil subpoenas.

As a result, FIRREA subpoenas must be signed by the Attorney General or the Deputy Attorney General rather than a low-ranking Department of Justice attorney.

Unfortunately, we yet have another example of the minority not actually reading the text of the bill before making public statements.

Going forward, I hope the minority will study the text of the bill instead of relying on false statements and talking points of the senior Senator from Massachusetts.

□ 1115

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the privilege to serve in this body for a number of terms, but I have not lost my ability to be outraged. Operation Choke Point is an outrage to the American people.

Who will stand up and defend the small mom and pop shops on Main

Street from the billions of dollars and the thousands of lawyers at the so-called Justice Department who wake up one day and decide that, notwithstanding current law, they are going to put them out of business?

Fortunately, Mr. Chairman, we have one outstanding Member of Congress, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), my colleague who is standing up to these people. He is standing up to these people by authoring H.R. 766, and he is saying enough is enough. And we must say enough is enough.

Fortunately, Mr. Chairman, a number of Democrats on the other side of the aisle have actually joined with our side to say that justice must prevail and that the rule of law must prevail. I suspect that is why the ranking member—bless her heart—had to spend so much time speaking herself, because she probably couldn't find any other speakers to come and help her out.

It is an outrage, Mr. Chairman, that this administration continues to trample on the Constitution. Clearly, we know the President has his pen and he has his phone. But he clearly doesn't have a copy of the Constitution. For legally constituted businesses to have to fear that, in the dark of night, they are going to be shut down by the awesome power of the Obama administration is an outrage. All Americans should be outraged.

Frankly, when is it that we will have the ranking member and others stand up for the rule of law? We are losing the rule of law to the discretion of regulators. If there was any justice in the Obama Justice Department, somebody would be indicted over Operation Choke Point. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, they should indict themselves for bringing forth something we haven't seen since the Nixon era. What else is going to be in the bag of dirty tricks?

Somebody has to stand up against the elites in Washington who bypass article I, section 1 of our Constitution. All legislative power is vested in this body. It is not vested in the Justice Department, Mr. Chairman. They are supposed to enforce the law, not make the law.

To wake up one morning and find out that your bank account and your access to funds have been choked off by an oppressive Federal Government, lawlessly, has to be stopped. Where is the justice, Mr. Chairman? I ask you, where is the justice?

Now, just yesterday I learned that on the other side of the Capitol, we had a Senator from Massachusetts who invoked the names of three dead African Americans who tragically lost their lives and used that bloody shirt to attack this bill. Then this very same Senator turned around and put out a fundraising appeal on H.R. 766.

The American people have not lost their ability to be outraged at those who may possess Ivy League degrees and Washington, D.C., addresses who have the arrogance to tell them what is

best for them, their businesses, their lives, and their families.

It is time that we respect the rule of law. It is time that we respect the Constitution. It is time that we choke off Operation Choke Point and put it into the dustbin of history: the history of dirty tricks and the history of lawlessness.

That is why it is so important, Mr. Chairman, that all Members—Democrat, Republican, and liberals—let their voice be heard by casting their vote for H.R. 766.

Why—why—do Members outsource their legislative authority to the unaccountable and unelected? Sooner or later, Mr. Chairman, the shoe is going to be on the other foot.

Who will stand for justice today? We will look closely as the names come up on the big board. The American people are watching, and they want to know: Who is going to stand with me? Who is going to stand for the rule of law? Who is going to stand for the Constitution? Who is going to stand for the little people in America?

I am proud to stand with Chairman LUETKEMEYER and the Republicans of the House Financial Services Committee to ensure that Operation Choke Point is choked off once and for all.

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

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

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

It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114-41. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 766

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 “Financial Institution Customer Protection Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR DEPOSIT ACCOUNT TERMINATION REQUESTS AND ORDERS.

(a) **TERMINATION REQUESTS OR ORDERS MUST BE MATERIAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An appropriate Federal banking agency may not formally or informally request or order a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account or group of customer accounts or to otherwise restrict or discourage a depository institution from entering into or maintaining a banking relationship with a specific customer or group of customers unless—

(A) the agency has a material reason for such request or order; and

(B) such reason is not based solely on reputational risk.

(2) **TREATMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS.**—If an appropriate Federal banking agency believes a specific customer or group of customers poses a threat to national security, including any belief that such customer or group of customers is involved in terrorist fi-

nancing, such belief shall satisfy the materiality requirement under paragraph (1)(A).

(b) **NOTICE REQUIREMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—If an appropriate Federal banking agency formally or informally requests or orders a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account or a group of customer accounts, the agency shall—

(A) provide such request or order to the institution in writing; and

(B) accompany such request or order with a written justification for why such termination is needed, including any specific laws or regulations the agency believes are being violated by the customer or group of customers, if any.

(2) **JUSTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.**—A justification described under paragraph (1)(B) may not be based solely on the reputation risk to the depository institution.

(c) **CUSTOMER NOTICE.**—

(1) **NOTICE NOT REQUIRED.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring a depository institution or an appropriate Federal banking agency to inform a customer or customers of the justification for the customer's account termination described under subsection (b).

(2) **NOTICE PROHIBITED IN CASES OF NATIONAL SECURITY.**—If an appropriate Federal banking agency requests or orders a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account or a group of customer accounts based on a belief that the customer or customers pose a threat to national security, neither the depository institution nor the appropriate Federal banking agency may inform the customer or customers of the justification for the customer's account termination.

(d) **REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**—Each appropriate Federal banking agency shall issue an annual report to the Congress stating—

(1) the aggregate number of specific customer accounts that the agency requested or ordered a depository institution to terminate during the previous year; and

(2) the legal authority on which the agency relied in making such requests and orders and the frequency on which the agency relied on each such authority.

(e) **DEFINITIONS.**—For purposes of this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE FEDERAL BANKING AGENCY.**—The term “appropriate Federal banking agency” means—

(A) the appropriate Federal banking agency, as defined under section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813); and

(B) the National Credit Union Administration, in the case of an insured credit union.

(2) **DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION.**—The term “depository institution” means—

(A) a depository institution, as defined under section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813); and

(B) an insured credit union.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS REFORM, RECOVERY, AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1989.

Section 951 of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 (12 U.S.C. 1833a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(2), by striking “affecting a federally insured financial institution” and inserting “against a federally insured financial institution or by a federally insured financial institution against an unaffiliated third person”; and

(2) in subsection (g)—

(A) in the header, by striking “SUBPOENAS” and inserting “INVESTIGATIONS”; and

(B) by amending paragraph (1)(C) to read as follows:

“(C) summon witnesses and require the production of any books, papers, correspondence, memoranda, or other records which the Attorney General deems relevant or material to the inquiry, if the Attorney General—

“(i) requests a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction for such actions and offers specific and articulable facts showing that

there are reasonable grounds to believe that the information or testimony sought is relevant and material for conducting an investigation under this section; or

“(ii) either personally or through delegation no lower than the Deputy Attorney General, issues and signs a subpoena for such actions and such subpoena is supported by specific and articulable facts showing that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the information or testimony sought is relevant for conducting an investigation under this section.”

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part B of House Report 114-414. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered 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 MR. SHERMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part B of House Report 114-414.

Mr. SHERMAN. 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 2, line 6, strike “poses” and all that follows through “such belief” and insert the following: “is, or is acting as a conduit for, an entity which—

(A) poses a threat to national security;

(B) is involved in terrorist financing;

(C) is an agency of the government of Iran, North Korea, Syria, or any country listed from time to time on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list;

(D) is located in, or is subject to the jurisdiction of, any country specified in subparagraph (C); or

(E) does business with any entity described in subparagraph (C) or (D), unless the appropriate Federal banking agency determines that the customer or group of customers has used due diligence to avoid doing business with any entity described in subparagraph (C) or (D), such belief

Page 2, line 9, strike “materiality requirement under paragraph (1)(A)” and insert “requirement under paragraph (1)”.

Page 3, line 16, after “security” insert the following: “, or are otherwise described under subsection (a)(2)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chair, this is really two bills that have been put together. One deals with Operation Choke Point, and for reasons explained by the majority, it is important that we pass that part of the legislation. The other imposes restrictions on FIRREA, and for reasons eloquently expressed by the ranking member, I do not support that part of the bill. I, frankly, do not know how I am going

to vote because of these portions of the bill, one is important to pass, and the other is a restriction that I cannot support.

I will point out for all of us who want to deal with Operation Choke Point that it is unfortunate that these two bills have been put together into one because we know the President isn't going to sign this bill if it has got the FIRREA portion in it. So it is my hope that we put on the President's desk a bill that protects American businesses from Operation Choke Point, a bill that the President can sign.

I want to use the time allotted here to try to improve the Operation Choke Point provisions because I hope they are ultimately signed into law.

Now, why are those Operation Choke Point provisions important? As the majority has explained, various businesses that are currently unpopular with the bureaucracy are being targeted, and it is an extremely powerful tool to destroy a business and to cut off its access to financial institutions.

Today they come for the gun stores and the tobacco dealers. And I don't have friends who are gun store owners and tobacco dealers, so some would say I should be quiet. But I do not know who the next President of the United States will be. And as I listen to the RECORD, I know that if they have the power, they will come after the Planned Parenthood clinics and the environmental organizations.

Woe be to a Congress that yields extreme power to the executive branch in the expectation that the executive branch will use it in a way that they favor knowing that the tide turns and the other party could be in control of that branch. So it is important that we improve the Operation Choke Point provisions of this bill.

Every speaker who talked about the Operation Choke Point provisions of this bill focused on mom and pop businesses, domestic businesses. Every bit of the discussion in committee focused on that, and that is why it is important that this bill not have an unintended consequence never discussed by anyone at committee; that is, that it would affect our anti-terrorism and national security efforts.

So in the words of the Democratic Daily Whip from Whip HOYER, the Sherman amendment clarifies that the underlying bill does not prevent banking regulators from requesting a financial institution terminate a relationship because the customer poses a national security threat, is engaged in terrorist financing, or is domiciled in Iran, North Korea, Syria, or another state sponsor of terrorism.

I think it is a step forward to improve the Operation Choke Point portions of this bill. I think that, as further improved, those provisions should and, I believe, will become law. So I ask support for an amendment that makes it clear that a bill that was discussed only in the sense of domestic businesses, only in the sense of ma and

pa and Main Street, does not have an effect that the author never included in our national security policy.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS).

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the gentleman from California who has shown his concern about the Choke Point provisions of the bill. He is absolutely right. Both of these issues are in this bill. We cannot divide it in the way that we are moving forward. And it means that if this bill passes, no matter what the concern may be, the overriding concern must be about stripping the Justice Department of its investigatory power and its subpoena power. It must be about undermining the Justice Department's ability to hold these big banks accountable.

I don't think you can divide this. This is one bill.

Mr. SHERMAN. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman, this bill will be going through the legislative process. It is important that we improve the Operation Choke Point provisions.

I have enjoyed working with the gentleman from Missouri, and I hope that he will see fit to accept this amendment and to narrow it to a focus outside of terrorism policy.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), who is a very thoughtful member of the House Financial Services Committee.

I wish to accept his amendment. I believe it adds greater granularity and specificity on a very important issue. Since he lost an amendment yesterday, I want him to bat at least .500.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. GOSAR

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part B of House Report 114-414.

Mr. GOSAR. 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 3, strike lines 4 through 9 and insert the following:

(1) NOTICE REQUIRED.—Except as provided under paragraph (2), if an appropriate Federal banking agency orders a depository institution to terminate a specific customer

account or a group of customer accounts, the depository institution shall inform the customer or customers of the justification for the customer's account termination described under subsection (b).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer a commonsense amendment that will protect customers of financial institutions and increase transparency between them and the Federal Government.

I applaud the committee for bringing this bill to the floor to protect consumers and businesses from an overreaching Federal Government. I am especially grateful to Representative LUETKEMEYER for his work on the bill, and I am proud to be a cosponsor.

My amendment will increase transparency by requiring the financial institutions to provide notice to customers if their account is ordered terminated by a Federal banking regulator. Customers have a right to be informed when the Federal Government has instructed a financial institution to close their accounts.

In the base bill, Federal banking agencies are required to notify the financial institution and provide written justification as to why the termination is needed. My amendment would simply require the depository institution to share that justification with the customer.

□ 1130

One of the ways the Federal Government has abused its powers in the past regarding customers of financial institutions is Operation Choke Point. Operation Choke Point was an unconstitutional program created by the Obama administration that put pressure on banks and payment processors to shut down industries like gun stores and pawn shops that President Obama and the attorney general just didn't like.

After continued pressure from Chairman LUETKEMEYER, myself, and other Members of Congress, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FDIC, announced in January of 2015 that some changes to this terrible program were to be made. While this was a positive step, this bill and my amendment are still very necessary. Congress needs to codify these customer protections to prevent future abuses by an overreaching Federal Government.

My amendment will help put an end to the abuses of Operation Choke Point. President Obama has been staunch in his assault on the Second Amendment, and Operation Choke Point was simply another way for the President and the DOJ to infringe upon the rights of lawful gun owners and businesses.

American citizens do not want Big Government to have the power to arbitrarily terminate their accounts at financial institutions based on ideological opposition to individuals or organizations. This simple, commonsense amendment, which is supported by Americans for Limited Government, the National Rifle Association, Gun Owners of America, and Eagle Forum, is about protecting consumers and increasing transparency.

CBO has informed me that this amendment will not score. As such, there is no reason not to pass this amendment or this bill that will increase transparency and protect consumers throughout the Nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and H.R. 766.

I thank the distinguished chair and ranking member.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, Mr. GOSAR's amendment is a dangerous amendment to an already highly problematic bill. As the OCC deputy comptroller noted in 2015 testimony before our committee: "In the rare cases where a customer has engaged in suspected criminal or other illegal activity," the OCC "may order the bank through an enforcement action to terminate the customer's account."

H.R. 766 creates a national security exception for customer notice, but it leaves the term undefined in a case where the illegal activity does not pose a threat to national security. Mr. GOSAR's amendment would potentially force banks to tip off someone engaging in criminal activity, frustrating regulators' oversight of Federal anti-money laundering laws.

Mr. GOSAR's amendment exacerbates an already highly problematic proposal, and I would urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. Chairman and Members, again, I just want to point out, since I have time on this amendment, that this bill is not about all of this anyway. They keep focusing on Choke Point, and they come up with these questionable amendments, et cetera, such as Mr. GOSAR's.

This is about the Republicans on the opposite side of the aisle stripping the Justice Department of its authority to go after these too big to fail banks and taking away their investigatory powers and their subpoena powers, thus threatening the citizens of this country once again to the kind of predatory lending that helped to almost bring down this economy starting in 2008.

I ask for a "no" on this amendment, and I am going to ask for a "no" on the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I am miffed. I am absolutely miffed that a

customer, or a consumer, would not have the ability to understand that their account was actually closed. I am totally miffed at personal rights and responsibilities and the coordination with the Justice Department.

Once again, this is the second amendment I have offered on Financial Services with the same type of attitude and idiocracy that I have actually seen in defiance of a commonsense amendment.

I oppose the gentlewoman's objections, and I would ask everyone to vote for this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman and Members, I would ask the Members of this Congress to not pay attention to what has been attempted by the opposite side of the aisle.

Again, I challenged them and I asked them to talk about FIRREA. I asked them to talk about the bill that takes away the investigatory powers of the Justice Department. I asked them to explain why they would take away subpoena powers from the Justice Department. I asked them if they remembered what happened when this country went into a recession, almost a depression, because of predatory lending. I asked them did they want to have their name and their vote behind big banks that are guilty of fraud, who have been fined enormous sums of money by the Justice Department because they were found guilty, and I am asking them to talk about this. So this is a distraction. This is obscuring the real bill that is before us.

Forget about this Choke Point part of the bill. We have time to work on that. There are some Members on the opposite side of the aisle that share some of those concerns, but not in this bill. They coupled it with this taking away of the Department of Justice power because they knew that they could somehow divert the attention over to the so-called Choke Point and talk about this administration and talk about guns and talk about payday loans and talk about rent to own and pawn shops and all that.

This is not about small business protection. This is about using the Choke Point argument as a way to divert attention away from what they are really doing.

Ladies and gentlemen, you can't go home and explain to your constituents why you would protect the too big to fail banks, why you would take away the power to make them accountable. They have harmed this country. They have harmed our citizens. They have caused people to lose their homes, and they have increased the homelessness with their predatory lending.

We have reform that we are trying to implement. I know every trick in the book has been played to try to undermine Dodd-Frank and to keep us from having the kind of reform because there are people who are just very close to the big banks and they are not going

to cross the big banks. As a matter of fact, they used too much of their career to protect the big banks.

This is an outrage. I want the Members of this Congress to understand, we have got time to have a discussion about Choke Point and all of that. We have Members on both sides of the aisle who would work with you on those issues. This is not it.

You should not have placed this part in this bill. You should not have had to try and make believe that this is all about Choke Point when, in fact, the real big deal in this bill is about how you are going to try to protect the biggest and the worst banks.

We have pointed out to you in this discussion all of the big fines that have been imposed against these banks. Did these banks say, "No, we didn't do it"? Did these banks say, "I am not going to accept this. I am going to court, and I am going to fight"? You know they rolled over because they are guilty, and you know that they are.

Please do not be diverted from the real meaning of this bill. This bill is about crippling the Department of Justice and not about Choke Point.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. WOMACK). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois) having assumed the chair, Mr. WOMACK, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 766) to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 595, 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 ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on adoption of the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

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. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I am opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Castor of Florida moves to recommit the bill H.R. 766 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Sections 2 and 3 shall take effect on the date that the Attorney General and the Federal financial institutions regulatory agencies jointly certify to the Congress that in the preceding 5 years no federally regulated financial institution has been subject to—

(1) a consent order, settlement, deferred prosecution agreement, civil or criminal penalty for a violation of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act;

(2) a consent order, settlement, deferred prosecution agreement, civil or criminal penalty for bank fraud, wire fraud, or mail fraud relating to the origination, servicing, securitization, or sale of a mortgage product; or

(3) a consent order, settlement, deferred prosecution agreement, civil or criminal penalty for unfair or deceptive acts and practices relating to the origination, servicing, securitization, or sale of a mortgage product.

(b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term “Federal financial institutions regulatory agencies” has the meaning given that term under section 1121 of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 (12 U.S.C. 3350).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker and Members, 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.

Mr. Speaker, I rushed to come to the floor to offer this motion to recommit because this bill, H.R. 766, is so outrageous. Under this bill, the Republicans in Congress are poised to give a get out of jail free card to big banks and Wall Street interests when it comes to fraud. Republicans propose to take away tools and investigatory powers from the Department of Justice in cases of fraud and undermine the Department of Justice's ability to prosecute mortgage fraud and other crimes to the detriment of American families and our neighbors back home.

Americans expect that the big banks that have broken the rules be held accountable for any of their financial misdeeds. However, the House Repub-

licans are trying to give their special interest friends a break they do not need at the expense of hardworking Americans.

Shortly after I was sworn into Congress in 2007, my neighbors started to come to me and express, sincerely, about a problem that was happening. It started in Florida almost earlier than anywhere else.

As the financial crisis took hold and people began to lose their jobs or their employers cut back on their hours, they couldn't keep up with their mortgages. The deeper we dug in to it, we began to see a pattern of fraudulent practices by many in the mortgage loan business.

After 2007, I had six foreclosure prevention workshops. At that time, I will never forget looking into the eyes of my neighbors, who asked for a little bit of breathing room, a little bit of help.

We came to Washington and we asked for that help on behalf of American families, not to let them off the hook for their mortgages, but to give them a little breathing room. The response here in Washington was, instead, the huge, multibillion-dollar Wall Street bailout.

We asked, as part of that Wall Street bailout of the big banks: Could you allow homeowners to have a little more breathing room so they could stay in their homes? But, no, that couldn't be part of the multibillion-dollar Wall Street package. That was a lesson to everyone across America who really holds the power here in Washington, D.C.

Next week, I am still going to have another foreclosure prevention workshop with HOPE NOW and my local partners, because people are not healed and the fraud continues.

On Monday of this week, I sat down with my U.S. attorney in the middle district of Florida, one of the busiest districts in America, especially when it comes to fraud. Do you know what U.S. Attorney Lee Bentley said? He said we need more tools to fight fraud. They are winning big cases and big settlements when it comes to Medicare fraud and mortgage fraud and rooting out waste in the system.

So it is appalling. You bring H.R. 766 to take away those investigatory tools, the subpoena powers, for white-collar crime.

Today, House Republicans are aiming to weaken the vital financial fraud fighting law, Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act. This is irresponsible. House Republicans should be called out for it.

Republicans will eliminate the authority of thousands of Federal prosecutors to issue subpoenas for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting any big banks or other financial institutions that engage in financial fraud or other financial crimes.

□ 1145

So I am offering an amendment, a motion to recommit, that, instead,

sides with our hardworking families back home. My amendment will prevent the legislation from taking effect until the Department of Justice and banking regulators certify that no financial institutions that are covered by the act have broken the law by taking advantage of servicemembers or by perpetrating abuses in the mortgage market. That is the very least my Republican colleagues could do.

In the meantime, American families who are appalled at this kind of action in the Congress should know that the Democrats are united for opportunity for hardworking Americans, especially for servicemembers and homeowners who are seeking to enjoy the American Dream. Americans should be appalled that Republicans want to take the financial cops off the beat and take tools away from our Department of Justice and U.S. attorneys.

I ask my House Republican colleagues to join us in working to build an economy that works for all Americans, not just for the privileged few.

I urge a “yes” vote on the motion. Side with American families.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the gentlewoman's motion.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I think I have finally found some common ground with my friends on the other side of the aisle, which is that we lament how few prosecutions there have been after the great financial crisis.

How about all of the former Democratic officials who used to warrant Fannie and Freddie, which took tens of millions of dollars of bonuses only to see hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer bailouts? Where are those prosecutions, Mr. Speaker?

How about all of the Democratic lawmakers who came and said, “Let's roll the dice for taxpayer bailouts”? Guess what? The dice were rolled, and taxpayers were rolled as well. Where are the prosecutions there? It has been 8 years of the Obama administration's Justice Department.

They are trying to take you away from what this is truly about. It is about, again, Operation Choke Point. It is about the awesome resources and power of the Federal Government that is being used to crush small businesses that somehow appear on the Obama administration's enemy list.

Today, those small businesses that deal with ammunition sales, that are coin dealers, dating services—all on the enemies list—that deal with fireworks sales, payday loans, pharmaceutical sales. It is all right here in the FDIC Supervisory Insights. It reads that, even though you are a perfectly legal business, if we don't like you, we are going to crush you, and there is nothing you can do about it because we are the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, there is something we can do about it. We can pass H.R. 766. All the motion to recommit says is that the Justice Department gets to decide whether the law is ever enacted. It is not worth the paper it is printed on.

When is this body going to quit outsourcing its constitutional authority to unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats? It is an outrage. Operation Choke Point is an outrage. It is an affront to the Constitution. It is an affront to the rule of law. It is an affront to all of the hardworking mom-and-pop shops all across America. It strikes fear in the hearts of Americans.

It is time to stand up for the Constitution. It is time to stand up for the rule of law. It is time to stand up for those who do not have voice, for those who do not have power. Reject this motion to recommit, and enact H.R. 766.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

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.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were 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.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 177, nays 240, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 62]

YEAS—177

Adams	Davis (CA)	Honda
Aguilar	Davis, Danny	Hoyer
Ashford	DeFazio	Huffman
Bass	DeGette	Israel
Beatty	Delaney	Jackson Lee
Becerra	DeLauro	Jeffries
Bera	DelBene	Johnson (GA)
Bishop (GA)	DeSaulnier	Johnson, E. B.
Blumenauer	Deutch	Kaptur
Bonamici	Dingell	Keating
Brady (PA)	Doggett	Kelly (IL)
Brown (FL)	Doyle, Michael	Kennedy
Brownley (CA)	F.	Kildee
Bustos	Duckworth	Kilmer
Butterfield	Edwards	Kind
Capps	Ellison	Kirkpatrick
Capuano	Engel	Kuster
Cárdenas	Eshoo	Langevin
Carney	Esty	Larsen (WA)
Carson (IN)	Farr	Larson (CT)
Cartwright	Fattah	Lawrence
Castor (FL)	Foster	Lee
Chu, Judy	Frankel (FL)	Levin
Cicilline	Fudge	Lewis
Clark (MA)	Gabbard	Lieu, Ted
Clarke (NY)	Gallego	Lipinski
Clay	Garamendi	Loeb
Cleaver	Graham	Lofgren
Clyburn	Grayson	Lowenthal
Cohen	Green, Al	Lowey
Cornally	Grijalva	Lujan Grisham
Conyers	Gutiérrez	(NM)
Cooper	Hahn	Luján, Ben Ray
Costa	Hastings	(NM)
Courtney	Heck (WA)	Lynch
Crowley	Higgins	Maloney,
Cuellar	Himes	Carolyn
Cummings	Hinojosa	Maloney, Sean

Matsui	Pocan
McCollum	Polis
McDermott	Price (NC)
McGovern	Quigley
McNerney	Rangel
Meeks	Rice (NY)
Meng	Richmond
Moore	Roybal-Allard
Moulton	Ruiz
Nadler	Ruppersberger
Napolitano	Ryan (OH)
Neal	Sánchez, Linda
Nolan	T.
Norcross	Sarbanes
O'Rourke	Schakowsky
Pallone	Schiff
Pascarella	Schrader
Payne	Scott (VA)
Pelosi	Scott, David
Perlmutter	Serrano
Peters	Sewell (AL)
Peterson	Sinema
Pingree	Sires

NAYS—240

Abraham	Goodlatte	Miller (MI)
Aderholt	Gosar	Moolenaar
Allen	Gowdy	Mooney (WV)
Amash	Granger	Mullin
Amodei	Graves (GA)	Mulvaney
Babin	Graves (LA)	Murphy (PA)
Barletta	Graves (MO)	Neugebauer
Barr	Griffith	Newhouse
Barton	Grothman	Noem
Benish	Guinta	Nugent
Bilirakis	Guthrie	Nunes
Bishop (MI)	Hanna	Olson
Bishop (UT)	Hardy	Palazzo
Black	Harper	Palmer
Blackburn	Harris	Paulsen
Blum	Hartzer	Pearce
Bost	Heck (NV)	Perry
Boustany	Hensarling	Pittenger
Brady (TX)	Hice, Jody B.	Poe (TX)
Brat	Hill	Poliquin
Bridenstine	Holding	Pompeo
Brooks (AL)	Hudson	Posey
Brooks (IN)	Huelskamp	Price, Tom
Buchanan	Hultgren	Ratcliffe
Buck	Hunter	Reed
Bucshon	Hurd (TX)	Reichert
Burgess	Hurt (VA)	Renacci
Byrne	Issa	Ribble
Calvert	Jenkins (KS)	Rice (SC)
Carter (GA)	Jenkins (WV)	Rigell
Carter (TX)	Johnson (OH)	Roby
Chabot	Johnson, Sam	Roe (TN)
Chaffetz	Jolly	Rogers (AL)
Clawson (FL)	Jones	Rogers (KY)
Coffman	Jordan	Rohrabacher
Cole	Joyce	Rokita
Collins (GA)	Katko	Ros-Lehtinen
Collins (NY)	Kelly (MS)	Roskam
Comstock	Kelly (PA)	Ross
Conaway	King (IA)	Rothfus
Cook	King (NY)	Rouzer
Costello (PA)	Kinzinger (IL)	Royce
Cramer	Kline	Russell
Crawford	Knight	Salmon
Crenshaw	Labrador	Sanford
Culberson	LaHood	Scalise
Curbelo (FL)	LaMalfa	Schweikert
Davis, Rodney	Lamborn	Scott, Austin
Denham	Lance	Sensenbrenner
Dent	Latta	Sessions
DeSantis	LoBiondo	Sherman
DesJarlais	Long	Shimkus
Diaz-Balart	Loudermilk	Shuster
Dold	Love	Simpson
Donovan	Lucas	Smith (MO)
Duffy	Luetkemeyer	Smith (NE)
Duncan (SC)	Lummis	Smith (NJ)
Duncan (TN)	MacArthur	Smith (TX)
Elmendorf (NC)	Marchant	Stefanik
Emmer (MN)	Marino	Stewart
Farenthold	Massie	Stivers
Fitzpatrick	McCarthy	Stutzman
Fleischmann	McCauley	Thompson (PA)
Fleming	McClintock	Thornberry
Flores	McHenry	Tiberi
Forbes	McKinley	Tipton
Fortenberry	McMorris	Trott
Fox	Rodgers	Turner
Franks (AZ)	McSally	Upton
Frelinghuysen	Meadows	Valadao
Garrett	Meehan	Wagner
Gibbs	Messer	Walberg
Gibson	Mica	Walden
Gohmert	Miller (FL)	Walker

Walorski	Williams	Young (AK)
Walters, Mimi	Wilson (SC)	Young (IA)
Weber (TX)	Wittman	Young (IN)
Webster (FL)	Womack	Zeldin
Wenstrup	Woodall	Zinke
Westerman	Yoder	
Whitfield	Yoho	

NOT VOTING—16

Beyer	Herrera Beutler	Sanchez, Loretta
Boyle, Brendan	Huizenga (MI)	Smith (WA)
F.	Murphy (FL)	Takai
Castro (TX)	Pitts	Titus
Fincher	Rooney (FL)	Westmoreland
Green, Gene	Rush	

□ 1208

Mr. ROKITA changes his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Messrs. JEFFRIES, HUFFMAN, VARGAS, and BUTTERFIELD changed their votes from “nay” to “yea.”

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE 12 U.S. MARINES STATIONED AT KANEOHE MARINE CORPS BASE

(By unanimous consent, Ms. GABBARD was allowed to speak out of order.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, today we are gathered and rising in memory of the 12 United States Marines stationed at the Kaneohe Marine Corps base in my district who were tragically lost the night of January 14 in a training accident.

We must never forget the risks that our servicemembers take every single day, whether they are in training or in combat as they put their lives on the line for the security of our Nation.

Major Shawn Campbell, College Station, Texas.

Captain Brian Kennedy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Captain Kevin Rouche, St. Louis, Missouri.

Captain Steven Torbert, Florence, Alabama.

Sergeant Dillon Semolina, Chaska, Minnesota.

Sergeant Adam Schoeller, Gardners, Pennsylvania.

Sergeant Jeffrey Sempler, Woodruff, South Carolina.

Sergeant William Turner, Florala, Alabama.

Corporal Matthew Drown, Spring, Texas.

Corporal Thomas Jardas, Fort Myers, Florida.

Corporal Christopher Orlando, Hingham, Massachusetts.

Lance Corporal Ty Hart, Aumsville, Oregon.

May we offer them a moment of silence to honor their service, support their loved ones, and our entire U.S. Marines Corps in this tragic loss.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will please rise for a moment of silence.

Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

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.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 250, nays 169, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 63]

YEAS—250

Abraham	Graves (LA)	Paulsen
Aderholt	Graves (MO)	Pearce
Allen	Griffith	Perry
Amash	Grothman	Peterson
Amodei	Guinta	Pittenger
Ashford	Guthrie	Pitts
Babin	Hanna	Poe (TX)
Barletta	Hardy	Poliquin
Barr	Harper	Pompeo
Barton	Harris	Posey
Benishek	Hartzler	Price, Tom
Bilirakis	Hastings	Ratcliffe
Bishop (GA)	Heck (NV)	Reed
Bishop (MI)	Hensarling	Reichert
Bishop (UT)	Hice, Jody B.	Renacci
Black	Hill	Ribble
Blackburn	Holding	Rice (SC)
Blum	Hudson	Rigell
Bost	Huelskamp	Roby
Boustany	Hultgren	Roe (TN)
Brady (TX)	Hunter	Rogers (AL)
Brat	Hurd (TX)	Rogers (KY)
Bridenstine	Hurt (VA)	Rohrabacher
Brooks (AL)	Issa	Rokita
Brooks (IN)	Jenkins (KS)	Ros-Lehtinen
Buchanan	Jenkins (WV)	Roskam
Buck	Johnson (OH)	Ross
Bucshon	Johnson, Sam	Rothfus
Burgess	Jolly	Rouzer
Byrne	Jones	Royce
Calvert	Jordan	Russell
Cárdenas	Joyce	Salmon
Carter (GA)	Katko	Sanford
Carter (TX)	Kelly (MS)	Scalise
Chabot	Kelly (PA)	Schweikert
Chaffetz	King (IA)	Scott, Austin
Clawson (FL)	King (NY)	Scott, David
Coffman	Kinzinger (IL)	Sensenbrenner
Cole	Kline	Sessions
Collins (GA)	Knight	Shimkus
Collins (NY)	Labrador	Shuster
Comstock	LaHood	Simpson
Conaway	LaMalfa	Sinema
Cook	Lamborn	Smith (MO)
Costa	Lance	Smith (NE)
Costello (PA)	Latta	Smith (NJ)
Cramer	LoBiondo	Smith (TX)
Crawford	Long	Stefanik
Crenshaw	Loudermilk	Stewart
Cuellar	Love	Stivers
Culberson	Lucas	Stutzman
Curbelo (FL)	Luetkemeyer	Thompson (PA)
Davis, Rodney	Lummis	Thornberry
Denham	MacArthur	Tiberi
Dent	Marchant	Tipton
DeSantis	Marino	Trott
DesJarlais	Massie	Turner
Diaz-Balart	McCarthy	Upton
Dold	McCaul	Valadao
Donovan	McClintock	Wagner
Duffy	McHenry	Walberg
Duncan (SC)	McKinley	Walden
Duncan (TN)	McMorris	Walker
Ellmers (NC)	Rodgers	Walorski
Emmer (MN)	McSally	Walters, Mimi
Farenthold	Meadows	Walz
Fitzpatrick	Meehan	Weber (TX)
Fleischmann	Messer	Webster (FL)
Fleming	Mica	Wenstrup
Flores	Miller (FL)	Westerman
Forbes	Miller (MI)	Whitfield
Fortenberry	Moolenaar	Williams
Fox	Mooney (WV)	Wilson (SC)
Franks (AZ)	Mullin	Wittman
Frelinghuysen	Mulvaney	Womack
Garrett	Murphy (PA)	Woodall
Gibbs	Neugebauer	Yoder
Gibson	Newhouse	Yoho
Gohmert	Noem	Young (AK)
Goodlatte	Nugent	Young (IA)
Gosar	Nunes	Young (IN)
Gowdy	Olson	Zeldin
Granger	Palazzo	Zinke
Graves (GA)	Palmer	

NAYS—169

Adams	Garamendi	Napolitano
Aguilar	Graham	Neal
Bass	Grayson	Nolan
Beatty	Green, Al	Norcross
Becerra	Grijalva	O'Rourke
Bera	Gutiérrez	Pallone
Blumenauer	Hahn	Pascrell
Bonamici	Heck (WA)	Payne
Brady (PA)	Higgins	Pelosi
Brown (FL)	Himes	Perlmutter
Brownley (CA)	Hinojosa	Peters
Bustos	Honda	Pingree
Butterfield	Hoyer	Pocan
Capps	Huffman	Polis
Capuano	Israel	Price (NC)
Carney	Jackson Lee	Quigley
Carson (IN)	Jeffries	Rangel
Cartwright	Johnson (GA)	Rice (NY)
Castor (FL)	Johnson, E. B.	Richmond
Chu, Judy	Kaptur	Roybal-Allard
Ciulline	Keating	Ruiz
Clark (MA)	Kelly (IL)	Ruppersberger
Clarke (NY)	Kennedy	Ryan (OH)
Clay	Kildee	Sánchez, Linda T.
Cleaver	Kilmer	Sarbanes
Clyburn	Kind	Schakowsky
Cohen	Kirkpatrick	Schiff
Connolly	Kuster	Schrader
Conyers	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Cooper	Larsen (WA)	Serrano
Courtney	Larson (CT)	Sewell (AL)
Crowley	Lawrence	Sherman
Cummings	Lee	Sires
Davis (CA)	Levin	Slaughter
Davis, Danny	Lewis	Speier
DeFazio	Lieu, Ted	Swalwell (CA)
DeGette	Lipinski	Takai
Delaney	Loebach	Takano
DeLauro	Lofgren	Thompson (CA)
DeBene	Lowenthal	Thompson (MS)
DeSaulnier	Lowe	Tonko
Deutch	Lujan Grisham	Torres
Dingell	(NM)	Tsongas
Doggett	Lujan, Ben Ray	Van Hollen
Doyle, Michael F.	(NM)	Vargas
Duckworth	Lynch	Veasey
Edwards	Maloney,	Vela
Ellison	Carolyn	Velázquez
Engel	Maloney, Sean	Visclosky
Eshoo	Matsui	Wasserman
Esty	McCollum	Schultz
Farr	McDermott	Waters, Maxine
Fattah	McGovern	Watson Coleman
Foster	McNerney	Welch
Frankel (FL)	Meeks	Wilson (FL)
Fudge	Meng	Yarmuth
Gabbard	Moore	
Gallego	Moulton	
	Nadler	

NOT VOTING—14

Beyer	Green, Gene	Rush
Boyle, Brendan F.	Herrera Beutler	Sanchez, Loretta
Castro (TX)	Huizenga (MI)	Smith (WA)
Fincher	Murphy (FL)	Titus
	Rooney (FL)	Westmoreland

□ 1217

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. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, February 1; Tuesday, February 2; Wednesday, February 3; and Thursday, February 4, 2016, I was on medical leave while recovering from hip replacement surgery and unable to be present for recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted: "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 46 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2187, as amended). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 47 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4168). "No" on rollcall vote No. 48 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 594). "No" on rollcall vote No. 49 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 594). "No" on rollcall vote No. 50 (on agreeing to the Palazzo Amendment to H.R. 3700). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 51 (on agree-

ing to the Al Green Amendment to H.R. 3700). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 52 (on passage of H.R. 3700). "No" on rollcall vote No. 53 (on passage of H.R. 3762, objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding). "No" on rollcall vote No. 54 (on passage of H.R. 3662). "No" on rollcall vote No. 55 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 595). "No" on rollcall vote No. 56 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 595). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 57 (on agreeing to the DeSaulnier Amendment to H.R. 1675). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 58 (on agreeing to the Issa Amendment to H.R. 1675). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 59 (on agreeing to the Carolyn Maloney Amendment to H.R. 1675). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 60 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 1675, with instructions). "No" on rollcall vote No. 61 (on passage of H.R. 1675). "Yes" on rollcall vote No. 62 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 766, with instructions). "No" on rollcall vote No. 63 (on passage of H.R. 766).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my vote was not recorded on rollcall No. 62 on the Motion to Recommit for consideration of H.R. 766, Financial Institution Customer Protection Act of 2015. I am not recorded because I was absent due to the birth of my son in San Antonio, Texas. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, my vote was not recorded on rollcall No. 63 on the final consideration of H.R. 766, Financial Institution Customer Protection Act of 2015. I am not recorded because I was absent due to the birth of my son in San Antonio, Texas. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Office of the Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: Due to my recent appointment to the House Budget Committee, I hereby resign my position on the House Science, Space, & Technology Committee.

Sincerely,

BILL JOHNSON,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.
There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Small Business:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Office of the Speaker,
Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: In light of my recent appointment to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I hereby resign

my position on the House Small Business Committee.

Best Regards,

MIKE BOST,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on the Budget:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Office of the Speaker,
Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: In light of my recent appointment as Chairman of the Select Panel on Infant Lives, I hereby resign my position on the House Budget Committee.

Best Regards,

MARSHA BLACKBURN,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 3293, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST ACT, AND H.R. 2017, COMMON SENSE NUTRITION DISCLOSURE ACT

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Committee on Rules issued two announcements outlining the amendment processes for H.R. 3293, the Scientific Research in the National Interest Act, and H.R. 2017, the Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act of 2015.

The amendment deadline for H.R. 3293 has been set for Monday, February 8, at 3 p.m. The amendment deadline for H.R. 2017 has been set for 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 9.

Amendments should be drafted to the text of each bill posted on the Committee on Rules Web site. Please feel free to contact me or my staff at the Committee on Rules for any questions.

ELECTING CERTAIN MEMBERS TO STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the House Republican Conference, I send to the desk a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 602

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Guinta, to rank immediately after Mr. Stutzman; and Mr. Johnson of Ohio.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Mr. Bost.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RANKING MEMBERS OF A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 603

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby ranked as follows on the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS.—Mr. Takai, after Mrs. Lawrence; and Ms. Adams, after Ms. Clarke of New York.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND ADVANCEMENTS FOR DYSLLEXIA ACT

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3033) to require the President's annual budget request to Congress each year to include a line item for the Research in Disabilities Education program of the National Science Foundation and to require the National Science Foundation to conduct research on dyslexia, with the Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike section 4 of the bill and insert the following:

SEC. 4. DYSLLEXIA.

(a) *IN GENERAL*.—Consistent with subsection (c), the National Science Foundation shall support multi-directorate, merit-reviewed, and competitively awarded research on the science of specific learning disability, including dyslexia, such as research on the early identification of children and students with dyslexia, professional development for teachers and administrators of students with dyslexia, curricula and educational tools needed for children with dyslexia, and implementation and scaling of successful models of dyslexia intervention. Research supported under this subsection shall be conducted with the goal of practical application.

(b) *AWARDS*.—To promote development of early career researchers, in awarding funds under subsection (a) the National Science Foundation shall prioritize applications for funding submitted by early career researchers.

(c) *COORDINATION*.—To prevent unnecessary duplication of research, activities under this Act shall be coordinated with similar activities supported by other Federal agencies, including research funded by the Institute of Education Sciences and the National Institutes of Health.

(d) *FUNDING*.—The National Science Foundation shall devote not less than \$5,000,000 to research described in subsection (a), which shall include not less than \$2,500,000 for research on the science of dyslexia, for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, subject to the availability of appropriations, to come from amounts made available for the Research and Related Activities account or the Education and Human Resources Directorate under subsection (e). This section shall be carried out using funds otherwise appropriated by law after the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) *AUTHORIZATION*.—For each of fiscal years 2016 through 2021, there are authorized out of funds appropriated to the National Science Foundation, \$5,000,000 to carry out the activities described in subsection (a).

SEC. 5. DEFINITION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY.

In this Act, the term "specific learning disability"—

(1) means a disorder in 1 or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations;

(2) includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia; and

(3) does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Mr. SMITH of Texas (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

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

There was no objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

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

(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 p.m. 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.

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.

Mr. Speaker, the House will also consider H.R. 3293, the Scientific Research in the National Interest Act, sponsored by Representative LAMAR SMITH. This bill will go a long ways toward providing greater transparency and accountability at the National Science Foundation. It is essential that we ensure precious Federal dollars are spent on Federal grants that promote science but do so in a way that is in the best interest of the United States.

Additionally, the House will consider H.R. 3442, the Debt Management and Fiscal Responsibility Act, sponsored by Representative KENNY MARCHANT. This commonsense bill simply requires the administration to report to Congress on the status of the Nation's debt and their plans to address our fiscal problems prior to the Nation reaching its debt limit. With more than \$18 trillion in public debt, we have a responsibility, both Democrats and Republicans, to show the American people a path toward solvency.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider H.R. 1017, the Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act, sponsored by Representative CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS. This important bill addresses a harmful menu labeling regulation that will burden every grocery store, convenience store, and pizza restaurant in the country. Instead, our approach will provide a reasonable and flexible way for these businesses to provide customers with nutritional information.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information with respect to the legislation that is going to be on the floor next week.

I would simply say with respect to one of these bills, the Debt Management and Fiscal Responsibility Act, I don't know whether that bill requires the House to do the same, but certainly both the executive and the legislative branches of government need to have a responsible fiscal program and analysis so that, in fact, we can move toward fiscal balance. I look forward to having that discussion next week on the floor.

Mr. Leader, we had a prayer breakfast this morning. It was a moving and very, I think, unifying time here in Washington where we had Republicans and Democrats and a lot of people from around the world attending. We talked about coming together. We talked about respecting one another, talking to one another, and serving our country and our people in a way consistent with our various faiths.

In that context, I am going to ask the gentleman some questions on the scheduling, but I am hopeful that the Speaker has indicated that he wants to consider some broad issues. He refers to five in particular: national security, jobs and economic growth, health care, poverty and opportunity, and restoring the Constitution. I am not sure exactly

what that last phrase means, but in any event, I think all of us want to make sure the Constitution is honored and certainly adhered to.

However, it also appears—and we had this discussion last week—that substantive legislation—that is, translating thoughts and objectives and visions into legislation—may not occur in 2016. I don't know that to be the case, but I fear that to be the case, that we will not offer to the American people in this critically important election year specifics as to what we might do.

I mention specifically the Affordable Care Act, which I know the gentleman's party believes is not good policy, whether or not we were going to consider an alternative to do what your party has said it is going to do for the last 5 years, and that is repeal, but replace with policies. I think that would be a useful discussion for us to have and do so in a way that respects the integrity of each person's view as to what the best interests of our country are.

□ 1230

In addition, one of the pieces of legislation would be the Voting Rights Act amendment. I bring that up now because Speaker RYAN said yesterday, as I understand it, that he was in favor of doing a voting rights bill. I don't know that he went into specifics.

We believe that we need to address this bill because we believe it was substantially undermined by the recent decision of the Supreme Court some few years ago. He indicated that that was not going to be brought to the floor because of Mr. GOODLATTE's opposition to that or, perhaps, the failure of Mr. GOODLATTE to address that in committee.

I bring that up specifically because I know, Mr. Leader, you made the observation, and I think you are quoted as saying you believe the two parties can achieve consensus on that legislation, but we may not be able to move it forward this year.

Excuse me. That speaks to criminal justice system reform, not to voting rights. I think we can reach consensus on the criminal justice reform. I think both parties believe that there are substantial areas that need to be addressed in criminal justice reform. Senator CORNYN has certainly indicated that. Republicans and Democrats in this House have indicated that.

My question to you is with respect to the issues that I think we have all discussed and that the Speaker has discussed, such as: jobs and economic growth; health care; poverty and opportunity, which we believe is a very important issue; criminal justice reform; job creation; long-term fiscal agreements so that we can replace the sequester with a permanent rather than an every-2-year resolution; comprehensive tax reform, which almost all of us have said we are for—Mr. CAMP brought a bill forward on that—

comprehensive immigration reform; restoring voting rights, which I mentioned; taking action to address gun violence, which we are in favor of, and I think clearly your side has indicated that mental health is very much a component of that and you want to address that; and addressing our national security challenges, which I agree with the Speaker that is a primary responsibility and concern of, I think, everybody on the floor of this House.

My question, therefore, Mr. Leader, is: Do you expect any substantive legislation, rather than simply ideas that both parties might express and put out to the public, that would be transparent, specific, and on which we could have debates on alternative policies? Do you expect, in the relatively short time we have this year, to have legislation on the floor dealing with one or more of those subjects?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I did take notes because you raised a lot of different issues.

The first point, you talked about Congressman KENNY MARCHANT's bill asking the administration to set a path forward. I agree with you. That is why I believe that any budget that comes before this floor should balance in the 10-year window. I am proud of the fact that, on this side of the aisle, we have been able to do it, because that shows you the path to solvency and how you deal with this debt through big changes.

You talked about what Speaker RYAN laid out. These are big, bold, new ideas. The Speaker says that they are going to go through committee. Every Member of this body, your side and ours, will be able to participate. The legislation will come through committee.

Knowing these are bold ideas and the time we have here, some will get done and some may not get done by the end of this calendar year, but that doesn't mean that we can't finish the job.

If we want to save this country and put us on a path of solvency and increased growth, these are areas that we find need to get done. We look forward to you working with us on all of these areas.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

I think, certainly, we agree that we ought to work together. He and I have worked together, as a matter fact, on some very significant legislation more than a month ago that passed the House. I think the American public wants that.

My urging to the majority leader would be that each of these ideas, if we are going to ultimately make them policy, has to be translated into legislation.

The gentleman says all of us will be able to participate. Frankly, the gentleman knows, as well as I do, that legislation has to come to the floor for all of us to engage in, hopefully, with the ability to offer amendments and our ideas on how to perfect legislation that

may come out of the committees. I would hope that we would see that.

The gentleman mentioned the budget. I think the gentleman and others have said they want to accelerate the budget process. I think that is a good idea. I have always felt that we ought to move the budget and the appropriations bills earlier than we have historically done so that we can get those to the Senate, so they have time to work on them and bring them back, in order to have all 12 appropriations bills done seriatim, one after another.

In my view, we are going to need a bipartisan effort and not have poison pills or the so-called riders in them in order for the Senate to consider them and be able to work their will and then go to conference and get that done all prior to October 1. I don't know whether that is possible, but I think the gentleman would say that would be certainly good to do, if in fact we could get that done.

When does the gentleman expect the budget, which is the start of that process, to be on the floor?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Well, I was just speaking with the Budget Committee chairman. He is trying to move that process up. It is our goal. If we can reach that goal before the first part of March and get that done, we can move up the appropriations process.

As you know, it is difficult to move too fast because you have the committee hearings and you want the input and to be able to have the accountability and oversight of all the agencies. We have to have those hearings so that both sides of the aisle are in those committees and are able to produce something that is very productive.

Yes, it is our goal to try to move the process up this year. As soon as we have that scheduled for the floor, I will let you know.

Mr. HOYER. Am I correct, then, in saying that our target is the first week in March or the second week in March, at the latest, for the budget?

Mr. MCCARTHY. We are looking at that timeframe, yes.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate that information.

Let me discuss a number of other specific issues, if I can.

First of all, the Speaker indicated that he wanted to see legislation on the floor of the House by March 31 on Puerto Rico. As you and I both know, Puerto Rico is facing a fiscal crisis of its own. It is going to need some authority to deal with that crisis so that neither the Americans living in Puerto Rico are disadvantaged nor the children and others—whether it is through the educational system, the healthcare system, providing power, or whatever services are necessary—will not be adversely impacted.

Can the gentleman give me an idea as to what progress we are making to-

wards seeing legislation on the floor by March 31?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank my friend for yielding.

As the gentleman knows, we are committed to addressing this issue. We have had numerous meetings and we have also had committee hearings. Even this week, Chairman BISHOP and the Natural Resources Committee are hard at work to find the best path forward.

We are committed to getting this done. I will not prejudge the committee on what the solution should be, but I know they are hard at work. We continually monitor it week to week. As soon as we have it scheduled, I will notify the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that.

Again, I would reiterate that, on the voting rights issue, the Speaker is supportive of some legislative treatment addressing that issue.

Does the gentleman have any idea when that might occur?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think the gentleman is referring to an article that we both read. I am not sure that you were in the meeting. I was not in the meeting.

Mr. HOYER. I was not.

Mr. MCCARTHY. One thing that Speaker RYAN has laid out for this body is that it is not top-down, it is bottom-up, and that we go through regular order. Committees are there to do their work.

Look at the metrics of just this last year: If you take the 25-year average, it is usually a little over 300 bills come through committee to this floor. We are well over 500. So we've shown that we are taking that path and improving on having them come to the floor.

I think what the Speaker said and what I read was that he may have a personal opinion, but he wants it to go through committee so that all voices are heard and we have the opportunity for amendments. When it gets out of committee, we can move it to the floor.

I will keep you posted on when it is scheduled.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate you keeping me posted, but my frustration is that this issue has been hanging around for a very long period of time. When Mr. Cantor had your position as majority leader, he indicated he was receptive to addressing it. The gentleman is correct; I was not there either, but I believe the Speaker is reported as having said it needs to be addressed.

I understand bottom-up, but if bottom doesn't work, you never get up. I refer to the Export-Import Bank that lay sanguinely for 2 years in the committee because the chairman was opposed to it when the majority of your party was for it when it came to the floor.

So it is one thing to say that we ought to work bottom-up, but if the

bottom is a stopper and creates gridlock, frankly, this body does not get to do what its responsibility is, and that is to reflect the will of the people, as we did on the Export-Import Bank.

So I sympathize with the bottom-up, and that is the way it ought to work; but if, in fact, what we have is a blockage to the people's Representatives having the ability to work their will and reflect the United States citizens' views, then democracy is not working.

We saw that in the Export-Import Bank, in my opinion, which I worked on very, very assiduously for over 2 years to get to this floor. Very frankly, when it did get to this floor, as I said repeatedly, it would enjoy the majority's support.

In my view, if a voting rights bill gets to this floor, it will enjoy the majority's support. As you know, Mr. SENBRENNER was the sponsor. President Bush was President when we passed the Voting Rights Act in 2006. It passed overwhelmingly in the House, overwhelmingly in the Senate, and was signed by President Bush.

I am certainly sympathetic to wanting to make sure that we follow regular order, but if regular order precludes democracy from working, then it is irregular order and not in the best interests of our country.

Lastly, Mr. Leader, recently, all of us are concerned about Zika. We are all focused on Zika. Can the gentleman tell me whether or not there are any planned efforts to address what is clearly a very serious health crisis that confronts not only us, but certainly South America, Latin America, and other parts of the world?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding, but I do want to thank the gentleman for still being able to work Ex-Im Bank into the colloquy.

Mr. HOYER. You gave me such a great opening.

Mr. MCCARTHY. The gentleman brings up a very serious issue. This is something that should not be taken lightly. This should not be partisan in any way shape or form. This is something we should get ahead of. That is why the Energy and Commerce Committee has already scheduled and sent out letters for hearings. SUSAN BROOKS has a bill that she has been working on dealing with this as well.

So, yes, we want to get in front of this. I know we have been talking to the administration as well. I look forward to working with you in dealing with this issue because this is not something that should lay by the wayside. This is something we have to get in front of.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman. We certainly agree on that. I look forward to working together to address it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2016, TO MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2016

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next and that the order of the House of January 5, 2016, regarding morning-hour debate not apply on that day.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1245

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S HANDLING OF IRAN

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to give voice to the millions of Americans who continue to be dumbfounded and frustrated by this administration's handling of Iran.

Shortly before President Obama's final State of the Union address, news broke that 10 U.S. sailors had been captured by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard.

Remarkably, the President did not even mention our sailors in his speech while TVs across the world became littered with pictures of our sailors on their knees at gunpoint.

Even worse, Iran's Supreme Leader celebrated this incident last week by awarding medals to those Iranians who captured the intruding Americans.

Once the situation was resolved, Secretary Kerry had the audacity to actually thank the Iranians, and Mr. Obama then released billions of dollars in sanctions to the Iranians.

This is yet another embarrassing episode of weakness and capitulation that only serves to embolden our enemies and increase the likelihood of further conflict.

It is time that this administration set aside what I would characterize as disdain for our military and, instead, defend our servicemembers with the passion and respect that they have earned and deserve.

EARTHQUAKE WARNING SYSTEMS

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, my home State of Oregon sits on the Cascadia subduction zone, a fault that separates the Juan de Fuca and North America tectonic plates. We are due—some say overdue—for an earthquake.

Oregonians are well aware of the dangers facing our State, and I applaud the President and Interior Secretary Jewell for recognizing this potentially devastating threat to the West Coast.

On Tuesday the White House convened scientists, public officials, and

private companies at a summit to discuss how to improve warning systems and resilience to earthquakes. Oregon was well represented by the Oregon director of Emergency Management and by representatives from the University of Oregon and Intel.

The University of Oregon manages the USGS Pacific Northwest Seismic Network and assists local governments in preparing for disaster resilience. Intel is a leader in efforts to involve the private sector in helping businesses and communities prepare for an earthquake.

We all know that better warning systems can save lives and save property. I look forward to continuing to work with all of my colleagues in Congress to help communities prepare for earthquakes and related hazards.

WISHING MELISSA TRAYLOR A HAPPY 110TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Melissa Traylor of North East, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, a very happy 110th birthday.

Melissa was born on February 6, 1906, on a farm located along the Pennsylvania and New York border. She later married and moved to Detroit, where she attended beautician school, eventually opening her own hair salon and working for around three decades before retiring in the 1960s.

Melissa later moved to Florida before eventually moving back to Erie County in 2006 to be closer to her nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Traylor remained active even after her 100th birthday, flying in an ultralight airplane with her nephew when she turned 101.

Now I am looking forward to traveling to the Erie area this weekend to join family, friends, and other local and State officials in wishing Melissa a very happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, only one out of 10,000 people live to be 100 years old. Even more impressive is the fact that only 1 in 7 million people turn 110.

I wish Mrs. Traylor the best as she continues her wonderful life.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Black History Month.

Black History Month is an opportunity for our Nation to honor the contributions and accomplishments that African Americans and civil rights organizations like the NAACP have etched in the cornerstone of this America they helped change.

The NAACP is the Nation's oldest and preeminent civil rights organization. Established in 1909 to curb the rampant discrimination plaguing our country, today's NAACP envisions an America not defined by color.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to ask Congress to help make the NAACP's dream a reality. Let's restore the full protection of the Voting Rights Act, fix our broken criminal justice system, and end the school-to-prison pipeline.

We must continue to move forward to ensure equality of opportunity for all Americans, not just the privileged few.

During Black History Month, Mr. Speaker, and every month, let us recommit ourselves to ending the journey and having a more just and perfect union.

Lastly, I salute the NAACP and its chairperson, Rosalyn Brock, and my Columbus chapter NAACP chair, Nana Jones.

THE JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT—CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Brooke was a victim of human trafficking and child pornography at the age of 7. The nanny was selling Brooke on the marketplace of sex slavery in the United States. A small child sold for sex in the United States is shameful.

Brooke was scared, feeling alone, and didn't tell anyone about her plight. No one spoke about sex trafficking then. But sex slavery has been going on in the United States for a long time, women and children forced into this scourge.

Brooke, with the help of her mother, has spoken out against this evil.

Congress has also spoken out. Congress passed a law last year that will change the way we address human trafficking in the United States.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will provide and ensure that America provides grants to rescue and restore survivors like Brooke, grants to educate the public, law enforcement, doctors, and educators to identify, prevent, and prosecute human trafficking.

Monsters that hurt victims will be prosecuted, the sellers and the buyers. Most importantly, the victims of slavery will be rescued, restored, and treated as victims of crime.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has said that our children are not for sale.

And that is just the way it is.

LESS OF US, MORE OF GOD

(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, this week in Washington was one where many came together in order to express their faith and fellowship and, also, to pray.

It culminated in the National Prayer Breakfast, where the President and our House Speaker both were there with many Congressional Members and leaders and international leaders, all there with the theme of “Less of us, more of God” expressed several times, spoken by our President as well.

Also, he spoke of unity, as many did in that gathering, unity that I think is best expressed by this verse from the Bible, 2 Chronicles 7:14:

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Indeed, less of us, more of God.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, February 8, 2016, at 2 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4222. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Highly Fractionated Indian Land (HFIL) Loan Program (RIN: 0560-AI32) received February 3, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4223. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Bernard S. Champoux, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4224. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's reports entitled “Community Services Block Grant Reports to Congress for Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012” and “Community Services Block Grant Performance Measurement Reports”, pursuant to Secs. 678B(c) and 678E(b)(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4225. A letter from the PRAO Branch Chief, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — SNAP Requirement for National Directory of New Hires Employment Verification and Annual Program Activity Reporting [FNS-2015-0029] (RIN: 0584-AE36) received February 3, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4226. A letter from the Deputy Chief, International Bureau, Federal Communications

Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services [IB Docket No.: 12-267] received February 3, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4227. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4228. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting reports containing the status of the Foreign Military Financing Account Direct Loans, the Foreign Military Liquidating Account Direct Loans, and the Foreign Military Debt Reduction Account Direct Loans as of September 30, 2015 as required by Sec. 25(a)(11) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4229. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4230. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4231. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4232. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4233. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4234. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4235. A letter from the Assistant Director, Executive and Political Personnel, Department of the Air Force, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4236. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of the Army, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4237. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of the Army, transmitting a notifi-

cation of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4238. A letter from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of the Navy, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4239. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting the annual Report to Congress for the North Slope Science Initiative, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 15906(e); Public Law 109-58, Sec. 348(e); (119 Stat. 708); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4240. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Visas: Documentation of Non-immigrants under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended (RIN: 1400-AD17) received February 3, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4241. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, Department of Defense, transmitting the City of Manhattan, Kansas Local Protection Project: Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study for April 30, 2016, pursuant to Public Law 91-611, Sec. 216; (84 Stat. 1830) (H. Doc. No. 114—98); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and ordered to be printed.

4242. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, Department of Defense, transmitting the Charleston Harbor Post 45: Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement for January 2016, pursuant to Public Law 91-611, Sec. 216; (84 Stat. 1830) (H. Doc. No. 114—99); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and ordered to be printed.

4243. A letter from the Senior Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazmat Safety Law Division, PHMSA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Hazardous Materials: Adoption of Special Permits (MAP-21) (RRR) [Docket No.: PHMSA-2013-0042 (HM-233F)] (RIN: 2137-AF00) received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4244. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, Department of Defense, transmitting the Leon Creek Watershed: Texas Interim Feasibility Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment for April 2014 (H. Doc. No. 114—100); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and ordered to be printed.

4245. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Revenue Ruling: 2016 Prevailing State Assumed Interest Rates (Rev. Rul. 2016-02) received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4246. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Revocation of Rev. Rul. 2008-15 (Rev. Rul. 2016-3) received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4247. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Revenue Procedure 2016-10 (Rev. Proc. 2016-10) received February 2, 2016, pursuant

to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4248. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Update of Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates [Notice 2016-07] received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4249. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Guidance Relating to Refunds of Foreign Tax for Which an Election Was Made Under Section 853 [Notice 2016-10] received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4250. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Section 506 Notification Requirement for New and Certain Existing Section 501(c)(4) Organizations [Notice 2016-09] received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4251. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Applicable Federal Rates — February 2016 [Rev. Rul. 2016-4] received February 2, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4252. A letter from the Deputy Director, ODRM, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) (RIN: 0985-AA11) received February 3, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

4253. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled "FY 2015 Report to Congress: Review of Medicare's Program for Oversight of Accrediting Organizations and the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Validation Program", pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395ll(b); Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, title XVIII, Sec. 1875(b) (as amended by Public Law 110-275, Sec. 125(b)(4)); (122 Stat. 2519); jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 901. A bill to prohibit accessing pornographic web sites from Federal computers, and for other purposes (Rept. 114-415). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. PASCRELL (for himself and Mr. ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 4460. A bill to reduce sports-related concussions in youth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia (for himself, Mr. ALLEN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAT, Mr. BUCK, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. PALMER, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. SALMON, Mr. STEWART, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. YOHIO, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. MICA):

H.R. 4461. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that agencies may not deduct labor organization dues from the pay of Federal employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HANNA, Mr. HONDA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LOEBBACH, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. PIERLUISI, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. PETERS, Mr. TONKO, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. CUMMINGS):

H.R. 4462. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require certain institutions of higher education to provide notice of tuition levels for students; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself and Mr. GIBSON):

H.R. 4463. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to brownfield remediation grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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 Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. GRAYSON, and Ms. ESTY):

H.R. 4464. A bill to ensure that Federal research and development in support of civil aviation remains at the forefront of addressing challenges confronting the Nation's air transportation system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. DENHAM (for himself, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana):

H.R. 4465. A bill to decrease the deficit by consolidating and selling Federal buildings and other civilian real property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. RATCLIFFE):

H.R. 4466. A bill to exempt the Lower Bois d'Arc Creek Reservoir Project from the Federal Water Pollution Control Act; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Ms. BONAMICI):

H.R. 4467. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow for advertising relating to certain activities in compliance with State law; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. HANNA, and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee):

H.R. 4468. A bill to establish a Water Infrastructure Investment Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and 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. PAULSEN (for himself, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 4469. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve access to health care through expanded health savings accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and 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. KILDEE (for himself, Mr. UPTON, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. AMASH, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mrs. DINGELL, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. TROTT, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PAYNE, and Ms. EDWARDS):

H.R. 4470. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act with respect to the requirements related to lead in drinking water, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HONDA (for himself and Mr. HINOJOSA):

H.R. 4471. A bill to improve quality and accountability for educator preparation programs; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana (for himself and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 4472. A bill to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt a centralized electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide grants to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GOSAR (for himself, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SALMON, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. SINEMA, and Ms. MCSALLY):

H.R. 4473. A bill to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in Yavapai County, Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. KIND, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. POMPEO, and Mr. BLUM):

H.R. 4474. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain farming business machinery and equipment as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mr. TAKAI, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MOORE, Ms. LEE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. POCAN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. HONDA):

H.R. 4475. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to support the access of marginalized youth to sexual health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BLUM:

H.R. 4476. A bill to provide that the rates of pay for Members of Congress shall be reduced following any fiscal year in which there is a Federal deficit; to the Committee on House Administration, 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. CLAWSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. BLUM, and Mr. ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 4477. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require voice mail for certain telephone lines paid for by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HUNTER (for himself and Mr. ZINKE):

H.R. 4478. A bill to amend the Military Selective Service Act to extend the registration and conscription requirements of the Selective Service System, currently applicable only to men between the ages of 18 and 26, to women between those ages to reflect the opening of Combat Arms Military Occupational Specialties to women; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 4479. A bill to provide emergency assistance related to the Flint water crisis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Education and the Workforce, Financial Services, and 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 Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. KEATING, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. PIERLUISI):

H.R. 4480. A bill to implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. LOWEY (for herself and Mr. REICHERT):

H.R. 4481. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide assistance for developing countries to promote quality basic education and to establish the goal of all children in school and learning as an objective of the United States foreign assistance policy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. McCAUL, Mr. WALKER, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. SALMON, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT):

H.R. 4482. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a southwest border threat analysis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 4483. A bill to appoint a special investigator to determine the role of the Environmental Protection Agency in the Gold King Mine spill and its downstream environmental effects, provide compensation to injured persons, fund certain long-term water quality monitoring programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Rules, Energy and Commerce, 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 Miss RICE of NEW YORK (for herself, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. ZELDIN):

H.R. 4484. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of alternatives for commemorating Long Island's aviation history, including a determination of the suitability and feasibility of designating parts of the study area as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 4485. A bill to ensure that public housing dwelling units are occupied by low-income families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WENSTRUP (for himself, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. MASSIE, and Mr. FLORES):

H.R. 4486. A bill to hold the salaries of Members of a House of Congress in escrow if the House of Congress does not hold a vote on final passage of each regular appropriation bill for a fiscal year prior to the beginning of that fiscal year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

H. Res. 602. A resolution electing certain Members to standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BECERRA:

H. Res. 603. A resolution ranking Members of a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. LARSON of Connecticut (for himself, Mr. COLE, Mr. LOEBACK, Mr. McNERNEY, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. WELCH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. FARR, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. CLAY, Mr. TAKAI, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr.

HONDA, Mr. SIRE, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. TONKO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. DOLD, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. ESTY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. HECK of Washington, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BEYER, Mr. KILMER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. VELA, Mr. PETERS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BERA, Mr. CUELLAR, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. GALLEGGO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. POLIS, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. DeFAZIO, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. HAHN, Mr. PETERSON, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. HOYER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KIND, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. VISCOSKY, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. COSTA, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. MENG, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. KUSTER, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BASS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUPERSBERGER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. KEATING, Mr. NEAL, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. COOPER, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WALZ, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. HIMES, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. TTUS, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. LEE, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. POCAN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. HANNA, Mr. REED, Mr. KATKO, Ms. STEFANK, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. TIBERI, Mr.

RENACCI, Mr. MEEHAN, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. BARTON, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. YODER, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. MCHEENRY, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. PITTS, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. BRAT, Mr. HURT of Virginia, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. HILL, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. KLINE, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. MULLIN):

H. Res. 604. A resolution recognizing the establishment of the Congressional Patriot Award and congratulating the first award recipients, Sam Johnson and John Lewis, for their patriotism and selfless service to the country; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. FOSTER:

H. Res. 605. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Office of Technology Assessment should be reestablished; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. ISRAEL (for himself, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. DENT, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. LEE, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H. Res. 606. A resolution expressing support for designation of February 4, 2016, as National Cancer Prevention Day; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ROSS:

H. Res. 607. A resolution condemning and censuring President Barack Obama; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. PASCRELL:

H.R. 4460.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia:

H.R. 4461.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The authority enumerated in clause 18 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4462.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 (relating to the power of Congress to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.)

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 4463.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 4464.

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. DENHAM:

H.R. 4465.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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 clause 17 (relating to authority over district as the seat of government), 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. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 4466.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4467.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4468.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1: "to provide for . . . the general Welfare of the United States;"

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 4469.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 (to lay and collect taxes) and Clause 18 (necessary and proper)

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 4470.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. HONDA:

H.R. 4471.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.R. 4472.

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 Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 4473.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause).

Under this clause, Congress has the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States. By virtue of this enumerated power, Congress has governing authority over the lands, territories, or other property of the United States- and with this authority Congress is vested with the power to all owners in fee, the ability to sell, lease, dispose, exchange, convey, or simply preserve land. The Supreme Court has described this enumerated grant as one "without limitation" *Kleppe v New Mexico*, 426 U.S. 529, 542-543 (1976) ("And while the furthest reaches of the power

granted by the Property Clause have not been definitely resolved, we have repeatedly observed that the power over the public land thus entrusted to Congress is without limitation.")

Historically, the federal government transferred ownership of federal property to either private ownership or the states in order to pay off large Revolutionary War debts and to assist with the development of infrastructure. The transfers codified by this legislation are thus constitutional.

By Mr. ABRAHAM:

H.R. 4474.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 4475.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. BLUM:

H.R. 4476.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 6, Clause 1

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. CLAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 4477.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8

By Mr. HUNTER:

H.R. 4478.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 12-14: To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years; To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 4479.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. LOWENTHAL:

H.R. 4480.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4481.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I.

By Ms. MCSALLY:

H.R. 4482.

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 defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18—To make 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. PEARCE:

H.R. 4483.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 4484.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;"

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. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 4485.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional power of congress to regulate commerce in and among the states, as enumerate in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WENSTRUP:

H.R. 4486.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 6, Clause 1

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS TO PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 27: Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia.
H.R. 131: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 140: Mr. BRAT.
H.R. 188: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. ENGEL.
H.R. 228: Mr. MARINO and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 250: Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 267: Mr. JONES and Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 343: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 347: Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 448: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 534: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 624: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 721: Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 793: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 840: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 850: Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 939: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1197: Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 1227: Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 1391: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 1397: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 1421: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 1427: Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 1475: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1486: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. COLE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. POLQUIN, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. STEWART, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. PALMER.

H.R. 1492: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 1581: Ms. MCSALLY and Mr. SCHWEIKERT.

H.R. 1635: Mr. WESTMORELAND.

H.R. 1671: Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 1769: Mr. WENSTRUP and Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H.R. 1887: Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 1988: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 2005: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 2460: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 2518: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 2566: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 2698: Mr. ROSKAM.

H.R. 2737: Mr. POE of Texas.

H.R. 3036: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 3051: Mr. BEYER and Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 3088: Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 3099: Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Mr. BEYER.

H.R. 3119: Mr. GUINTA and Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 3177: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 3209: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 3223: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 3229: Mr. SHUSTER.

H.R. 3308: Mr. LEWIS and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 3513: Mr. HONDA and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3516: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. NEWHOUSE.

H.R. 3537: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 3713: Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 3765: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 3779: Mr. FORBES and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 3917: Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. KEATING, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 3926: Mr. LARSEN of Washington and Ms. LEE.

H.R. 3952: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 3965: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 3970: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 4009: Mr. FARR.

H.R. 4019: Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 4043: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 4073: Mr. LANGEVIN and Mr. TROTT.

H.R. 4087: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 4114: Mr. HECK of Nevada.

H.R. 4140: Mr. NUGENT.

H.R. 4197: Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 4207: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 4229: Mr. DEUTCH and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.

H.R. 4247: Mr. BABIN and Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 4262: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 4313: Mr. AMODEI.

H.R. 4333: Mr. MCCLINTOCK and Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 4342: Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 4365: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 4371: Mr. GOHMERT and Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 4380: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 4386: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. GALLEG0, and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 4400: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. SPEIER, and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 4420: Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. BRAT, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. BABIN, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. FLORES, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Mr. YOH0.

H.R. 4448: Mr. BURGESS.

H.J. Res. 55: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H. Con. Res. 98: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H. Con. Res. 105: Mr. PERRY.

H. Con. Res. 108: Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.

H. Res. 154: Mr. ROYCE.

H. Res. 220: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mrs. LOWEY.

H. Res. 343: Ms. PINGREE.

H. Res. 393: Mr. LEVIN.

H. Res. 419: Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois and Mr. ROONEY of Florida.

H. Res. 424: Mr. JOLLY.

H. Res. 469: Mr. BABIN.

H. Res. 561: Mr. PETERS.

H. Res. 567: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Miss RICE of New York, and Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia.

H. Res. 571: Mr. YOH0, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. PERRY.

H. Res. 588: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. ZINKE.

H. Res. 591: Mr. ROUZER, Mr. YOH0, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. BOST, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. HURT of Virginia, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. DENHAM, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. HARPER, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. COSTA, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Ms. ESTY.



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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Father of love, who lives and reigns in majesty, we honor Your Name.

Today, use our lawmakers to advance Your kingdom of good will on Earth. Deliver them from ungodly pride and ungenerous judgments, as You inspire them to seek Your wisdom and to follow Your precepts. Give them the wisdom to labor to mend broken hearts, to repair shattered dreams, and to leave the world better than they found it. Lord, teach them to cherish the things that endure, remembering always their accountability to You.

Lord, bless also the many members of their staffs who work faithfully behind the scenes to keep America strong.

We pray in Your precious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The majority leader is recognized.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE USO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, when Americans hear "USO," they often think of Bob Hope. There is no question that he helped to lift the spirits of countless men and women in uni-

form, but the USO impacts military personnel in a number of other important ways, too, which is something it has been doing literally for decades—in fact, 75 years to the day. I think every colleague will join me in commemorating this impressive 75-year history.

Our men and women in uniform sacrifice a great deal to defend us, and so do their families. One of the things the USO excels at is helping them to stay connected—connected to hometowns, connected to loved ones, connected to the simpler joys in life. From providing deployed soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines with an opportunity to phone home, to providing world-class entertainment, to helping servicemembers find meaningful employment once their service is complete, the USO's mission is broad in scope and has made a lasting and positive impact on many since it was first conceived just before World War II. Much of that credit is due to Americans' willingness to volunteer.

Our military personnel—especially our forward deployed and combat arms units—willingly trade the comforts of home for harsh living conditions. They often forgo life's precious moments, such as celebrating a child's birthday or a first day at school, and they are willing to put everything on the line for us. The USO provides one more platform to say "thank you" for that service, to show gratitude for that sacrifice, to let every man and woman in uniform know what they mean to us.

Congratulations to the USO for 75 years of service to our troops and their families. We hope you will continue your important work for many years to come.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote with respect to the Murkowski amendment No. 2953 occur at 11:30 a.m. today

and that the cloture vote with respect to S. 2012 follow that vote in the usual form and that the additional time be equally divided.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE USO AND COMMENDING WAYNE NEWTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to join my Republican colleague, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, and underscore everything he said about the USO. As just a point of personal privilege, one of the successors of Bob Hope is Wayne Newton. President Bush selected him to lead the USO, which he did for many years.

There has never been a more successful nightclub entertainer than Wayne Newton. He is known all over the world for his voice and his performances. He traveled the world during the time he was that person chosen by the President to represent the USO. He is one of the most patriotic persons I have ever known, and I admire him very much. I want to ensure that the record reflects his friendship to me and all the veterans in America.

Certainly, I appreciate very much joining in this celebration of the USO.

FLINT, MICHIGAN, WATER CRISIS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 100,000 people in Flint, MI, have been poisoned, but sadly the Republicans are doing nothing. Nine thousand children, all under the age of 6, have been poisoned. Their brains have been attacked. Still, Republicans have refused to do anything to help.

For the last 2 weeks, the Senators from Michigan have worked on an

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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amendment that would allow Federal funds to address the Flint water crisis. Senators STABENOW and PETERS worked hard to negotiate with Republicans. But almost having an agreement in place is not an agreement. We need Republicans to work with us to reach an agreement and let the people of Flint know that help is on its way; otherwise, Senate Republicans will continue ignoring Flint. If that is the case, then I would like my Republican colleagues to come to the floor and explain to this country why this man-made disaster in Flint is not worthy of the Republicans' attention. Tell us why 100,000 Americans should be forced to drink polluted water and bathe in poisonous water.

One mother told Senator STABENOW: I was doing everything I could for my children. I made sure that they stopped drinking soda pop. So they didn't have soda pop. They drank water. But it was horrible water, and it has affected my children's lives. She said: I am responsible for the poisoning of my children.

I heard statements made by the assistant Republican leader earlier this week, and here is a direct quote: "While we all have sympathy for what's happened in Flint, this is primarily a local and State responsibility."

I don't know if "outrageous" is sufficient to describe this. After all, it was the assistant Republican leader who just last year welcomed Federal disaster assistance for the people of Texas because of the terrible flooding that was taking place. Again in 2013, the town of West, which is in Texas, suffered a catastrophic explosion of a fertilizer plant—another manmade disaster. The Senator from Texas was quick to seek Federal assistance. He said:

We will aggressively pursue this matter with FEMA and pursue all appeals and remedies available to us. . . . This was a disaster area and their failure to acknowledge it as such is just inexcusable. We're going to get the residents of West the assistance they need.

The junior Senator from Texas—one of the many Republicans running for President—was just as eager to accept Federal funds. He said:

I am confident that the Texas congressional delegation, Senator Cornyn and I . . . will stand united as Texans in support of the Federal Government fulfilling its statutory obligations, and stepping in to respond to this natural disaster.

According to Senator CRUZ, the Federal Government had an obligation to help Texas. He is right. We had an obligation, and we fulfilled that obligation. But we also have an obligation to help Flint, MI.

I ask my colleagues from Texas and the other Republicans here in the Senate, why are floods and explosions in Texas disasters worthy of Federal support and not the help needed for 100,000 poisoned people in Flint, MI? Why do Texans deserve Federal assistance but not the people of Flint? What could the reason be?

The sad thing is that this sort of hypocrisy isn't limited to just the Senators from Texas. The junior Senator from Florida—one of the many running for President on the Republican side—is doing the same thing.

Last year Florida was hit with extreme flooding. Senator RUBIO appealed for Federal assistance. He wrote a letter to the President. He said: "As Floridians continue to reel from the effects of last month's torrential rains and flooding, I respectfully request you consider Governor Scott's appeal for a Major Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance for the five impacted counties." That is what he wrote to President Obama last year, but, like it always is with the Senator from Florida, that was then and this is now. This is what the junior Senator from Florida says now: "I believe the federal government's role in some of these things [is] largely limited unless it involves a federal jurisdictional issue." That is a buzz word for saying "Good luck, Flint." According to Senator RUBIO, Floridians deserve disaster assistance but not the people of Flint. This Senator hopes to become President; yet he refuses to treat all Americans the same.

There are plenty of other examples. Whenever their States have been hard hit, Republican Senators run here to the Senate floor and demand Federal aid—as well they should. The Federal Government should help in times of disaster. There has to be a bit of consistency from Republicans. They must be fair to everyone. The people of Flint are just like every other American. They are deserving of the Federal Government's help.

Mr. President, I have a letter from the Congressional Black Caucus. I am not going read the whole letter, but I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS,

Washington, DC, February 4, 2016.

Senator MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, The Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: The state of emergency in Flint, Michigan requires immediate action from the United States Senate. Our children have been poisoned because of poor decision-making by some and inaction by others who are responsible for protecting the most vulnerable among us. Senate Republicans should not prevent federal emergency assistance to the people of Flint by blocking the common-sense amendments offered by Michigan Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters to the Energy Policy and Modernization Act. Instead, both parties should come to an agreement on an emergency relief package for the people of Flint.

While there are no flooded streets or people stranded on the roof of their home, poisoned water still runs through the faucets in Flint. There are children with visible scars, and those who will have mental health issues and learning disabilities that we cannot yet see. Bottled water is not a solution. It is a band-aid that will not heal this gaping wound. The City of Flint is in crisis.

Providing emergency assistance to Flint is not a bailout. The Stabenow-Peters amendments would: a) provide emergency funding to help repair Flint's water infrastructure, b) notify the public of concentrations of lead in the water, and c) connect children and adults exposed to lead poisoning with community services and health experts. Moreover, other communities currently dealing with lead water crises in states like Ohio and elsewhere could also benefit from these resources.

Republican senators have routinely requested this type of assistance when disasters occurred in their states. The people of Flint deserve nothing less. Republicans must join Democrats in meeting our moral obligation to protect the health of our children.

Senator McConnell, we are asking for your leadership to ensure your Republican colleagues do not condemn the people of Flint to more pain and suffering by blocking these amendments.

Very truly yours,

G. K. BUTTERFIELD,
Chairman,

The Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. REID. Here is what is said in the final two paragraphs:

Republican Senators have routinely requested this type of assistance when disasters occurred in their states. The people of Flint deserve nothing less. Republicans must join Democrats in meeting our moral obligation to protect the health of our children.

This is what is said by Congressman BUTTERFIELD, who is the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The final paragraph in the letter says:

Senator McConnell, we are asking for your leadership to ensure your Republican colleagues do not condemn the people of Flint to more pain and suffering by blocking these amendments.

I would hope my Republican colleagues would look in the mirror and ask themselves a simple question: What would I do if 100,000 of my constituents were poisoned?

I urge my Republican colleagues to join us in addressing this critical issue.

In a conference held in Las Vegas, NV, yesterday, one of the foremost experts dealing with water, Pat Mulroy, said that the "stupid stunt" that led to widespread lead contamination in Flint, MI, has dealt a blow to public confidence in water systems everywhere—even in places such as Southern Nevada, where lead pipes are not an issue. "It has given a black eye [to water management] not just in Michigan, not just in the United States, but around the world."

She went on to say:

I was angry. I was very angry. They did it to save money. But was it really worth affecting these children's lives forever to save a couple of bucks?

She also said that complaints about the water began a month after the switch, but officials waited for almost 2 years. By then, tests showed elevated levels of lead, which causes brain damage.

She said:

The finger-pointing is going to be endless for a while, especially as lawsuits begin to emerge. . . . I think there will be criminal charges.

I don't know if there will be criminal charges, but these are pretty egregious actions taken by the State of Michigan.

She said that ready access to clean water is something most Americans take for granted, but something like this can cast doubt on the whole system. "Now there is a crack in that trust relationship," she said. "In Flint it is gone." That is certainly true.

So I would certainly hope my Republican colleagues will understand it is important that we do something now to help these people. We have something that can be done. It should be done. Republicans should stop it. It is not something that is a local issue or a State issue.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday, President Obama visited a mosque in Baltimore, MD. It was a powerful expression to counter the divisive, hateful rhetoric used by too many Republicans and to emphasize the importance of giving all Americans the respect and dignity they deserve. For years right-wing extremists have attacked the religion of Islam and stoked fear about the presence of Muslims in our country.

Some of those same extremists attacked President Obama for visiting the mosque yesterday. That is an attack on millions of American citizens who are being slandered. I was so gratified that the Presiding Officer had the courage to show solidarity with the Muslims in the State of Arizona and the country by visiting a mosque a short time ago. The Presiding Officer was attacked by rightwing extremists for this visit. I am sorry about that, but I admire what he did.

When hateful extremists set their sights on attacking one religion, they are attacking the core values of American society upon which our Nation was founded. President Obama could not have made this point more clearly yesterday. He said, "An attack on one faith is an attack on all our faiths."

Religious liberty is a priceless American value that should be cherished. We cannot allow the threat from menacing radicals to change who we are and how we treat our fellow citizens. As President Obama also said yesterday, "We are one American family. We will rise and fall together." So I applaud the President for his courage and willingness to combat the detestable hatred that leading Republicans have embraced and far too few Republicans have spoken out against—the hateful rhetoric—especially in the Presidential election by our Republican colleagues.

As defenders of democracy, we must stand against the bigotry wherever it arises. Doing so is the only way to ensure that we stay true to our fundamental values. As election season begins to kick into high gear, I encourage the American people to heed the call that President Obama made yesterday at the Islamic Society of Baltimore,

when he closed by saying, "We have to reaffirm that most fundamental of truths—we are all God's children, all born equal with inherent dignity."

Will the Chair announce the business before the Senate today.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2012, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2012) to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murkowski amendment No. 2953, in the nature of a substitute.

Murkowski (for Cassidy/Markey) amendment No. 2954 (to amendment No. 2953), to provide for certain increases in, and limitations on, the drawdown and sales of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Murkowski amendment No. 2963 (to amendment No. 2953), to modify a provision relating to bulk-power system reliability impact statements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 a.m. will be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

The assistant Democratic leader.

FLINT, MICHIGAN, WATER CRISIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what happened in Flint, MI, is incredible. In the 21st century, in the most developed country on Earth, to think that 100,000 people were exposed to contaminated water, to think that 9,000 or 10,000 children were exposed to lead poisoning—it was not a natural disaster but the results are disastrous. It was a disaster created by those who were in charge of managing the city of Flint.

The governmental agencies and those who worked for them made what they considered to be the right budgetary decisions, but they certainly made the wrong decisions when it came to the health and the well-being of the poor people who were victimized by their wrongdoing. Every time I hear the story, the same question comes to my mind: Who is going to jail for poisoning 9,000 children? Think about the circumstances here. A knowing decision by a city manager to switch to a water supply which was contaminated endangered the health of thousands of children, tens of thousands of citizens. If that is not the grounds for at least investigation, I don't what is.

So the Senators from Michigan, Senator PETERS, Senator STABENOW, have come to the floor of the Senate and said to America: Will you help Flint, MI? It is right that they do so. I have been fortunate to serve in the House

and Senate for many years. I cannot tell you how many times Senators from States all across the Nation have asked that same question: Will you help us in Louisiana? Will you help us in Alabama? Will you help us in Texas?

There is hardly a State that has not come to the floor of the Senate asking for help. Yet, for reasons I cannot explain, the Republican majority in the Senate is resisting this idea. Almost 100,000 people were forced to live without access to clean water in their homes. They could not turn on their faucets in the morning to make breakfast or to take a shower, as all of us do. They started their day by waiting in long lines for bottled water to feed and bathe their kids, to take showers, and to stay healthy. They started rationing the water.

The elderly and disabled who could not make it to a pickup location for bottled water, they were left with the option of continuing to use water they know was poisoning their bodies. This is a disaster by any definition. I cannot understand why there is not more understanding and empathy from my colleagues when it comes to Flint, MI. It could happen anywhere. If it happened, would you hesitate for a moment as a Member of the Senate to ask for help?

Nine thousand children exposed to lead poisoning has been called an earmark by the critics of our Senators from Michigan. They said it is just special interest legislation to try to help these victims. That is hard to imagine, that it could reach that level in criticizing this effort. Just like those who suffered from tornadoes and hurricanes, these families did nothing to deserve it. Just as the Federal Government always helps when Americans are hit by disasters, we should do it in Flint.

There were no complaints last May when the Federal Government declared an emergency and reached out to the residents of Texas to help them rebuild their lives after a tornado hit. So I am wondering if the Republican Presidential candidate from Texas is willing to step up, the junior Senator from Texas, and ask for the same level of Federal assistance for Flint, MI, that he asked for his own State.

This crisis is not the fault of the kids, the pregnant women who still call Flint home. Their only crime was living in a city that was so poorly mismanaged by the Michigan State government. Their only crime, if there was one, was being the victims of cheap, dirty water. These kids and pregnant women are the most vulnerable when it comes to lead contamination. We are not going to know for years the extent of the damage, but we know there will be damage.

Many of them live in homes that have been found to have 10 times the EPA limits for lead in drinking water. The Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW, yesterday told us that some of the lead samples reached the level of toxic dumps, so far beyond the level

that is acceptable for human consumption. This means a generation of Flint kids are in danger of suffering brain damage, developmental delays, and behavior issues for the rest of their lives.

To add insult to injuries, when mothers came to the State nurse to fight for their children, they were met with apathy. Listen to what they were told:

It's just a few IQ points. . . . It's not the end of the world.

This is supposedly a quote from a State nurse. The Flint water crisis truly is a tragedy. We need to step forward. It does not just mean funding. It reminds us of the importance of clean drinking water that we all take for granted. When I think of all of the efforts on the floor of the Senate to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency and to remove their authority to deal with issues involving clean water, it is hard to imagine that they could envision what happened in Flint, because having access to clean water should not be determined by your ZIP Code or your government. I hope my Republican colleagues will work with us on a bipartisan basis, the way we always do it when it comes to disasters that hurt innocent people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. 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. STABENOW. Mr. President, as all of our colleagues know, we have been working very hard to come together around a reasonable path to provide some support and assistance to the people of Flint, MI, who got up this morning—if they took a shower, it was with bottled water. If they were getting breakfast for their children, if a mom was mixing baby food formula, it was with bottled water.

That has gone on now, for some people, 18 months or more. I mean, originally, they were told the water was safe, and they were drinking it and then found incredibly high lead levels in their children. Now it is bottled water. We have businesses downtown who have gone to the expense of creating their own water systems that are totally safe, but no one will come. Doors are closing.

We have small businesses in neighborhoods—we have a revitalization effort in downtown Flint that has been really quite extraordinary. The chamber, a wide variety of organizations, the University of Michigan-Flint, a whole range of groups investing in downtown Flint.

This is all collapsing because of the fact that people are afraid to come and to drink the water or to eat food mixed with the water, even though our businesses downtown are doing things to rectify this right now. The citizens of

Flint, rightly, are in a position where they have been told that the water was safe to drink. They gave it to their children. It wasn't. They are poisoned.

Now they are in a situation where they have great despair and great anger. I share in both of those feelings, a multitude of feelings, as does my friend and colleague Senator PETERS. We are joined together in our commitment on a whole range of efforts to be able to help the children and families of Flint. There was one report—by the way, this is what the water looks like—brown, smells.

There was one story on the news of a house where they went to talk with folks and looked at the lead levels. It was above toxic waste dump levels. I talked to a mom who talked about—and I heard another mom as well, being interviewed, saying: You know, I took my children off of what we call pop in Michigan, other people call it soda, Coke, Pepsi, because I was told that was not healthy for my children. So when my children were playing last summer, I told them to drink water to hydrate because I did not want them getting the extra sugar, the ingredients from pop. Now I know I was poisoning my children.

I can only imagine what that mom feels right now. We have a lot of infrastructure problems around the country, no question. We have colleagues on both sides of the aisle working together on various proposals that I support to deal long term with infrastructure.

But this is way beyond that. This is an entire city of 100,000 people who have poisoned water because of decisions that none of them made. We can talk later about whose fault it is. There is certainly culpability and accountability. But right now we are focused on helping the people who had nothing to do with creating this. It is 100,000 people. The entire system has lead in it. Some levels are thousands of points higher than is acceptable. No lead is acceptable, but some of it is higher than a toxic waste belt.

So we are on the floor asking to help the children of Flint by doing what we do all the time. We just step up as Americans and help a community rebuild their water system. There is a lot more to do. We are so grateful for colleagues who have reached out to say we want to help in a variety of ways—with their education needs, nutrition needs, and health care needs,—but the basic issue is fixing the water system so that the people of Flint have the dignity that we have of knowing that when they turn on the faucet there is going to be clean water.

You have probably seen the picture, but in this example in Time magazine, this is a child whose mom was bathing her children, and there are rashes. We have seen rashes, sores, hair falling out, and lead levels because a community drinking water system has been decimated.

Americans responded across the country by sending bottled water, and

people are very grateful for that. But we also know Americans support and join us by saying bottled water is not enough. This baby cannot be bathed in bottled water every day for years and years and years.

I had one citizen say to me: Ma'am, I can't take a shower in bottled water. We have to support fixing the infrastructure. We do that all the time.

So what we have done—and I appreciate the chair of the Energy Committee working with us. She spent a lot of time—as has the ranking member, who has been ferocious in her support, for which we are so grateful—trying to work this out. Originally, we thought we had a path forward. Then there were procedural issues that came up. Yesterday we thought we had another path forward that would give us bipartisan support on a solution that we could get done and passed here. Then that was paused. I am not exactly sure why that happened, but that was paused.

So today we are asking for colleagues to give us some more time. We have very key people in this Chamber who are now stepping up to give us additional ideas on how we could get this fixed. We can do this quickly if there is the will to do that. So we are asking colleagues to give us more time.

As we know, the cloture vote in front of us today is to basically shut off amendments and go to the next step in third reading. What we are saying is give us some time. There are other issues that need to be resolved as well, certainly issues with working men and women around Davis-Bacon laws. There are other issues. We know that we can come to a resolution if there is the political will and a little more time, so that it is not just some bogus proposal. We have had things thrown out that don't solve the problem. We are not looking for something that just gives somebody political cover. We have resisted a lot of folks who would love just to make this a political issue. These children should not be a political football.

I think Members of this body know that Senator PETERS and I are people who want to get things done. We work across the aisle every single day. If we wanted to blow this up as a political issue, believe me, there would be a different way to do it, and the story writes itself.

We are asking people to care and see these children like you see your own children. These children, these families have been ignored and not seen. We see them. Their faces are burned in my memory. We are asking colleagues to see them, to hold them with as much value as you would children in your own family and in the States that you represent. That is what we are asking—nothing more, nothing less.

We have not proposed that the Federal Government take full responsibility on cost—far from it. In fact, we have been told by colleagues that we have not proposed enough. We have

been willing, in fact, to come to an agreement on something that is less than half of what we originally asked for.

But these children deserve the dignity of knowing we will step up and help them. Too many of these children—9,000 of them under the age of 6 and a whole lot of many more thousands above the age of 6—are going to be set back and not have the opportunity to be all they can be. How many scientists, doctors, business people, and teachers are we going to lose because of lead poisoning in this community?

It doesn't go away. I have learned more than I have ever wanted to know about lead. I didn't know that once it enters the body, it never goes away. So the children who are poisoned are going to have to live with this, and the best we can do is mitigate it through nutrition and through other strategies. But they deserve to know that we are going to fix this, and we can't begin to deal with it unless the water system works. That is all we are asking for.

Today, because we know there is a path, people of good will have been trying to get it done. We need a little more time. I think these children deserve a little more time. I think these families deserve a little more time.

Let us get this together. If we vote next week, next Tuesday, we will be OK. How many kids, how many bottles of water—how many bottles will be used between now and next Tuesday by the people of Flint?

We can take a couple of extra days to do something that will dramatically change the opportunity for our future in a city that is as important as any other city in our country. So that is what we are asking for. We are grateful that our colleagues are standing with us—our colleagues on our side of the aisle—to give us more time.

We are hoping that the leadership will decide to give us that time so that we can say to this child: We see you, we hear you, we care about you, and we are doing our part in the Senate to make things better.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to oppose the upcoming cloture vote on the Energy Policy Modernization Act. This is not because I think this is a bad bill. In fact, I know this bill is the result of months of hard work on both sides of the aisle, and it contains many provisions that will move our economy forward.

I appreciate the efforts of Chairman MURKOWSKI and Ranking Member CANTWELL, including their willingness to include bipartisan legislation that I offered with Senators ALEXANDER and STABENOW to support the development of next-generation clean vehicle technologies. While I sincerely hope that we are able to advance this bill out of the Senate, it is simply too soon to cut off debate and invoke cloture.

Senator STABENOW, Senator CANTWELL, and I have been negotiating with our Republican colleagues to secure critical assistance for the city of Flint, MI, whose residents are continuing to suffer from a manmade disaster. Nearly 2 years ago, an unelected emergency manager appointed by Michigan's Governor changed the city of Flint's water to a source of the Flint River in an attempt to save money while the city prepared to transition to a new regional water authority.

After switching away from clean water sourced from the Detroit water department, Flint residents began to receive improperly treated Flint River water, long known to be contaminated and potentially very corrosive. Brown or yellow water poured from Flint faucets that tasted and smelled terrible. This water wasn't just disgusting, it turned out to be poisonous. This corrosive water leached lead from aging but previously stable infrastructure.

A generation of children in Flint are now at risk for the severe effects of lead exposure, which can cause long-term development problems, nervous system damage, and decreased bone and muscle growth. Even though Flint is no longer pulling its water from the contaminated river and is back to drawing safe Lake Huron water, the recently damaged pipes and infrastructure contaminate the water before it pours from the tap.

Flint residents are unable to use their showers and need to wash themselves with baby wipes. Some walk as far as 2 miles to pick up bottled water to drink—the same bottled water they use to cook and to brush their teeth. This is simply not sustainable.

Flint needs the support of all levels of government to overhaul its damaged water infrastructure and help the children of Flint, who will be dealing with the health effects of lead exposure for decades to come.

What makes America so exceptional is its resiliency and the unity of our people in the face of a tragedy or a crisis. While Flint has faced decades of economic hardship, it is now facing a full-blown crisis, and now is the time for all of us to pull together.

On Monday, I heard from a woman who was on the verge of tears as she discussed her fears of the health conditions that her children face.

Yesterday I met another mom from Flint who brought a baby bottle filled with brown water that she poured from her tap—and brought it to Washington—to show my colleagues and Congress just how immediate a public health threat this public crisis is. This image that appeared on the cover of Time magazine is clearly a haunting cry for help.

I ask my colleagues to look into those eyes and to hear that cry, to see that cry for help. I believe that if any of my colleagues saw this tragedy such as we are seeing in our home State—Senator STABENOW and I—they would be standing here doing everything in

their power to deliver assistance. Whether the crisis is natural or manmade, it simply doesn't matter. This is a crisis.

It is also important to know that this crisis has raised questions about the safety of our Nation's infrastructure. It is possible that other communities could be affected.

While other communities may not suffer a crisis like Flint, across the country communities are learning about the vulnerabilities of their own water supply and what may happen in the future.

I should also reiterate that the proposal Senator STABENOW and I have been negotiating would provide funding for any State that has had an emergency declaration related to lead or other contamination in public drinking water systems. So it is not just about Flint. This is about any community that is suffering from contamination of their drinking water.

While we often talk about crumbling roads or bridges, hundreds, if not thousands of American cities, towns, and villages have aging water infrastructure and lead pipes.

Should one of our colleague's communities experience a similar crisis in the coming months, this funding we are fighting for today will be available to them as well.

Now is the time for action and to help the families of Flint. I hope that we can reach a resolution on our negotiations with our Republican colleagues, but we are not quite there yet. I urge all of my colleagues to oppose cloture on this bill until we have a deal.

Whether in Flint or elsewhere in America, we have a responsibility to care for our children. We must repair the trust Flint residents have lost in the ability of government officials to protect them and provide the most basic of all services.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join us in our efforts to help Flint recover from this unnecessary, manmade disaster.

Standing up for the children of this country is not a Republican or a Democratic issue, and I hope that today we show the American people that we can come together at times of crisis. This is common ground on which we can stand together and stand up for the people and children of Flint.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I see that the distinguished Senator from Alaska has come to the floor as the manager of the bill. I have a statement I wish to give, but I didn't know if she needed to say something.

Mr. President, I rise today to add my heartfelt and impassioned voice to call for action to help the people who live in Flint, MI, with this emergency situation. We have to be in it to deal with the emergency today and the long haul for tomorrow.

This is of catastrophic, almost Armageddon, proportion. An American city has been poisoned because of a situation that has been self-induced and self-inflicted. What is happening in Flint, MI, is appalling. It is a tragedy, it is a disgrace, and it will be for a long time. We need to fix the pipes right away, but the fixing of human beings is going to take a long, long time.

Let's get real. We are now bogged down in parliamentary inertia. We are now bogged down in Washington wonky budgetary talk: Where are the offsets?

What is this? What is this? Are we human beings? We take an oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, but sometimes an enemy is a tragedy. It can come from—God knows—a hurricane or tornado, and we rush in to help. If this had been a terrorist attack, oh, my gosh, we would be willing to go to war to defend America. Well, we need to go to the edge of our chair to help Flint. My gosh.

The Senators from Michigan are looking for \$400 million. That is no small amount of money, but I bring to my colleague's attention that it is the price of four F-35s—four F-35s that are supposed to protect America. Good for that. But right now I think the people of Michigan would say they would like to have the help they need. If we are talking about a threat to the people, the threat is here.

Now, where are we? We have to deal with this. I am the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee. I say to my colleagues: Guess what, gang. All this budgetary stuff, all the battles with sequester and so on—we have only \$800 million for safe drinking water, less than \$1 billion. Flint today is asking for \$400 million. We know it is a down payment. I say to my colleagues from Michigan, this could happen to any State. It could happen to any State because our infrastructure is not only aging in place, it is becoming dysfunctional in place and it is becoming dangerous in place—\$800 million.

Senators STABENOW and PETERS have already shared horror stories. Gosh, they have done a great job speaking up for the people. I really compliment their advocacy. But we are all Flint. We are all Flint. The facts will speak for themselves as we talk about how the Flint water is contaminated because its pipes are permanently damaged. I understand that replacing Flint's corroded water infrastructure will cost anywhere from \$700 million to \$1.5 billion—approximately 500 miles of old iron pipe and thousands of lead service lines.

It is an untold, big cost, but I am going to speak about the children. I am going to speak about the people. My gosh, what are you going through? I don't know how you can run a family. Well, you can't run a family on bottled water. You can't run a business on bottled water. You can't run a city on bottled water. I don't know how you wash. I don't know how you take care of your

children. I wouldn't go anywhere in Flint unless I personally prepared my food or washed my clothes or saw what I was doing. I would be scared to death. I bet those parents are too. And what are we afraid of? We need to get there.

Now I am going to talk about the children and the human cost. I say to my colleagues, both from Michigan and here, Senator CARDIN and I know a lot about lead poisoning. We have been through really difficult problems in Baltimore because of lead paint poisoning and the legacy of paint used during World War II. We know what it does. It lowers IQs. It causes significant developmental delays. There are behavioral issues, including attention deficit disorder. It is a lifetime; that little boy or girl at 6 years old, God willing that they live to their 80s, they are going to carry this in their blood unless there are incredible medical breakthroughs for the rest of their lives. Senator STABENOW and I have discussed possible medical breakthroughs, but, gosh, we have to get on it. We have to get on it. Again, the effects of poisoning could take a lifetime.

What I know about lead paint in Baltimore goes back to my days in city council where the paint was poisonous. They were coming into Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland Medical Center, kids just so sick. I remember the story about a little boy who was so weak that on his way to school he lay down in the middle of the street. He was so depleted because of the consequences of lead paint.

That is why I support the Stabenow amendment to provide \$800 million in loans and grants and also to provide about \$20 million to HHS to bring together the best thinking to have the best responses to the human infrastructure.

I have worked on this issue for a long time, going back to Senator Kit Bond, my pal and partner when we had the old VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee. Senator Bond was a real champion on this. There can be a bipartisan solution. Let's make it an American solution. This isn't about "you," and it is not about "Democrats." It is about "us."

As vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, I certainly want to work with my colleagues on how we can do this. But let's get the lead out of the pipes, let's get the lead out of the water, let's get the lead out of the way the Senate has functioned and move to make a down payment on this.

Mr. President, I really want us to understand we have to solve this problem.

I will conclude with this. I just want to say something to the mothers of America: We need you right now. The mothers of Flint need you. The mothers of Flint need you. The fathers of Flint need you. The mothers and fathers of Flint need you. If you are a mother or father anywhere, you could be a mother or father in Flint. Let's organize ourselves in the most effective

way to solve this problem, and let's begin to heal the critical infrastructure so we begin to prevent this from happening in any other American city.

Mr. President, today I wish to support an amendment filed by my friend and colleague Senator COLLINS that would require the Department of Energy to identify a mitigation strategy to help protect our critical infrastructure in the electric sector from a catastrophic cyber attack. When it comes to our national security, there is no such thing as partisanship, and we have to work together on a bipartisan basis to ensure our Nation is safe and protected. We need to act, and we need to act in the defense of the United States of America. The Senate has a great opportunity today to pass an amendment to help protect and defend our Nation's critical infrastructure from a devastating cyber attack.

What do I mean by critical infrastructure? It is our electric power grid, our financial services, our water supplies, those things that are the bread and butter of keeping America, its business, and its families going. These are entities that are vital to the safety, health, and economic well-being of the American people; so we need to do our part to help keep our critical infrastructure hardened and resilient against attack.

You don't have to be a science fiction enthusiast to understand how devastating an attack that disabled our power grid would be—millions without power. I am not worried that we will have to put away our iPhones; I am worried about vulnerable populations lacking heat in the dead of winter, about emergency responders who can't get calls, and about patients who need power for lifesaving medical devices.

The possibility of an attack on our power grid is not far-fetched. We know that there are already attacks going on in our energy sector. The committee report accompanying this bill notes that one-third of reported cyber attacks involve the energy sector.

But not only do I worry about an attack, I equally worry about our inertia, where we do nothing. I bring to the attention of the Senate that Jim Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, testified that the No. 1 cyber concern he has is an attack on our Nation's critical infrastructure, saying the greatest threat facing our country was in the cyber domain. His testimony is backed up by several intrusions into the industrial control systems of critical infrastructure, which are the computers that control operations of industrial processes, including energy plants. Just a couple of weeks ago, Marty Edwards, who runs the Department of Homeland Security's Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team, warned that he had seen an increase in attacks over the past year, saying systems are vulnerable because they are exposed to the Internet.

Admiral Rogers, the Director of the National Security Agency, with responsibility for cyber space, testified in a hearing this summer that our country was at a “5 or 6” in preparedness for a cyber attack against our critical infrastructure.

In November 2015, Richard Ledgett, the Deputy Director of the NSA, was asked if foreign actors already have the capability to shut down key U.S. infrastructure during a CNN interview, such as the financial sector, national gas distribution and energy sector, transportation network, and air traffic control system. His response was “Absolutely.”

We don’t want a digital Pearl Harbor. We can act now. We can act when it is within our power to protect, defend, and deter these attacks. That is what I want. I want us to have a sense of urgency. If we wait for another major cyber attack, we risk overreacting, overregulating, overspending, and overlegislating. The time to act is now.

This amendment would take the commonsense approach of requiring the Federal agencies responsible for the cyber security of the electric grid to review those entities that matter most and to propose actions that can reduce the risk of a catastrophic attack that could cause thousands of deaths or a catastrophic blow to our economy and national defense.

Congress has missed opportunities to improve our Nation’s cyber preparedness, and we need to take action before a “cyber 9/11” occurs. Right now, our adversaries are watching us, and it looks like we are doing nothing—that when all is said and done, more gets said than gets done.

Our adversaries don’t have to spy on us. They can just look at the Senate floor and say, “What the heck are they doing?” You know what they are going to do? They are going to look at us and say, “There they go again.” Our own inability to pass legislation, our own partisan gridlock and deadlock emboldens our predatory enemies who know we have done nothing to strengthen vulnerable critical infrastructure by putting in place those hardened, resilient systems and policies to protect, defend, and deter.

A cyber attack has the same intent as a traditional terrorist attack—to create chaos, to create civil instability, and to create economic catastrophe. Just think about a cyber attack in which our grid goes down. Think of a blackout in New York. Think of a blackout in Baltimore. When the Senate, at my urging, did the cyber exercise on what an attack would look like on our critical infrastructure, it showed what would happen. The stoplights go down, the lights go out in the hospitals, and the respirators go off. Business shuts down. Commerce shuts down, and 9-1-1 shuts down. America would be shut down, and we would be powerless and impotent to put it back on in any quick and expeditious manner.

This happened in Ukraine in December 2015. Ukrainians lost power in what the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Ukrainian authorities assessed was a cyber attack. The attack caused a blackout for tens of thousands of people, and industry experts identified this as the first-known power outage caused by a cyber attack. This is no longer a theoretical risk; it is here, and it is real.

Think of the chaos of no electricity. We will all go through blackouts. Snowzilla roared through the east coast last week leaving hundreds of thousands without power. No matter how delayed Pepco, BG&E, and Dominion were at responding, they got it back on.

But what happens if they can’t get it back on? What happens if they can’t get it back on for weeks or longer? Remember, the attack is to humiliate, intimidate, and cripple. Humiliate? Making us look powerless. Intimidate? To show there is this power that can cripple our functioning as a society. I find it chilling.

I have been immersed in cyber issues since I was elected to the Senate. Our cyber warriors at the National Security Agency are in Maryland, and I have been working with the NSA to ensure signals intelligence was a national security focus even before cyber was a method of warfare. In my role on the Intelligence Committee, I served on the Cyber Working Group, which developed findings to guide Congress on getting cyber governance right, protecting civil liberties, and improving the cyber workforce.

As vice chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, I have insisted on a robust cyber budget and fought to increase our cyber security investments in the fiscal year 2016 Omnibus to keep us safe, putting funds in the Federal checkbook for critical cyber security agencies on the order of \$12 billion. These include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which investigates cyber crime; the Department of Homeland Security, which safeguards critical infrastructure in cyber space; the Department of Defense, or DoD, which defends our homeland, national interests, and DoD networks against cyber attacks and includes intelligence and cyber agencies, like the National Security Agency, U.S. Cyber Command, the Central Intelligence Agency, and Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity, which are coming up with the new ideas to keep our country safe; the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which works with the private sector to develop standards for cyber security technology; and the National Science Foundation, which researches ways to secure our Nation. These funds are critical to building the workforce and providing the technology and resources to make our cyber security smarter, safer, and more secure.

Good people in this body have been working on both sides of the aisle for

some time now. So I conclude my remarks by saying to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Let’s do what we need to do to protect and defend the United States of America and adopt this amendment now. Working together, we can make our Nation safer and stronger and show the American people we can cooperate to get an important job done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I would like to speak about the Energy Policy Modernization Act that we have been considering on the Senate floor.

This bill has a lot of good things in it. It includes provisions to support a wide array of energy technologies, from improving conventional energy sources to promoting renewables to advancing long-overdue policies to increase energy efficiency. It supports energy infrastructure, which is critical for energy exporting States like Montana. It includes specific provisions that I have worked on to promote geothermal development, and I thank Chairman MURKOWSKI and Ranking Member CANTWELL for including them. In the course of this debate, we have adopted amendments to boost research and development overall and to clarify policies to recognize the value of energy development from forest biomass. I am also hopeful we will also be able to add provisions from the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act that I have championed for years.

Furthermore, this bill includes permanent reauthorization of the land and water conservation fund with my making public lands public provision to increase access to our public lands for hunters, fishers, and others who want to enjoy them. Although it does not provide the money to fully fund the LWCF, a permanent authorization would help us avoid letting the fund lapse, as it did last fall for over 2 months. It also invests in our national parks as we celebrate the centennial year of the Park Service. Though I may not agree with everything in the bill, these provisions I have highlighted are tremendously important to Montana.

But we are also in the midst of a developing environmental catastrophe. The people of Flint, MI, including as many as 9,000 children, have been exposed to lead-contaminated water for a prolonged period due to decisions made by the State of Michigan in the interest of saving money. A generation of kids in this community could see lifelong effects from a completely avoidable and manmade disaster. As we know all too well in Montana, clean water is far more valuable than money. It is completely unacceptable that this has happened.

In Montana, there are places where we are still living with the legacy of environmental pollution. In Butte, Anaconda, Libby, and elsewhere, long-term cleanups continue from mining development, industrial activities, and the tragedy of widespread asbestos use.

The human health costs of these disasters have been tremendous. We must not stand by and watch another community and more kids be affected by manmade disasters without stepping in to help. If we have a chance to stop this particular catastrophe before it gets any worse, we ought to. We have to.

And that is why I am disappointed that we are not currently able to provide meaningful and immediate assistance to help fix the pipes and address broader impacts. I hope we can figure out how to pass this bill. Let's stay on this bill, let's find a way to do right by folks in Flint, and let's pass this bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3140, AS MODIFIED

Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about a bipartisan amendment offered by Senator COLLINS that was adopted this week. I support this amendment to help bolster forest biomass in our renewable energy portfolio and provide consistency across Federal programs. Our Nation has long depended on the flow of wood and fiber from our forests. Now, we are recognizing the role of forest biomass in lowering our carbon emissions and increasing our energy independence. When harvested sustainably, the carbon benefits of forest biomass can be great. Carbon emitted to the atmosphere from forest biomass is eventually removed again with forest growth, and this cycle can happen again and again.

Forest biomass is also good for jobs, particularly in rural communities. Recognizing the carbon benefits of forest biomass can increase its value. This will help keep our Nation's forests healthy by making it economically feasible to conduct forest health treatments and reduce hazardous fuels that threaten our communities. It will also help the timber industry by allowing them to use more wood that would otherwise be wasted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Energy Committee has worked really hard over the past year to develop the broad bipartisan energy legislation that is before us. Members in both parties focused on areas of common ground, worked across the aisle, and developed legislation that ultimately earned the support of more than 80 percent of their colleagues, Republicans and Democrats alike.

Here is what some of our Democratic friends have had to say about the broad bipartisan Energy Policy Modernization Act.

The junior Senator from New Mexico said this bill "is critical to protecting" his State's "treasured public lands and outdoor heritage."

The junior Senator from Minnesota pointed out that "several key measures" he wrote are in this bill and that this bill represents "a good step" forward.

The junior Senator from Hawaii noted that her proposals in the bill "will bolster energy reliability and security" in her State.

The senior Senator from West Virginia said he was able to include "critical measures" in the bill to help coal jobs and low-cost electricity in his State. "It is critical for America to establish an all-of-the-above energy portfolio that includes all of our domestic resources," he said, and, "I truly believe that this bipartisan bill will bring us one step closer to achieving U.S. energy independence." That is the senior Senator from West Virginia, a Democrat.

The top Democrat on the Energy Committee said:

If we want to continue to compete in the global economy, we must continue to improve energy productivity and that is exactly what this bill does. The Energy Policy Modernization Act will help ensure that the nation is eliminating energy wastage and making improvements in new technologies that will improve our competitiveness for the 21st century.

That was the ranking Democrat on the Energy Committee. She worked hard with Senator MURKOWSKI on the Energy Committee to develop this bill, and they have worked together to manage it here on the floor as well. Under their leadership, more than 30 amendments from both Democrats and Republicans have already been adopted.

For example, one of our Democratic friends offered an amendment that he said would "strengthen this bipartisan energy bill and help us move towards a 21st century economy." The Senate adopted it.

Another of our Democratic friends said his amendment would "empower us with knowledge" and help us "make informed decisions to protect consumers, key sectors of our economy and our energy security." The Senate adopted that amendment too.

There is a lot for both parties to like in this bill. The Energy Policy Modernization Act is the result of a year's worth of constructive and collaborative work. So let's not risk that progress. Let's keep working together and vote today to advance this measure. If we want to help Americans produce more energy, let's vote to advance the measure. If we want to help Americans pay less for energy, let's vote to advance it. If we want to help Americans save energy, let's vote to advance it. And if we want to help bolster our country's long-term national security, one more time, let's vote to advance it.

I would note one more thing the top Democrat on the Energy Committee recently said: "Sometimes we can be cynical about this place and what we can get done; then, all of a sudden, we have a great opportunity to move something forward."

She continued:

This is a milestone for the Senate. The fact that we are considering energy policy legislation on the Senate floor in a bipartisan bill, or any bill, for the first time since 2007 is a tremendous milestone.

That is the ranking Democrat on the Energy Committee.

So let's bring this bill to the finish line. Let's vote to bring America's en-

ergy policies in line with today's demands so we can prepare for tomorrow's opportunities too.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I also want to, as I did before, commend those working on this bill, and I share the majority leader's feeling that a lot of positive progress has been made. We are just not done yet. So while I commend, and have commended, the chair and the ranking member, we have important issues and an energy bill that deals with energy, water, and all kinds of issues. Certainly addressing what is happening in Flint, MI, with the catastrophe is appropriate. We just want to know that we have an agreement—not vote, but an agreement—to get this done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments from my colleagues raising attention to the issue in Flint, MI. I think we have had good, constructive discussions, not only very intensely yesterday, but working with the two Senators from Michigan on this issue for several months right now. As the Senator said, the discussions are still ongoing, and I want to speak to where we are in that process.

I would like to start my comments this morning by recognizing that we are very close to the time that has been set for this first cloture vote on this broad bipartisan bill.

As we approach it, I want to follow on the majority leader's comments in terms of reminding Members of what we have incorporated within this measure, to reiterate the strong bipartisan support that our bill has drawn, and to lay out what I believe is our best path to final passage.

This Energy Policy Modernization Act, as I have mentioned, is more than a year's worth of hard work by those of us who serve on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, it has been the result of Member-to-Member conversations, listening sessions, legislative hearings, bipartisan negotiations, and then we had a marathon 3-day markup in July. At the end of that markup, we moved it out by a vote of 18-to-4. It was pretty strong support—10 Republicans and 8 Democrats in favor.

The reason the bill passed out of the committee on such a strong bipartisan basis was not just because of our commitment to good process. We matched that with an equal commitment to good policy. I think that is important to recognize. It was processed, but it was also policy.

We worked together to include the priorities from Members of both sides of the aisle as well as from within the committee and outside of the committee. We agreed to include a bill to streamline LNG exports that was written by Senator BARRASSO and 17 other bipartisan Members. We agreed to include a major efficiency bill headed up

by Senators PORTMAN and SHAHEEN and 13 other bipartisan Members. We agreed to improve our mineral security, an effort that I have led with Senators RISCH, HELLER and CRAPO. We agreed to promote the use of hydropower, a clean renewable resource that is favored by almost everybody in this Chamber. We agreed to expedite the permitting of natural gas pipelines without sacrificing any environmental review or public participation. This was an effort that was led by Senator CAPITO.

We agreed to a new oil and gas permitting pilot program, one of several ideas that Senator HOEVEN contributed. We took up a proposal from Senator COLLINS to boost the efficiency of schools. We agreed to approve our Nation's cyber security based on legislation from Senator RISCH and Senator HEINRICH. We also made innovation a key priority to promote the development of new technologies. As part of that, we agreed to reauthorize many of the energy-related portions of the America COMPETES Act, thanks to the leadership of Senator ALEXANDER. We agreed to take commonsense steps to promote geothermal energy, which is a key issue to Senator WYDEN, certainly myself, and so many others. We agreed to promote vehicle innovation based on a bipartisan measure from Senator ALEXANDER and our friends from Michigan, Senator PETERS, Senator STABENOW. We agreed to reauthorize the coal R&D program at the Department of Energy based on yet another bipartisan proposal from Senators MANCHIN, CAPITO, and PORTMAN.

In the context of our broader bill—and only in the context of the broader bill—we also agreed to reauthorize and reform the Land and Water Conservation Fund. What we came away with was a good, timely bipartisan measure that has a very real chance of being the first Energy bill to be signed into law in over 8 years. It is a measure that will help America produce more energy. It will help Americans save money, and it will help ensure that the energy can be transported from where it is produced to where it is needed. It will bolster our Nation's status as the best innovator in the world, something we should all aim to support. It will boost our economy, especially our manufacturers, and it will cement our status as a global energy superpower.

As I said, it does all of this without raising taxes, without imposing any new mandates, and without adding to the Federal deficit. I think because of all of that, that is why you have seen the good, strong support for this measure. That was our base bill. That was where we started. When we came to the floor, it got better. Our starting point at the Senate floor was good and strong. Since we have taken up the debate for a week now, we have continued to work in a very open, very bipartisan, sometimes a little bit lengthy and tedious process, but it works.

We committed to an open amendment process and most Members have

held back on, whether you call them gotchas or gimmies or poison pills, but there has been a great deal of cooperation. We voted on 38 amendments now. We have accepted 32 of the 38. We have added even more good ideas from even more Members to an already bipartisan bill.

I will recount a few of the things we have done with that. We agreed to boost our Nation's efforts to develop advanced nuclear technologies. This was a great amendment led by Senators CRAPO, WHITEHOUSE, RISCH, BOOKER, HATCH, KIRK, and DURBIN. We voiced our strong support for carbon capture and utilization storage technologies thanks to an idea from Senators HEITKAMP, CAPITO, BOOKER, WHITEHOUSE, MANCHIN, BLUNT, and FRANKEN. We have reaffirmed the need for consistent Federal policies that recognize the carbon neutrality of forest biomass. This was an effort that was championed by Senators COLLINS, KLOBUCHAR, AYOTTE, KING, FRANKEN, DAINES, CRAPO, and RISCH.

You do not often see these large groups of Senators coming together in a way that we have seen on this bill. Some would look at the names I read off and say: I did not know that they had anything to work on. But these issues have brought them together. This truly has been a team effort, with Members reaching out to one another, lining up behind each other's ideas, working with Senator CANTWELL and me to ensure their adoption.

The best proof of that is simple review of our bill. Right now the Energy Policy Modernization Act includes priorities sponsored or cosponsored by at least 62 Members of the Senate. When was the last time we saw that level of cooperation and collaboration? Think about it. More than three-fifths of the Senate has contributed something to this Energy bill, and we are not done processing amendments yet. My staff and the staff of Senator CANTWELL have been comparing notes about the feedback we have been getting outside the Chamber. What we found is that from the very time we started working through the committee process to our time on the Senate floor, a very wide range of individuals, businesses, groups have come out and supported the bill or certainly pieces of it. We have had provisions endorsed by major associations whose membership account for hundreds of companies and millions of American workers. This includes the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Chemistry Council, National Electrical Manufacturers Association, the Alliance of Automobile. We have also heard from labor groups—North America's Building Trades Union, the United Autoworkers, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. They have all weighed in with support for ideas that are included within the bill.

We have a huge coalition from the Alliance to Save Energy to Seattle City Light that has welcomed the work we are doing on efficiency. I have got-

ten good, strong support from Alaskans from our Department of Natural Resources, the Alaska Power Association, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Cordova Electric Cooperative, and a whole lot more. As you might expect, we have also received great encouragement from the people who keep the lights on, who keep our fuel affordable, who help produce the materials that make modern life that much more enjoyable—whether it is the National Mining Association, American Exploration & Mining, the Business Council for Sustainable Energy, American Public Power Association, Edison Electric, and others.

The reality is, those who have weighed in, in support of this measure are too many to name this morning, but that is a good problem to have when you are legislating that you have run out of time in outlining the coalitions that have come together in support.

So that I do not get into any trouble this morning, I want to be clear that many of the groups and the entities I have listed have endorsed parts of the bill, not all of it. I am not suggesting that everyone who likes our work to streamline LNG Exports is automatically supportive of what we are doing to clean up the U.S. Code. That is entirely fair. Not everything in this is going to appeal to everyone.

In a lot of ways, that is how things work in a place like the Senate. Not everyone likes every provision of this bill. I do not like every provision of this bill. Not everyone is getting everything they want. It is pretty tough to find a situation where you get 100 percent of everything you would want. This is not the bill I would have written on my own, but it is the bill we have written together first as a committee of 22 and now as a Senate working together.

Our work has produced a good bill, a good bill worth debating, worth advancing, and worth passing. That brings us to the point where we are with the cloture vote we will soon take. This vote is on the first of two cloture motions we will need to approve before we can move to final passage.

There are two votes. There is one on the substitute amendment, and there is one on the underlying bill. This means this vote we will see very shortly is a means to advance debate, not to conclude it, on our Energy Policy Modernization Energy Act. It is also a choice. I think it is important to lay out clearly to Members where we are, what we are voting on this morning.

By voting for cloture, Members will be ensuring that we remain on this bill for at least another 30 hours of legislative activity. You will be voting to continue this process, to continue this debate, and to continue processing amendments whether by voice, as we have done so many of them, or by roll-call vote that we hope to set up. You will also be giving us the time we need

to focus on matters that are simply not settled yet.

As we have heard from our colleagues from Michigan, there are some matters they wish to have resolved that are not yet settled, but this allows us that time to do that but to do this in a way that is going to be acceptable to the majority of our Members. The reality is, if you are not comfortable with where we are 30 hours from now, you can still vote against the next cloture motion that comes up. That is one choice, and that is going to be my choice. Here is the other: If you vote against cloture, you will be effectively voting not to prolong debate but to move us off this bipartisan bill. You will be voting to effectively be giving up on so much of what we have done, a year of process, agreement on almost 50 Energy bills that we have incorporated into this base bill, and the strong approval of 32 separate amendments and counting that we have advanced through the floor.

I believe you will be voting to give up our best opportunity—certainly our most immediate opportunity—to address the issue to help the people of Flint, MI, and in other parts of the country that may have similar issues. Every time I leave the Senate floor—at least this past week—I am swarmed by reporters who want to know what is going on, what is the latest discussion. What is going to happen with Flint? Is Flint going to bring this bill down?

This morning I want to speak directly to this to let Members know what has gone on because we were not out here on the floor all day yesterday hashing things back and forth. We have been discussing very earnestly, and I believe very constructively, what our options are, how we can find a path forward that will yield a result, not just send a message but yield a result to help the people in Flint, MI.

The first thing I will say is that I share the concern, the heartbreak for what the people of Flint, MI, have faced and are facing. It is a crisis. It is a tragedy. It is heartbreakingly avoidable. Unfortunately, we look at how we got here, and it is a failure of local, State, and Federal Governments to regulate and monitor that city's water supply.

What has happened in Flint has hurt people. It is hurting children. It has damaged property. It has left families in a horrible predicament, through no fault of their own, where they cannot drink their tapwater, they cannot bathe their children. There is plenty of blame to go around here. I know my colleagues from Michigan would agree with me, but our job in the U.S. Senate is not to play this blame game. It is to own up to what that Federal role is because I believe there is that Federal role, and then on that basis do what we can to help and make sure that our response is proportionate to that role. So why then consider all of this in the context of an energy bill, you might ask, and it is a fair and legitimate

question. Well, it is because this is the first piece of legislation that is on the floor since the extent of the crisis in Flint became clear to us.

Senator STABENOW and I began discussions about the situation in Flint in very early December as we were trying to move through an omnibus bill to see if there was not something we might be able to address through the appropriations bill. Since that time, again, more has been learned, and we are here today with legislation that gives us an opportunity to consider it.

I did not shy away from this discussion, as hard it was. I did not say: Hey, that is going to be a poison pill. I cannot deal with it. I said: Let us try to figure this out because if we do not address the situation, it is not going to go away. We have a role here. Let us figure out what that responsibility is, and let us engage in this conversation.

Senator CANTWELL and I have been fully engaged, most directly with the Senators in Michigan, trying to find a responsible path forward. The negotiations have been earnest, in good faith, and ongoing, but I think that there has been a little bit of confusion about the status of the negotiations. I want to outline where I believe we are right now.

We have made headway on Federal assistance—something that we know cannot be borne by our Energy bill alone. We have found programs that could be good fits to provide aid.

We also recognize that this is not Flint's burden alone, but there are other communities in other States, including my State, that face similar crises as a result of government failures. We hear about them as Members and talk about these situations. I believe the Senator from Maryland used the phrase "We are all Flint." I think we all have situations—maybe not to the crisis proportion that they have in Michigan right now, where they needed a Presidential declaration, but we all recognize that we all have issues that are troubling us a great deal when it comes to how we provide safe drinking water for our families.

Our problem is not about whether we should offset the cost of this assistance; it is how we do so in a manner that does not destroy the underlying Energy bill and does not violate the Constitution or the rules we have here in the Senate. I made myself very clear when we began, at the outset of the debate on this measure, that we have to make sure we do not have scoring issues with CBO, and we have to make sure there are no blue slip issues because that would kill the bill, and then where would we be? Then nobody would win in that scenario. In that scenario we would end up with no energy bill and nothing to address the situation in Flint.

This morning I filed a second-degree amendment to provide support for the people of Flint. My amendment will make up to \$550 million available, including \$50 million which will be made

immediately available for the people of Flint. What we are seeking to do here is bridge the gap between what has been proposed and what I believe the Senate can agree to. It requires that 90 percent of the money we provide be paid back over time. Its cost is fully offset with a pay-for that we have been working on back and forth with CBO and are confident that they will accept. It includes provisions—and we have been working with the Senators from Michigan on this issue—as they relate to EPA notification and a loan forgiveness, language that I think has been in different iterations of measures that have been going forward. I am told that the House is looking at that as well.

That is where we are at this time as we are going into a cloture motion. I believe we have made progress. We are working constructively to help the people of Flint, and what this second-degree amendment would do is make \$550 million available to them. It has been challenging. We have done a lot of hard work to get to this point, but I think we owe it to every American, whether you are in Flint or somewhere else, to do that work and overcome that challenge.

We have gotten to where we are in the discussion. Again, we have the cloture motion going forward. We have been trying to make good progress. We have been trying to conduct an open and fair amendment process. We want to process more amendments this morning so that we can move to complete the bill.

Mr. President, at this time I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to call up the following amendments and make them pending, and that is Stabenow amendment No. 3129; Murkowski second-degree on Flint, amendment No. 3282; Cantwell amendment No. 3242; Flake amendment No. 3055; Flake amendment No. 3050; Murkowski-Cantwell amendment No. 3234; Isakson amendment No. 3202; Markey amendment No. 3232; and Cassidy amendment No. 3192.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I first want to thank the chair. She lists a lot of bipartisan efforts that have gone on. I know a lot of work has been done, but nowhere in that list have the needs of the folks of Flint been addressed, including the children.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state her objection.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we want to get this solved and not just have votes that go down.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask through the Chair if the chairman of the Energy Committee will yield for a question.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Certainly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the chairman of the Energy Committee has done tremendous work with the ranking member, Senator CANTWELL, to try to find some way to address the legitimate concerns we all share and have with what has happened in Flint, but I want to clarify some basic facts. I wish to ask for a comment or answer from the distinguished Senator from Alaska.

Isn't it true that there is not yet a comprehensive assessment and plan in place by the State of Michigan or Flint as to how they might even spend this money at this point to address their concerns about lead in the water supply in Flint?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. It is my understanding that there is an assessment and analysis that is due out, I believe, toward the end of next week. The State has been working aggressively to determine the costs, as well as how they would move forward with an action plan. That is my understanding.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for another question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Since there is no plan announced yet, or in place, it strikes me as putting the cart before the horse to say that the Senate ought to vote on a \$600 million emergency appropriations deal to pay for a plan that has not yet been created or disclosed to the American people.

I ask the Senator through the Chair, isn't it a fact that the State itself has already appropriated \$40 million to deal with this issue on an emergency basis and the Obama administration has made available another \$80 million through the EPA that is available to the State of Michigan to help Flint deal with this problem, so a total of roughly \$120 million has already been made available?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I cannot speak to the accuracy of exactly how much has been made available to the State. It is my understanding that the State has received, through the EPA, the State's annual receipts from the EPA's clean water fund. I do not know if that is specific to Flint or whether that is the State's share, as the State of Texas receives and the State of Alaska receives. It is my understanding that the President did make that announcement.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, might I ask the Senator to yield for a question so we can share the information?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the Senator is out of order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska has the floor.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask the Senator from Alaska if she would yield for one last question on topic.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Yes.

Mr. CORNYN. Isn't it true that the Senators from Michigan made this demand for a \$600 million earmark before

a plan was actually put together by the State of Michigan or the city of Flint—either to analyze the problem or what the solution might look like and how much it might cost—and that the Senator from Alaska, in her capacity as the bill manager, has made an effort to come up with some compromises? In fact, I believe the Senator from Alaska mentioned a compromise that would include upfront funds of \$50 million plus a loan, in effect, that would be paid back over time.

I ask the Senator, doesn't it make sense—because there is no plan in place and because there is money already available for Flint and Michigan to begin to address this problem—for us to take our time and handle any additional requests for funding from Flint or Michigan through the regular appropriations process? I believe the Senator is the chair of the subcommittee that has jurisdiction over these issues, and I am just wondering whether that wouldn't be a more orderly, responsible process than a \$600 million earmark before a plan is even in place.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Well, to answer the Senator's question, I have been working aggressively and constructively with the Senators from Michigan to try to figure out how we can provide for a level of response. I do not doubt the anxiety and urgency the people in Flint must feel. This is a difficult situation to be in, and it is not a situation that any of us would want any of our constituents to be in. I think there is an imperative from those who are seeking this assistance that—given that there is a Federal role, how can we help to facilitate the appropriate response on the Federal side? If there is a way to help expedite funding to move toward a solution, I think that is appropriate.

I think the Senator's question is, Are we jumping ahead here if we do not know how much? I think it is fair to say that the original estimates were based on the disaster declaration the State had requested. I think it is going to be critical that we understand what the costs will be, and hopefully we will learn about that next week. I know they have been working aggressively to determine that.

We also need to know what the spend plan is because we saw what happened with the stimulus. You can almost get too much money—if that is possible—going in, and you cannot spend it in the way it is best needed. I think we want to be thoughtful and responsible stewards of the taxpayers' dollars in recognizing that, and I think we want to also recognize that the role we have ought to be a proportionate role, and how we can be working to advance that is something we have been attempting to do.

Ms. STABENOW. Will the chair yield for a question?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. In a moment.

The solution I have put down this morning is one that I think recognizes that there is assistance that is needed,

and this is where the opportunity to access loans through the WIFIA Program that will be available not only to the State of Michigan but to other States should they be in a similar situation—so that avoids the earmark. Because I, too, want to make sure we have a situation where we do not allow this to continue in Michigan, but we also do not want to see it in other States as well. So we do that through opportunities for loans through WIFIA. But the direct assistance, which would be \$50 million in addition to whatever may be out there already from the EPA and through the State, I think is a reasonable approach. Again, it is one that is legitimately paid for, and I think that is an important part of our responsibility here, as well as to make sure we not only address the urgency of the situation but also the responsibility we have not only to the people of Flint but to all of our constituencies.

Mr. President, if I could just conclude, and then I will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time for debate has expired.

Ms. STABENOW. Will the distinguished leader yield for a question? I have been asking for the opportunity to ask a question, and I ask unanimous consent to ask a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. Is the chair aware that the dollars we have asked for require a comprehensive plan from the State and that at this point only \$28 million—most going to health—has been allocated to the State?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Through the Chair, I am aware that what you have required, as well as what we have been working on jointly, does require an action plan that describes the spend-down and how that would be allocated. It is my understanding that it will be very helpful to have that analysis from the State. That will be forthcoming—hopefully, next week.

Ms. STABENOW. I will be happy to continue the discussion.

I thank the Chair.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 amendment No. 2953, the substitute amendment to S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Lisa Murkowski, Cory Gardner, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, Bill Cassidy, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, John Thune, James E. Risch, Lamar Alexander, John McCain, Rob Portman.

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 amendment No. 2953, as amended, offered by the Senator from Alaska, Ms. MURKOWSKI, to S. 2012, 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. WHITEHOUSE (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 46, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 16 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Alexander	Gardner	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Capito	Hatch	Risch
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Roberts
Coats	Heller	Rounds
Cochran	Hoeven	Sessions
Collins	Inhofe	Shaheen
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Crapo	Kaine	Thune
Daines	King	Tillis
Donnelly	Kirk	Vitter
Enzi	Manchin	Wicker
Ernst	McCain	
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—50

Ayotte	Flake	Nelson
Baldwin	Franken	Paul
Bennet	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boozman	Klobuchar	Sasse
Boxer	Lankford	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Burr	Lee	Scott
Cantwell	Markey	Stabenow
Cardin	McCaskill	Tester
Carper	McConnell	Toomey
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cotton	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Whitehouse

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz	Rubio	Sanders
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 46, the nays are 50. One Senator responded "present."

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 Calendar No. 218, S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Lisa Murkowski, Cory Gardner, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, Bill Cassidy, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, John Thune, James E. Risch, Lamar Alexander, John McCain, Rob Portman.

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 S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 43, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 17 Leg.]

YEAS—43

Alexander	Gardner	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Capito	Hatch	Portman
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Roberts
Coats	Heller	Rounds
Cochran	Hoeven	Sessions
Collins	Inhofe	Shaheen
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Daines	Kaine	Thune
Donnelly	King	Tillis
Enzi	Kirk	Vitter
Ernst	Manchin	Wicker
Fischer	McCain	

NAYS—54

Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Baldwin	Franken	Peters
Bennet	Gillibrand	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Risch
Boozman	Klobuchar	Sasse
Boxer	Lankford	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Burr	Lee	Scott
Cantwell	Markey	Stabenow
Cardin	McCaskill	Tester
Carper	McConnell	Toomey
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Vitter
Cotton	Mikulski	Warner
Crapo	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Nelson	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz	Rubio	Sanders
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 43, the nays are 54.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I wish to say to my colleagues that Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator CANTWELL are going to continue to work over the weekend on the path forward. Hopefully, we will be able to salvage this important bipartisan legislation in the next few days.

In the meantime, the next vote will be at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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 majority whip.

FLINT, MICHIGAN, WATER CRISIS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I know there are others waiting to speak, and I will be brief. I want to take a couple of minutes to reflect on what just happened on the Senate floor.

We had a bipartisan bill that was shepherded through the Energy Committee by the chair, Senator MURKOWSKI, and the ranking member, Senator CANTWELL. Because our colleagues from Michigan refused to take yes for an answer—objecting to a vote on their very amendment—the Democratic caucus has come together and brought down this bipartisan bill—killing it, at least for the time being.

I share the majority leader's hope that discussions can continue and cooler, more reasonable minds will prevail, rather than just the gamesmanship that, frankly, frustrates all of us and gives Congress a bad name. We know that the vote that just went down was not about the Energy bill. This was about trying to embarrass Republicans and to try to make us look bad and portray us as having no compassion for the poor people of Flint—which is exactly the opposite of true.

The fact is that Senator MURKOWSKI, who is the bill manager and chairman of the Energy Committee, made an offer for a vote on a \$550 million package—a \$550 million package. The Senator from Michigan has asked for a check for \$600 million, but Senator MURKOWSKI, in good faith, trying to be responsible, offered them an alternative of a \$550 million package, and they refused it, instead choosing to bring down this legislation.

I think it is important to note that the State of Michigan has already appropriated somewhere close to \$37 million, including funds specifically set aside for outside experts to conduct an infrastructure integrity study. The fact is, the State of Michigan and the city of Flint don't yet know what they need to do to fix the problem or how much it will cost, and the Senators from Michigan come in here and say: We don't need a plan. We just need cash

upfront of \$600 million. We want this added to the national debt—which is already \$19 trillion.

I think the Senator from Alaska, the bill manager, made a very reasonable suggestion: Let the State and the city get started with the money that has been appropriated by the State, together with the tens of millions of dollars the Obama administration is making available to the State of Michigan that can then be available to the city of Flint to get started, to do the infrastructure integrity study, to come up with a plan. Then the Senators can come back to Congress—hopefully during the regular appropriations process—and come up with a responsible, shared plan for this local government, for the State government, and for the Federal Government to help the poor people of Flint out of this terrible crisis.

Instead, what we seem to have found happening is, in the immortal words of Rahm Emanuel—now the mayor of Chicago, formerly chief of Staff of the White House—never let a crisis go to waste. That is what is happening here. It is not responsible. It is not reasonable. And I think Senator MURKOWSKI's counteroffer to the demands of the Senators from Michigan demonstrates it is not even a good-faith effort to try to solve the problem. It is just trying to put on a show vote and embarrass people.

We also need to understand that the Environmental Protection Agency bears significant responsibility. The Obama administration's Environmental Protection Agency failed the people of Flint when they didn't act sooner. We heard that one Agency director has already resigned.

But let me be clear. There is no disagreement that we all want to work together to help the people of Flint find a solution once we have more information about the needs of the city and the State of Michigan and they know exactly what kind of help they need and in what amount. What we disagree on is that this bipartisan Energy bill should be held hostage until we know the solution. Frankly, that is beyond frustrating. It is disappointing. It is not serving our constituents and the American people the way we should, in a responsible, commonsense, bipartisan way. This is all about gamesmanship. This is all about "gotcha." In other words, this is all about the things the American people have come to loathe and hate about the political process in Washington, DC.

We can do better. We must do better. And I share the majority leader's wish that negotiations continue and that cooler, more sensible minds come together on solutions that we can perhaps agree to.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS— EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, this is the fourth time I have come to the floor urging Senator CRUZ to remove his hold on these very important nominees for two of our best allies, the countries of Sweden and Norway.

Norway has been without a confirmed ambassador for 860 days. As we know, the first nominee withdrew, but many of these days have been filled up by the second nominee, who is not controversial—Sam Heins from the State of Minnesota—who made it through the committee without objection. In the case of Sweden, it has been 469 days since the President nominated Azita Raji to be ambassador.

There is no issue with these nominees. In fact, in the words of Senator COTTON from Arkansas, my Republican colleague, "I believe both [nominees] are qualified . . . and we have significant interests in Scandinavia. My hope is that both nominees receive a vote in the Senate sooner than later." We know we have the support of Senator CORKER, the head of the Foreign Relations Committee. We thank Senator CARDIN for his support. We thank Majority Leader MCCONNELL. We thank Senator REID.

This vote is not a controversial vote. Senator CRUZ is not here to object. We understand Senator LEE is here on his behalf. But I would like to know why Senator CRUZ isn't here to object. I think I know why he isn't here to object—because he is in the State of my colleague Senator SHAHEEN.

We cannot hold up the business of the Senate like this. We have two nominees for two countries, the 11th and 12th biggest investors in the United States of America, Sweden and Norway. The country of Norway is the purchaser of 52 Lockheed fighter planes, 22 just ordered at \$200 million apiece, all made in Fort Worth, TX, the home State of Senator CRUZ.

These are allies who are taking in refugees by the thousands. These are allies who are at our side in the fight against Russia to stand up against their aggression in Ukraine. They have stood with us in the fight against Islamic extremism. They have stood with us in the fight against ISIS. And what do we say to them? You can have ambassadors from Russia or from China, you can have ambassadors from every country but not from the United States of America.

I ask Senator CRUZ and I ask his colleagues—or perhaps his staff to ask him—why every other European nation of any major size has an ambassador and why not these two Scandinavian countries.

So it is my hope—and the reasons for these holds are completely unrelated. They are varied. They are many. They change every day. I am hopeful that we are able to negotiate something because Senator SHAHEEN and I have pledged to come to the floor nearly every single day when the Senate is in

session to continue asking, and his colleagues are going to have to come and object on his behalf.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Samuel Heins to be Ambassador to the country of Norway, Calendar No. 263; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, on behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Azita Raji to be Ambassador to the country of Sweden, Calendar No. 148; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, on behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I see the Senator from New Hampshire is here. She is a leader on the Foreign Relations Committee. I know she has a few things to say. But, again, we are simply asking for a vote. Senator CRUZ can choose to be here or not. He can choose to vote or not. He can choose to vote no if he wants. We know these two nominees would pass because they are not controversial. I am tired of hearing from people in America and people who represent and live in these countries: What is wrong with America? Why are you "dissing" us when we stand by your side every day? This has to stop.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am joining my colleague, Senator KLOBUCHAR, to talk not just about these two positions of Ambassadors to Sweden and Norway but also about some of the other 27 nominees who deal with national security issues.

As Senator KLOBUCHAR said yesterday when we were on the floor, we said we were going to come down here every day. The Senate is not going to be in session every day, so we won't be here every day, but we will be back as often as possible to point out that we need to confirm these nominees. It is in the country's national security interests.

The Presiding Officer serves with me on the Senate Armed Services Committee, so she understands just how

critical it is that we have a team in place that can be part of the team that protects this Nation.

As Senator KLOBUCHAR said, Azita Raji has been waiting over a year since she was nominated. She went through the Foreign Relations Committee unanimously. Nobody objected. Sam Heins was nominated almost a year ago. He is nominated to be U.S. Ambassador to Norway.

Again, this is not about just these two individuals; this is also about the message we are sending to two of our best partners and allies, Sweden and Norway. Both of these countries have been part of the anti-ISIL coalition fighting with us against the terrorists. Sweden has been on the frontlines of the refugee crisis, taking in thousands of refugees in Europe. As we think about the strains that the European Union is under right now, for us to have failed to put ambassadors in two of our most important allies is unforgivable.

Yesterday I said it was in 1914 that Norway had to scramble their F-16 fighters. We know they didn't have F-16 fighters in 1914. It was 2014. So a little over a year ago, Norway, which is a NATO ally, scrambled its F-16 fighters 74 times to intercept Russian warplanes.

As we think about the threats from Russian aggression, Sweden and Norway are right there. They are on the frontlines. Norway has committed to participate in NATO's missile defense system. So, again, it is very important as we are looking at our efforts to stop Russian aggression.

Yesterday in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee we were talking about the strains on Europe. We had witnesses for both the majority and the minority who confirmed that our failure to move these nominees on the Senate floor is "an enormous issue," a "disastrous policy," and sends the message that Washington does not "care about European security"—both minority and majority witnesses—even arguing that the United States does not have "players on the field."

Not only are there national security implications, but, as the Senator from Minnesota pointed out, vacancies in Sweden and Norway mean that some \$11.3 billion in U.S. exports lack a strong champion in-country.

I hope the Senator from Texas—who is out running for President—will come back or will lift his hold so we can send the message that we should be sending to our European allies about how important they are and how strongly we want to support what is happening in those countries.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to move two other national security nominees.

The first is Ambassador Tom Shannon. He has been nominated to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Again, he has been waiting 136 days since being nominated. He also went through the Foreign Relations

Committee without any opposition. He would be responsible for working with Europeans on the implementation of the Iran agreement, on coordinating the G7 to combat Russian aggression, as well as providing daily oversight and direction to all the Department's regional bureaus. He is a career Foreign Service officer who has served in five administrations, two Democratic and three Republican.

At this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Ambassador Tom Shannon to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Calendar No. 375; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. On behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Again, I am hopeful the junior Senator from Texas is going to do what he should have done all along, which is lift his hold and allow both the Ambassadors to Sweden and Norway and Ambassador Shannon to move forward.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, finally, I want to ask unanimous consent to move Adam Szubin, who has been nominated to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes. He has also been waiting almost a year. He is somebody who Senator SHELBY, chairman of the Banking Committee, has said is eminently qualified, but the Banking Committee still has not voted to move his nomination to the Senate floor.

His position is very critical because he would lead the policy, enforcement, regulatory, and intelligence functions of the Treasury Department. They are aimed at identifying and disrupting the lines of financial support to international terrorist organizations to a whole range of other bad actors.

Next week on the Senate floor we are supposed to take up sanctions on North Korea. How can we in good faith tell the American people we are going to enforce sanctions on North Korea when we haven't been willing to fill the position that is responsible for doing that enforcement? It belies understanding that we are not going to move forward.

Again, this is a position that I know is supported by the Foreign Relations Committee. The Republican chair of the Foreign Relations Committee has been very supportive of moving Adam Szubin's nomination, just as he has been supportive of moving the two Ambassadors, of moving Ambassador Shannon.

This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue about what we are doing to ensure the national security of this country. It is unfortunate we have rules in the Senate that allow one person to hold things up for an indefinite period of time when the national security of the country is at stake.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of PN371, the nomination of Adam Szubin to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes; that the Senate proceed to its consideration and vote without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. On behalf of the senior Senator from Alabama, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Again, it is disappointing that the senior Senator from Alabama isn't here to talk about his concerns about Adam Szubin and why he is still on hold in the Banking Committee and that we haven't heard from the majority leader in the Senate about the importance of moving not only Adam Szubin's nomination but these other nominations that are critical as we make sure we do what we need to, to protect this country.

I am disappointed, but as Senator KLOBUCHAR said, we will be back.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, 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. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANNUAL NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I want to chronicle for the Senate and to make a part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that nearly 5,000 people gathered this morning for the annual National Prayer Breakfast with the President, members of the Cabinet, members of the Joint Chiefs, most of the Diplomatic Corps, and a lot of the Members of Congress.

The national breakfast is sponsored by the Senate prayer group that meets on Wednesday morning and the House

prayer group that meets on Thursday morning. This year it was the House's turn to be the cochairs. We do have cochairs in the House and the Senate prayer group, one from each party. In the case of the Senate prayer group, we were ably represented, as they spoke from the podium, by Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas and Senator KAINE of Virginia. They will be the cochairmen of the breakfast next year.

It was the eighth time that President Obama has spoken. This Senator feels it was the best speech at the Prayer Breakfast I have heard President Obama give. It was one of the best speeches that this Senator, after attending Prayer Breakfasts for over three decades, has ever heard. He quoted the Scriptures from the writings of Paul which say that our faith can keep us from fear. The President illustrated that throughout so much of his remarks.

During his closing remarks, he told a story that he had heard a week or so ago, and I wish to share that story here on the Senate floor. It was about a U.S. Army sergeant whose entire unit had been captured by the Nazis during World War II. While he was in the POW camp, a Nazi colonel told the sergeant, who was the senior official: I want the names of the Jewish soldiers in this unit, and I want them to report to me. The sergeant refused.

The Nazi colonel then decided to assemble all 200 of the sergeant's troops in the POW camp in formation, with the sergeant at the head of the formation. As the colonel approached him again, obviously trying to single out and take and probably try to annihilate the Jewish-American soldiers, he again said, as all the troops were standing there in formation: Sergeant, I want to know who the Jews are. The sergeant replied: Sir, we are all Jews. The colonel then took his pistol out of the holster, cocked it, and put it to the head of the sergeant and made the same demand again. The faith of that Christian sergeant overcame his fear for he was looking out for his troops, and he repeated again: Sir, we are all Jews. The Nazis backed down in that POW camp. The Jewish soldiers were not revealed and, therefore, protected.

That was just one of the many stories that were recounted as the President gave what was an extraordinary conclusion for his last National Prayer Breakfast as President. It is an occasion that so many of us join in on every Wednesday here as we come together and put aside our partisan, regional and any other differences that we have and are unified and joined in prayer. So I thought it fitting, the National Prayer Breakfast having just concluded, that I share this story with the Senate.

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. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TAKATA AIRBAGS

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, we have had quite a running story about the maker of inflatable airbags, which are usually in the steering wheel of an automobile and also over on the passenger side. These airbags have saved countless lives. Yet what we have found is that a manufacturer named Takata from Japan has consistently had different airbags under recall. Well, we just found out yesterday that another one of the automobile manufacturers that uses Takata airbags has now had a further recall just yesterday with 2.2 million of their vehicles. Why? Because of defective airbags.

These bags are supposed to save lives, not harm and kill lives. Yet I remember the lady in Orlando who had a minor fender-bender collision in an intersection, and her air bag deployed. When the police got there, they thought there was a homicide. Her neck was lacerated, and she bled to death. There is a fireman, also near Orlando, who will never be a fireman again because he lost his right eye after the explosion of the air bag. The airbag is defectively manufactured and explodes with such force that the air bag becomes a hand grenade which explodes, and pieces of shrapnel fly into the face of the driver or the passenger.

In the case of the lady in Orlando, her jugular was slashed and she was killed. We have seen a score of these deaths around the country. There was recently another one from a defective Takata airbag in South Carolina. There are now well over 20 million vehicles that have been recalled.

I will be talking to the head of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and will be asking all of these questions about safety, such as this: Why are we having the drip, drip, drip of recalls here and recalls there? Why isn't this agency taking an aggressive approach and going after all of these inflaters?

It is expected that it is the explosive compound ammonium nitrate that becomes extremely explosive when exposed to humidity and causes the metal to shred and, therefore, go right into the very driver or the passenger it was intended to save.

This is a matter of grave concern, and now the latest news is that Honda has recalled over 2 million more vehicles nationwide. There have been over 20 million vehicles that have been recalled worldwide. We have to get to the bottom of this and get those defective airbags out of the steering wheels of those cars and replace them with safe airbags.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION BILL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I would note for Members that we have just concluded the first cloture votes on the Energy Policy Modernization Act. There has been some interesting discussion about where we are in the process and how we might find a path forward toward completion of this very important bipartisan measure—a measure that has, I think, reflected good, strong work throughout the committee process and good, strong work throughout the floor process, but we have yet more work to do. Know that this Senator, along with the ranking member on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is committed to doing just that, along with the Senators from Michigan as well as many on this side.

So I think the message to those who are wondering what is happening after that noon vote—the word is that work is continuing, and I am optimistic about the outlook for the final passage of the Energy Policy Modernization Act.

Madam 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 (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING MARLOW W. COOK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise with sadness to remark on the passing of an old friend, Kentucky's former U.S. Senator, Marlow W. Cook. Senator Cook served in this Chamber for only a single term, but his political impact in the Commonwealth of Kentucky was substantial. So was his impact on my life.

Marlow Cook gave me my first real opportunity in politics. He gave me a chance to be a State youth chairman in his successful campaign for the U.S. Senate back in 1968. He also gave me an important opportunity in government. He won his election. I came to Washington with him, and I was what they called in those days chief legislative assistant. I think the term we use now is legislative director. I worked for him for 2 years. I recall that time very, very fondly. I can tell you that over the years I remained extremely grateful for the opportunity he gave me to get started.

Marlow Cook was someone who proved that Republican success was possible in a Commonwealth at that time completely dominated by Democrats. That was no easy task when he ran for office, but he succeeded anyway. You might even say he sketched out a political blueprint for victory: launch an improbable campaign for

Jefferson County judge executive in your thirties and win, secure reelection, and then launch a bid for U.S. Senator. That is the political path Marlow Cook took, and that is the exact political path I took as well.

Some might say the similarities end there or note that we haven't agreed on every issue in the years since, but what two people ever do? It doesn't change my enduring gratitude for the opportunities Marlow Cook brought to me. It certainly doesn't change my respect for him. This is a man who enlisted in the Navy when his country called and when he was still a teenager.

Marlow Cook served his country honorably in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters in World War II. He served his country honorably in the U.S. Senate.

I should note that Marlow Cook was the first Roman Catholic elected to statewide office in Kentucky. Believe it or not, that was something of an issue back then. It is hard to imagine today.

One more thing. Marlow Webster Cook's impact was felt in the course of the Commonwealth's history in the shape of the riverfront in Louisville. He bought the Belle of Louisville, the sternwheeler that is still going up and down the Ohio River today and is a particularly big thing during the Kentucky Derby week every year.

He had a huge impact on a lot of young Kentuckians, such as myself. I knew his family well. Nancy, his now widow, and his five kids were all running around during that campaign way back then.

I want to say to Nancy and all of Marlow and Nancy's kids how much we admire him. Elaine and I are truly saddened by his loss. We are going to continue to remember this veteran, this extraordinary county official, and our United States Senator fondly. I am sure colleagues will join me in that sentiment. I ask them also to join me in sending our best to all of Marlow's family and friends.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate, on Monday, February 8, at 5 p.m., proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 360; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, last week I asked students and families to share with me their experiences with student loans and college affordability, and I want to start by sharing one of those stories. It is from a young woman named Rebeckah from my home State of Washington. When she was 18, Rebeckah signed up for student loans so she could go to college, and her parents took out what are called PLUS loans to help their daughter afford it. Rebeckah worked hard in college and graduated with her degree. But now she is facing a mountain of student debt, and that is preventing her and her partner from buying a house and starting a family. Not only that, Rebeckah found out that her parents have been taking money out of their retirement savings to pay off their PLUS loans, and they have even resorted to taking a lien out on their home to pay down the debt.

Rebeckah said when she enrolled in college, she was sure that getting a good education would pay off. But now, with all the overwhelming student debt, it feels as if she signed her family up for financial ruin.

When I hear stories like Rebeckah's, it is clear that college costs and student debt are holding families back. I consider it to be one of my most important jobs as a Senator to make sure Washington State families have a seat at the table and a voice in our Nation's Capital, and on an issue as important as this, I am going to make sure their voices are heard loud and clear here in this Congress. I am going to continue to work with my fellow Democrats on ways to make college more affordable. I am going to keep fighting to reduce the crushing burden of student debt for so many families in my home State of Washington and across the country.

Today, the yearly costs of tuition and room and board at a public 4-year institution are 5½ times what they were in the early 1980s. There are many reasons that colleges have gotten more and more expensive, but the result has been the same. It has strained the budgets of middle-class families across the country, and, in some cases, it prevents students from even applying and has forced many others to drop out before they ever earn a degree. With skyrocketing college costs, we are sending the message that college is reserved for the wealthiest few and not for middle-class families and those who want to get there.

We have all heard the numbers of student debt. Overall, Americans hold more than \$1.3 trillion in student loan debt. That is a huge number, and it is actually a little hard to wrap your head around, so let's try this: Every second that goes by, student debt in our country grows by nearly \$3,000. That is every second. And behind those numbers are people who invested in themselves by furthering their education but are now saddled with debt, preventing them from buying a home

or even starting a small business or a family.

A young man from Washington State named Alex told me his income barely covers his monthly expenses, let alone paying down his student loans. He says he feels financially stagnant because "I don't know if I will ever overcome the crippling college debt."

I am glad that Democrats have a plan to help students and families who are in the red. When more students are able to further their education, it doesn't help just them. A highly educated workforce helps our economy grow from the middle out, not from the top down, and it strengthens the workforce we will need to compete and lead the world in the 21st century economy. That is why Democrats want to give students the chance they need to attend community college tuition free.

Of course, many students and families take out student loans to help them finance higher education, but some are locked in with a high interest rate. Today, you can find offers to refinance your mortgage at 3.5 percent or your car loan for around 3.2 percent. I have heard from many borrowers who are paying an interest rate that is twice that amount, and some are paying even more.

Democrats want to make sure that borrowers can refinance their student loans at today's lower rates. We also want to hold the institutions of higher education accountable for providing a high-quality degree so students have confidence that the education they receive and pay for will get them ahead. Democrats want to increase investments in need-based aid, such as Pell grants, so students can keep up with the rising cost of college.

It has been just one week since I asked students and families to submit their stories online to us, and I want to hear from many more because I know there are so many people out there who are struggling. But I must admit, I was taken aback by the constant theme that showed up in so many of the experiences that I have seen so far. I heard story after story from people who said they felt hopeless. They feel buried under student debt, and they see no end in sight. It shouldn't have to be this way. Democrats are offering solutions, and I sincerely hope our Republican friends will join us.

For me, this isn't just another issue; this is really personal. When I was young, my dad was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Within a few short years, he couldn't work any longer, and without warning, my own family had fallen on hard times. My brothers and sisters and I—and I have six brothers and sisters—were all able to afford to go to college with the help of what we now call Pell grants, and my mom was able to get the skills she needed to get a better paying job through a worker training program at Lake Washington Vocational School. This country was there for us and never turned its back on my family.

Today, we can't turn our backs on the millions of families just like mine who need a path forward to pay back their student debt. These students want to stay in school to finish their degree even as the costs go up, and they want to one day be able to save up so their kids can afford to pursue their dreams.

It is time to make college more affordable and make sure students can graduate without the crushing burden of student debt. It is time for Democrats and Republicans to work together on solutions, and it is time to reaffirm that, in our country, earning your degree will pay off for you, your future, and the future of this country.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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. MCCAIN. 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. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in morning business and to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. GRAHAM.

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

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AND SYRIA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, not surprisingly, the talks that are commonly known as Geneva III, in an effort to stop the ongoing genocide taking place in Syria, have now been "suspended."

I quote from this morning's Washington Post: "Syrian peace talks are suspended before they even really begin."

That should surprise no one. The fact is that the situation on the ground, thanks to our total lack of a coherent strategy or even a serious effort, has resulted in Russian airstrikes, ensuring Bashar al-Assad's continued strength. Along with the Iranians, along with Hezbollah that the Iranians have brought in from Lebanon—they all have given the overwhelming majority position to Bashar Assad, who is not about to leave office with the advantage he has now obtained on the battlefield, to a large degree because of Russian airstrikes that are relentless and that have mostly targeted the Western-backed opposition to Bashar Assad's rule. Those airstrikes, according to the Washington Post, have proven sufficient to push beyond doubt any likelihood that Assad will be removed from power by the nearly 5-year-old revolt against his rule.

The gains on the ground are also calling into question whether there can be meaningful negotiations to end the conflict Assad and his allies now seem convinced they can win.

Let's go back about 4 years. Bashar Assad was about to fall. The President of the United States said that it is not a matter of whether Bashar Assad will fall, it is a matter of when. All the momentum was on their side.

At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, the Secretary of Defense—then Leon Panetta—said that the departure of Bashar Assad was "inevitable." And then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said it was inevitable that Bashar Assad will leave.

So a policy which was doomed to failure—rejecting a no-fly zone, rejecting robust training and equipping of those who were seeking to stop the slaughter—has now resulted in what many now view as an international crisis; that is, the refugee problem where millions of refugees are flowing into European countries not just from Syria but primarily from Syria, Iraq, and other countries as far away as Afghanistan. So everyone—especially our European friends—is moaning, and their hearts go out and they are trying to accommodate this.

This is not the cause of the problem; this is the result of a failure of American leadership, a feckless American leadership, and a Secretary of State—this Geneva Convention is not the first or the second but the third time—this is the third time our Secretary of State has convened a whole bunch of people in five-star hotels in Geneva, where, of course, the result has been nonexistent because the facts on the ground favor Bashar Assad, the Russians, and Hezbollah.

So what has happened? Now, for the first time since 1973, when Anwar Sadat threw the Russians out of Egypt, the Russians now have a major role to play in the Middle East. They now have protected their base at Latakia. They now are conducting airstrikes in an indiscriminate fashion against—guess who—not ISIS but against the moderates who were fighting to overthrow Bashar Assad, while our Secretary of State calls him up, has conversations with him, begs them to start peace talks, et cetera. And it goes on.

I think sometimes we all get a little numb, but we shouldn't be numb. We shouldn't be numb to 250,000 killed and slaughtered, chemical attacks that indiscriminately kill men, women, and children. These Russian airstrikes are pervasive in the areas where the moderate opposition exists, and they are using what we call dumb bombs—not the precision bombs—slaughtering hundreds of innocent men, women, and children. Places are surrounded where people are starving to death, and our Secretary of State calls for another meeting in Geneva. It is absolutely remarkable.

I wish to point out again that according to the Washington Post story, Secretary of State John F. Kerry scrambled to rearrange his Thursday schedule after de Mistura—that is the U.N. guy—decided to delay the talks. The article states:

"The continued assault by Syrian regime forces—enabled by Russian airstrikes—against opposition-held areas, as well as regime and allied militias' continued besiegement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, have clearly signaled the intention to seek a military solution rather than enable a political one." . . .

Kerry repeated demands made by the opposition groups as preconditions for negotiations. . . . [but] both the opposition and human rights organizations have cited an increase in Russian bombing over the past several days that they said has targeted civilian areas, including camps for displaced persons in the western part of the country.

Russia maintains that it is only bombing "terrorists," but its definition of that word includes parts of the opposition that has been fighting a civil war against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for more than four years, whose representatives are among those on the opposition negotiating team in Geneva.

How can we expect them to negotiate while the Russian airstrikes are intensified? How can we possibly expect something positive to happen, when clearly the momentum and the strength is on the side of the Russians, the Iranians, and Bashar Assad?

Friends, this is another chapter in American history of humiliation and a failure of leadership. Of course, all of that is no better epitomized and symbolized than by what happened when the Iranians captured two American vessels that happened to stray into their territorial waters. Everybody should know that when a ship goes into another country's territorial waters, the first thing to be done is to go out and guide them out of it. It is against international law to take them at gunpoint all over the world but particularly—all over the Middle East is the picture of American servicemen and one woman on their knees with Iranian Revolutionary Guards holding their automatic weapons on them. This is an incredible act of arrogance and a humiliation for our American sailors.

What is the most aggravating is the response by the administration after this totally unlawful action and humiliation of American servicemen and sailors. The response by the administration was—and I am not making this up—White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said that the sailors were offered "the proper courtesy that you would expect." Being held at gunpoint on their knees with their hands behind their neck is, in the words of the White House Press Secretary, "the proper courtesy that you would expect."

The Secretary of State, John Kerry, offered his "gratitude to Iranian authorities for their cooperation in swiftly resolving this matter." That is the American Secretary of State after a gross violation of international law. Our American servicemen are put on their knees by a bunch of two-bit Iranians.

Vice President JOE BIDEN described the incident as "standard nautical practice." The Vice President of the United States says that when you put Americans on their knees and point

weapons at them with evil intention, that is standard nautical practice. What planet has the Vice President of the United States been on?

Now, to cap it all off, this week the Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei pinned the Order of Fat'h Medal to the chests of those who mistreated and humiliated American personnel. These people were given awards and medals by the Ayatollah Khamenei. The Obama administration has still failed to condemn Iran's behavior for what it was, a violation of international law and centuries of maritime tradition. According to a recent article in the *Navy Times*, legal experts all agree that this hostile incident represents a gross violation of international law.

So I ask my friend from South Carolina: Is there any explanation that could possibly be understood about this act, a violation of international law and the humiliation of American servicemembers? There is only one reason; that is, they don't want to upset the Iranians. They don't want to disturb the \$100 billion or so that is going to the Iranians as we speak while they buy weapons and toys all over Europe.

So here we have now seen American service personnel put on their knees with guns to their heads, and the most important people in our government praised the Iranians for their actions. I would ask my friend, how else could you explain—not passivity, but—the absolute endorsement by the Vice President of the United States and the Secretary of State for this kind of humiliating behavior?

Mr. GRAHAM. I say to Senator McCain, I think it is a disconnection from reality—trying to shape a reality that does not exist.

Can you imagine your good friend Ronald Reagan, if he had been President, what the Iranians would have done?

Mr. McCain. Could I remind our colleague that some of our colleagues recall that the day Ronald Reagan was sworn in as President of the United States, the hostages that were being held from our Embassy in Iran came home.

Mr. GRAHAM. This is about lack of respect for the Obama administration, John Kerry, and everybody else in our government. The Iranians did this, Senator McCain, I think for one reason—to show the region they are not intimidated by the United States.

Mr. McCain. Or that they can intimidate the United States—

Mr. GRAHAM. Right, that they can test our resolve. They do it all the time. They fired two missile tests in violation of existing U.N. resolutions. The Obama administration did nothing about it. They captured two boats. These are lightly armored naval vessels with two 50-caliber machine guns. One of them became disabled and they drifted into Iranian waters. The Iranians reacted as if it was some kind of invasion by America. They humiliated these sailors.

Instead of standing up for our naval personnel, basically we thanked the Iranians for being so nice to people that they captured at gunpoint in violation of international law, but it goes to a deeper point. The Iranians are letting everybody in the region know they are not changing their behavior with this nuclear deal: Don't mistake us having a nuclear agreement with a behavior change.

The Ayatollah and his henchmen are still in charge. They are not part of a family of nations. Since the deal has been signed, they fired missiles in violation of international resolutions, they are on the ground helping the "Butcher of Damascus." Iranians are still the largest state sponsor of terrorism, and this is just the cherry on top of all that misbehavior.

One thing I do want to talk about—and I will get your view of this because you are so knowledgeable. Syria has literally held on, and 250,000 people have been slaughtered in Syria by Bashar Assad and his regime. Those people who took to the streets during the Arab Spring in Damascus were from all different backgrounds and different sects. They wanted to live in a country not run by Assad in such a brutal fashion. His response to their plea for better transparency, democracy, and economic opportunity was literally to shoot them down.

Now we have an all-out war in Syria. The radical Islamic groups have moved into Syria. The caliphate headquarters of ISIL is in Syria. It has been the biggest misjudgment since Munich by this administration. They had Assad on the ropes 3 or 4 years ago and they didn't act, and what you see today is a result of a failure to act.

What I find astonishing is that the Syrian people, who are being slaughtered by the thousands, are being asked by the U.S. Government to sit down with Assad and negotiate an end to this war. The Russians and Iranians are all in for Bashar Assad. The people we have trained to replace Assad have been killed by the Russian President. Our President hasn't lifted a finger. Now we have a Secretary of State basically browbeating the Syrian opposition to go to Geneva and enter into peace talks with Bashar Assad, who is in full control of his part of Syria. I can't believe we would do this to the Syrian people. The Syrian opposition called Senator McCain—this says a lot about you, my friend. They were calling Senator McCain to pass on a message: You have been our best friend. We are not going to sit down and talk with Assad until the U.N. resolutions calling for his removal have been honored.

Our government wants a deal in Syria—regardless of the quality of it—to say they stopped the war on their watch. They are now asking the Syrian people basically to kowtow to the man who has killed their families.

This deal with Iran is a nightmare for the region. You give the Iranian Ayatollah a pathway to a bomb, even if

he doesn't cheat, a missile to deliver the bomb, and money to pay for it all. Now they want to take the same negotiating team into Syria and lock into place Bashar Assad's regime, which has slaughtered the Syrian people, give the Russians and Iranians a foothold in Damascus through negotiations that they could never have dreamed of a year ago.

I ask Senator McCain, what do you think the consequence would be of any peace agreement as long as the Russians and Iranians are supporting Assad and we are indifferent to the Syrian opposition in terms of their military needs?

Mr. McCain. I think it is very possible that the Secretary of State will call another gathering in Geneva. After all, this is only the third. He has another year, and maybe we will have Geneva IV and V.

Mr. GRAHAM. What leverage do we have over Assad?

Mr. McCain. That is the point. There is no leverage, I say to my colleague. Meanwhile, while the Secretary of State is pressuring the Free Syria forces and threatening to cut off assistance to them, Russia is escalating their bombing campaign and continues the slaughter of innocent people. Meanwhile, there are also enclaves around Aleppo and other places where people are literally starving to death—literally starving to death. There are pictures, my friends, on the Internet, if you would like to see it.

What does our Secretary of State do? He calls Lavrov. He calls Lavrov and complains. Lavrov, of course—it would be very interesting to know what is going through Mr. Lavrov's mind—but it is very clear that the Secretary of State is a supplicant, and this incredibly weak economy, with a brutal dictator in charge, is now achieving goals that have been age-old ambitions of the Russians. They are now playing a major role in the Middle East.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask Senator McCain, may I read to you an exchange?

This is John Kerry 2 days ago:

"[T]here will be a ceasefire," Kerry predicted Tuesday in Rome. "We expect a ceasefire. And we expect an adherence to the ceasefire. And we expect full humanitarian access."

Two days later, the Russian bombing hasn't stopped and thousands of Syrians remain starving.

Not only has the Russian bombing continued, Putin has sent in advanced fighter jets to do the bombing.

Kerry said he was assured by the Russian counterpart [Lavrov] the Russians would stop bombing.

When asked, Lavrov said, "Russia's strikes will not cease. . . . I don't see why these air strikes should be stopped."

Whom is he talking to? The Russians are telling John Kerry to his face: We are going to keep bombing. John Kerry keeps telling the world they are going to stop bombing. In the meantime, Syrians are being slaughtered and starved

to death and we are fiddling while Syria burns.

Mr. MCCAIN. I want to mention one other aspect of this with my colleague, and that is the refugee issue.

It is surprising to many people in the world, this flood of millions of refugees, not just from Iraq and Syria but Iraq and even as far away as Afghanistan. Our European friends have treated it like maybe it was an earthquake or flood or natural disaster. It was not a natural disaster. It was a natural occurrence when the situation became so terrible that people believed they couldn't stay and live where they were.

Why did that happen? Because we watched the Russians, Bashar Assad, Hezbollah, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—we watched them commit all of this slaughter in Syria. No one can live in Syria today without fear for their very lives, unless they happen to be one of Bashar Assad's allies.

So now we have this huge refugee immigration crisis, which sooner or later we are going to have to be involved in, in some way or another, and it is a result of the failed policies of this President of the United States.

This President sat by and watched the chemical weapons use. This President refused to keep a sustaining force in Iraq. This President, when asked by his Secretary of State, his Secretary of Defense, and the head of the CIA to provide a safe zone turned it down. I still say to my colleague—and I would be interested in his views—that we still could establish a safe zone in Syria, where these people could go, we could protect them, and they wouldn't have to leave and flood Europe and eventually try to come to the United States of America.

That would be the best thing we could do in the short term, and this President refuses to do it.

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, let's get a little closer to the region. JOHN MCCAIN and LINDSEY GRAHAM have been saying for 3 years now that if we don't end the war in Syria—which means requiring the Islamic State, or ISIL, to be destroyed with a ground component and not by the air alone—we are going to get hit here at home and a Paris-style attack is coming our way. This strategy to destroy ISIL will never work. President Obama is trying to pass it on to the next the President. We have been begging the President to change his strategy in Iraq and Syria before we get hit here at home.

Another casualty of the war in Syria is the neighborhood itself. There are more Syrian children going to primary schools in Lebanon than Lebanese children. Our friends in Lebanon are being overrun by Syrian refugees because of the Hell-on-Earth nature of Syria.

But one of our best allies in the entire world is the King of Jordan. Let me tell you what he has experienced as a result of us as a nation allowing Syria to fall completely apart. This was yesterday:

The leader of a key U.S. ally in the Middle East warned Tuesday that his country [Jordan] is so packed with Syrian refugees, many with ties to the Islamic State terror group, that his nation has reached a "boiling point."

Sooner or later, I think, the dam is going to burst.

The bottom line is I have been saying this for 2 years now, along with Senator MCCAIN: If you don't end this war in Syria, one of the victims is going to be the King of Jordan. And the King of Jordan says that our welcoming nature has to come to an end.

Here is the lay of the land. Jordan cannot take any more. Lebanon is overrun. The Europeans are pushing back, and you are going to create a process where people in Syria have no place to go unless we help them. They are going to be slaughtered. They are in between ISIL and Assad. What we are suggesting is to create a safe haven inside of Syria where they can go without being killed, raped, and murdered so they don't have to go to Lebanon, Jordan, Europe or the United States.

If John Kerry and Barack Obama do not change their approach to Syria, Syria is going to be the catalyst for a meltdown in the Middle East. Their approach is going to allow the Iranians to control Damascus. Any deal done in Geneva under these circumstances is going to have one certain outcome: The Russians and the Iranians are going to win, and the Syrian people are going to lose. If we don't destroy the caliphate with a ground component soon—not just from the air—we are going to get hit here at home. The center of the caliphate is in Syria. If we don't bring this war to an end soon by getting rid of ISIL and Assad—which would require both to end the war—Lebanon and Jordan are going to fall.

So to the Obama administration, when you were Senators, you really took it to President Bush. He made his fair share of mistakes, but at least he corrected them. Senator Obama and Senator Kerry both opposed the surge in Iraq.

On President Obama's watch, he was handed an Iraq that was becoming secure and that was on a glidepath to stability, and he chose to withdraw all of our troops—against sound military advice—to fulfill a political promise. Three years ago, at the urging of Senator MCCAIN and myself, we had Bashar al-Assad on the ropes. His entire national security team advised President Obama to arm the Free Syrian Army while they were intact. That would have been the end of Assad, and Syria would be in the process of healing itself. But President Obama said no to his entire national security team. He drew a redline against Assad a couple of years ago and said: If you use chemical weapons, I will act. Assad used chemical weapons, and nothing of consequence happened. Assad is still in power. He will be in power when Obama leaves.

In the meantime, Russia has introduced itself in the Middle East unlike at any time since the early 1970s.

Now the Iranians are on the ground, fully behind Assad. The balance of power has shifted. Assad is in a good place. The Syrian people are in a lousy, terrible, horrible place. John Kerry and Barack Obama's foreign policy is in free fall.

I will make a prediction—and I hope I am wrong—that if they don't change their policies toward Syria, the region is going to have an imbalance that we have never seen in our lifetime. An attack against this homeland is coming. It is coming from Syria. It is being planned as I speak. We didn't know exactly what they were trying to do before 9/11, but we were worried that we were going to get attacked by Al Qaeda.

I can tell you exactly where the attack is coming from. It is coming from Raqqa, Syria. It is being planned while I speak. Every day the caliphate is allowed to exist is another day of danger and peril for the United States.

So if President Obama and John Kerry do not change their policies to destroy the caliphate sooner rather than later, we will be hit here at home. If we don't get Syria in a better spot soon, Jordan and Lebanon are going to be victims of this war.

To Senator MCCAIN, I just wish to end with that thought.

Mr. MCCAIN. Let me make a couple of additional points and then we will yield the floor.

To go back, these refugees are putting a strain on Europe that may basically lead to the dissolution of the European Union. You cannot have so many thousands—tens of thousands or more people—flood into a country with which they are totally unfamiliar without there being some problems there. So the very fabric of the EU may be tested here.

But one of the things I want to mention to my friend is that the apologists for the Obama Administration have constantly and persistently pursued a dishonest line of interpretation of history, and that is that after the surge was won—and it is a fact—at great sacrifice, at enormous sacrifice we had Iraq stable. The attacks were down. The Shiite militias were repressed. The battle of Fallujah had been won at great cost. There was a bright future that could lie ahead for Iraq, but it required a continuing American presence. That was an absolute necessity. It was the same reason why we didn't leave Korea after the Korean war, the same reason why we haven't left Bosnia, and the same reason why we didn't leave Germany or Japan.

But the apologists in the liberal media—and we all know who they are—are saying: Oh, they couldn't stay because they didn't have a status of forces agreement through the Iraqi Parliament and it couldn't be done. That absolutely made it impossible for us to stay.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may, could I interject?

Mr. MCCAIN. Yes.

Mr. GRAHAM. We couldn't have troops on the ground because Iraqis said no. Do we have troops on the ground today, I ask Senator MCCAIN?

Mr. MCCAIN. That is the point. Now we have at least 3,500 troops on the ground in Iraq.

Mr. GRAHAM. Where is the Parliament?

Mr. MCCAIN. We don't have a status of forces agreement. Their Parliament has not endorsed it. Where are our liberal friends on the other side? Aren't they concerned that there isn't a status of forces agreement and we continue to incrementally—a classic example of mission creep—gradually increase our presence more and more.

Actually—and I don't use this line very often but these apologists, particularly in the liberal media, the so-called commentators—they are lying. They are lying when they say that we couldn't keep a sustaining force there. We could, and we could have done it without the approval of their Parliament, including the fact that we have troops in a number of other countries where their Parliaments haven't approved a specific status of forces agreement. So it is really aggravating.

But the reason why they tell this lie is because if it were really a fact that at great sacrifice we had stabilized Iraq and it had a bright future at that time, their calls for a complete withdrawal and the President's announcement that the last combat soldier had left Iraq—remember that? Remember that one of his underlings said: We are leaving behind the most stable, prosperous, democratic Iraq in history. That was the statement. I think it was Blinken or one of those guys. It was great.

We have gotten everybody out of Iraq, just as the President promised when he ran for President of the United States. But leading from behind doesn't work. Just because you leave a conflict, that does not mean the conflict is over.

Again, this morning, they are trying to make that same mistake in Afghanistan, although I pray they have learned that they cannot go to what the President originally announced—that they would go to an embassy specific force of about 1,000. The question is how many and what their missions will be.

So I think it is important to emphasize that this did not have to happen. If we had kept that stabilizing force behind, you would never have had Baghdadi break off from Al Qaeda and move to Syria and seeing the things we are seeing today.

I am afraid my friend from South Carolina is right. In fact, I know he is right. There will be further attacks on the United States of America and Europe because it is inevitable. When Mr. Baghdadi controls a large piece of geography from which he can train, equip, motivate, and send people out to commit acts of terror, that will happen, and the responsibility will lay at the doorstep of Barack Obama and his minions.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I could, just to wrap this up, I wish we were wrong. When the President decided to withdraw all troops from Iraq against sound military advice, we cautioned—literally begged—the President and the Vice President. We went to Baghdad itself to try to help with this problem. I remember saying that I think all hell will break loose because this is so irresponsible. Iraq is in a good spot, but if we leave now, it will all fall apart. I hope I am wrong. Well, we weren't wrong.

When the Syrian people took to the streets to demand more freedom and our response was to ignore their plea, when the people of Iran went to the streets and the Ayatollah shot them down and our President said that he didn't want to discuss negotiations with the regime, when Assad had his back to the wall and President Obama declined to take good advice to arm the Free Syrian Army and the people of Syria to get rid of their dictator, all the things that Senator MCCAIN and I have predicted have come true.

The point of being here today is that the worst is yet to come and, God, I hope I am wrong because this is what I think is going to happen. I think there is going to be an attack on our country that is being planned as I speak, coming from Syria. If we went on the ground in the region—not 100,000 U.S. troops but mostly people from the region with some of us—we could destroy the caliphate and we could disrupt their plans against our homeland, but we are not doing that.

If we don't change our strategy regarding Syria, we are going to lose one of the best allies America has ever had, and that is the Kingdom of Jordan, because it is being overrun by refugees. The whole seam of the Middle East is splitting wide open.

I will say this. Everybody makes mistakes—Bush, LINDSEY GRAHAM, and JOHN MCCAIN. The key is to adjust. The problem I have with this administration is that they seem unable and unwilling to adjust. If they don't change their strategy, we are all going to regret it. As bad as it is today, the worst is yet to come.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I just add one other point to my friend from South Carolina?

The President is very good at setting up straw men. He says that we only have two choices—to send in a couple of hundred thousand troops or to do nothing. Neither LINDSEY GRAHAM or I or any smart person I know are advocating that.

What we are advocating is about a 10,000 American force providing the capabilities of ISR training, forward air controllers and others, with a large contingent of Arab countries that would then move to Raqqa on the ground with the use of American air power.

Please do not be fooled by this constant barrage of untruths that are being said about those of us that we

want to send in hundreds of thousands. We do not. This has to be an Arab coalition with the United States a small part of it, and, by the way, have them pay for it as well. With the proper American leadership and commitment and credibility, which is totally absent now in the region, that could be done. Otherwise, we will fight them there or we will fight them here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The senior Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed in morning business.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I had planned to be in the Senate Judiciary Committee today, debating and pushing for passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA. Unfortunately, the markup was postponed. I wish it had not been. So I hope next week we can make progress on this important bill. We have a need for this legislation, and we also need the money for it. Senator SHAHEEN has an emergency supplemental appropriations bill. These are actually both urgent matters.

States such as mine, Vermont, and our neighboring State of New Hampshire have been deeply affected by this wave of addiction. The media has covered this very personal and ravaging epidemic as never before. We have seen a transformation in how we talk about this issue and the need for solutions. It used to be that if you had a drug problem, they would bring in the police to straighten it out. We have removed the stigma of drug addiction, but we need more than talk. I have visited many of these communities. They are devastated by this epidemic and need resources for prevention and treatment. It is time for Congress to act.

For years I have been convening field hearings and sitting at kitchen tables, listening to Vermonters discuss innovative approaches to confront drug abuse and related crimes. I have also sat at kitchen tables and listened to tragic stories about a member of the family who had been hit with opioid addiction. What I have heard in the meetings I have had with the police, doctors, family members, faith community, and educators is that we cannot arrest or jail our way out of this problem. We have lost the war on drugs—if we were ever winning it—because we relied primarily on unnecessarily harsh sentencing laws.

I spent 8 years in law enforcement, and I know that law enforcement practices will always play an important role. That is why I have worked to secure funding for State-led, anti-heroin task forces. But if we want to find lasting solutions to these problems, we have to identify and support effective

prevention, treatment, and recovery programs. CARA does just that. This legislation would support innovative, evidence-based solutions—best practices that are already showing great progress in States like mine.

We need to do all we can to prevent and treat the abuse of prescription opioids. I have pushed for years to have the FDA promote safer alternatives to powerful prescription pain killers and to remove from the market the older, less safe drugs. The FDA's announcement to expand access to abuse-deterrent formulations of these powerful drugs is a step in the right direction in response to my concerns, but the FDA can and must do more.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the *RECORD* the April 28, 2014, Leahy-Blumenthal letter to the FDA Commissioner.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, April 28, 2014.

Hon. MARGARET A. HAMBURG,
Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration,
Silver Spring, MD.

DEAR COMMISSIONER HAMBURG: We are writing to urge the expedited review of New Drug Applications for abuse-deterrent formulations of single-entity hydrocodone products. Zohydro ER was the first pure hydrocodone product to receive FDA market approval. The drug was approved despite lacking any abuse-deterrent properties and over strong objections from the FDA's own independent advisory committee. We share the concerns of the many governors and state attorneys general who believe this powerful drug is all but certain to exacerbate our nation's addiction to opioid analgesics, which results in tens of thousands of overdose deaths each year.

Given their potency and ease of abuse, we have little doubt that pure opioid products may lead more Americans to addiction, some even to heroin. The FDA has already recognized the heightened risks of overdose and death with Zohydro ER, even at recommended doses. Drug developers continue to seek regulatory approval for other easy to abuse opioids, such as Moxduo IR. To the extent that pure opioid products fill a necessary niche in responsible pain management practices, the FDA must now take all available measures to ensure that patients are soon provided safer alternatives. This process begins by prioritizing review of abuse-deterrent formulations. Such formulations are much more difficult to crush or dissolve, two preferred methods of abuse.

As safer, abuse-deterrent opioids are approved, the FDA should act swiftly to remove any older, less safe versions. In the past, it has taken up to three years for the FDA to ban products that lack abuse-deterrent properties when a safer equivalent exists. Americans should not have to wait this long with Zohydro ER.

We also request that the FDA brief our staff on your plans to monitor the use of Zohydro ER, including what metrics will be used to potentially reevaluate its status as an approved drug if widespread problems develop. We also ask that you share your planned efforts to curb prescription drug abuse generally, including the development and approval of effective non-opioid painkillers that may finally break the cycle of opioid addiction. Each year, the opioid epidemic seeps into more communities and

takes more lives. We are eager to learn how we can assist the FDA to finally get ahead of this scourge.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
U.S. Senator.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. LEAHY. I am also concerned that rural communities are in desperate need of the lifesaving drug naloxone so that opioid overdoses can be stopped. I have heard from law enforcement officers and grateful families what a miracle this drug can be, so we need to make sure we have it supplied where it can literally save lives. I have had police officers tell me that they arrived at a scene with an overdose, and because they had that with them, they saved the life of the person. If they had not had it, the person would have been dead by the time the ambulance arrived.

In Vermont, we have seen a 65 percent increase in the number of Vermonters getting treatment for their addiction over the past 2 years. This is encouraging progress and reflects the fact that our Governor and also State legislators of both parties have stepped up. But we know that there are hundreds more who are on waiting lists, and patients in the very rural corners of my State travel hours just to get their medication. We need to do more about this real threat to our communities.

I am very proud to cosponsor Senator SHAHEEN's emergency supplemental appropriations bill. I want to be able to fund additional public health outreach, treatment, recovery, and law enforcement efforts. We have passed much larger emergency supplemental bills to address swine flu and Ebola. We passed huge supplemental bills on Ebola when we did not have a single case of Ebola originate here in the United States. We were worried about it coming in, but it did not originate here. But here, we have tens of thousands in the Presiding Officer's State, in my State, and in every other State. We have to take the health epidemic already in our communities just as seriously as we did those diseases that did not originate on our shores.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY and Mr. FRANKEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2506 are printed in today's *RECORD* under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, this is the first week of February, and a new month brings a new "Waste of the Week" speech from the Senator from Indiana. In preparing for this, we learned another disturbing fact about our economy, and that is that the United States has hit yet another new

mark. Our national debt now exceeds \$19 trillion.

It wasn't that long ago that I was standing on this floor and talking about the fact that we are approaching \$11 trillion of debt, and in just a few years that has accelerated in a most dramatic way. Now it has reached \$19 trillion. Obviously, it is having and it is going to have a significant impact on the future of this country and our economic growth. In fact, the Bureau of Economic Analysis said that our Nation's gross domestic product—the measure of our Nation's economic activity—grew a very anemic 0.7 percent in the last quarter of 2015. We simply cannot sustain our economy and grow and provide economic opportunity for Americans and jobs for Americans at a growth rate of 0.7 percent. In fact, the growth rate on the average is now about 2 percent. We can't even keep our heads above water in terms of providing employment opportunities for people if we don't grow at a much faster pace, particularly following one of deepest and most damaging recessions we have ever had.

Clearly there are issues that need to be addressed, issues that need to be talked about, and actions that need to be taken that put us on a better path to growth. Not having come up with the ability to address our long-term debt in any kind of a macro sense after many opportunities over the years and many efforts—some of them bipartisan and all of them denied by the President of the United States in terms of going forward for "political reasons"—I have shifted my talk to, say, at least let's try to stop spending money that falls in the category of waste, fraud, and abuse.

I have documented over the last year or so well over \$130 billion of documented waste, fraud, and abuse. This isn't just conjuring up some story or picking up stories out of a newspaper; these are documented examples by independent agencies of the Federal Government that examine our spending and come up with ways in which they can point out that the spending is not necessary and that these funds can be used for much better purposes, the best purpose of which would be to not increase our national debt in paying for waste and not demanding ever-more tax increases from our constituents to help pay for waste.

This week I am going to highlight something that wastes taxpayers' money and literally wastes space, warehouse space. The Department of Homeland Security owns or leases a number of warehouses around the country. They need this because they need to have in place the equipment that is necessary to address a disaster. Whether it is a natural or manmade disaster or whether it is a terrorist attack—for whatever reason, they need a number of these warehouses. They either buy or lease these warehouses to store this equipment that is needed for emergency situations.

In 2013 the Department of Homeland Security spent \$60 million to own or lease a total of 1,628 warehouses that, when added together, occupy 6.3 million square feet. That is a lot of leased space. That is a lot of space to own or lease to store equipment. That is the size of 110 football fields.

No one is questioning the need to be prepared for disasters or the need for warehouse space in different locations around the country, but, as is the case with so many government agencies, in the use of taxpayer dollars, we need to oversee and make sure the money is being spent in an efficient and effective way.

Thank goodness for these inspectors general. Without them, we would not be able to determine and find out what is going on at these various agencies regarding the handling of taxpayer money.

The latest report from the DHS inspector general said that there are some warehouses that are ripe for elimination, which would save taxpayers about \$9.7 million over a 10-year period of time. The inspector general said that the first of these buildings holds primarily a bunch of broken chairs—unused furniture. It is storage space for paperwork that is no longer necessary—and indicated that the DHS leases this warehouse in Northern Virginia for \$934,000 a year. I wish I owned that warehouse. I would be prohibited under the ethics code from doing that, but that is a pretty good deal. You build a warehouse and you lease it to DHS and charge them \$934,000 a year, and it is filled with equipment that is either broken or needs to be thrown out. In a macro sense, it kind of reminds me of my garage. I started thinking, well, there is a bunch of broken stuff in there sitting around on a shelf. Why don't I just get rid of it? Then I would have the space to store something that is needed.

I guess what the Inspector General is saying is, look, this stuff looks like a bunch of broken chairs and stuff we don't need, so why don't we get rid of it and save the taxpayers some money? Over the next decade, this could save the taxpayers a lot of money.

Let me show another picture. DHS also leases a 6,500-square-foot warehouse in Northern California. That is only \$74,000 of taxpayers' money on an annual basis. The warehouse is virtually empty. Maybe they have a plan to put something in there, but it is sitting there empty, and it is costing the taxpayers \$74,000.

The IG said: There are some old computers there which we don't use anymore. We bought new ones. There is a lot of broken equipment in there. There is old office furniture, and there are some books.

Again, it sounds a little bit like my garage on a macro basis. Why do we pay over \$70,000 to lease this warehouse when that is what it contains? I mean, let's throw it out.

These are just a few of the items the IG found. Clearly, though, it is an ex-

ample of an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars, and it can add up to some significant numbers. Those numbers, as I have been posting here over the last year or so, are now totaling \$130,146,746,016. It is a waste of a lot of money, and it is a waste that needn't take place.

I am going to keep coming down here week after week highlighting to my colleagues that we can do a better job of oversight, we can do a better job of running this government, and we can do a better job for the taxpayers, who are working hard to earn money that is taxed by Uncle Sam. Some of it is wasted or spent through fraud or abuse.

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. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about our relations with Iran and the enforcement of the U.S.-Iran—the international nuclear deal.

Let me first start with a few observations to reinforce an important point: that Iran is neither our friend nor our ally. Just last Wednesday, as the international community marked the 71st anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz as part of UNESCO's Holocaust Remembrance Day, when countries from around the world came together in solemn remembrance of the Shoah, united in a shared commitment that the atrocities of the Holocaust must never happen again, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, issued a very different proclamation. It came in the form of a video uploaded to his official Web site in which the narrator condemns the nations of the world for supporting Israel and questions the legitimacy and magnitude of the Holocaust.

Just a few days later, the Supreme Leader of Iran awarded medals to the members of the Revolutionary Guard Corps who detained American sailors last month under very dubious circumstances. The Iranian Supreme Leader, eager to use this incident for his own propaganda purposes, called them Medals of Conquest.

These two actions are despicable and not the sign of a nation ready to rejoin the international community. These actions by Iran's Supreme Leader are just the most recent in a series of provocations and reminders that the Iranian regime is neither America's ally nor friend.

A nation such as Iran that continues to suppress dissent, promotes terrorism on its regional neighbors, and blatantly disregards international law and

norms, is a destabilizing force, a revolutionary regime not to be trusted. It is precisely for this reason—because we are deeply distrustful of Iran and its intentions—that we have to come together to rigorously, aggressively enforce the terms of the nuclear deal with Iran and push back on its bad behavior, from its support for terrorism, to its human rights abuses, to its illegal ballistic missile tests.

Today I wanted to focus on one of the most vital elements of the nuclear deal—the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the nuclear deal with Iran, which is the dramatic increase in access and surveillance that the International Atomic Energy Agency, or the IAEA, has gained through this agreement.

After implementation day was reached, one of the significant consequences of that milestone is not just that Iran has taken dramatic action to push back its own nuclear trajectory but that it has granted unprecedented access to the world's nuclear watchdog agency to monitor its compliance with the deal. As Congress, the administration, and the international community now focus on enforcing the terms of the JCPOA, it is worth taking a much deeper look at what exactly makes this IAEA access so unprecedented and so important to maintain.

I recently visited the headquarters of the IAEA in Vienna, Austria, with a delegation of eight Senators. This agency has a huge amount riding on its ability to successfully detect any Iranian cheating under this deal. It is no understatement to say that the very credibility of the IAEA is on the line as it monitors, inspects, and verifies the status of Iran's nuclear program—not just for a week, a month, or a year, but for decades into the future. I was pleased and reassured to see that they are using some of the very innovative inspection techniques developed at America's own National Laboratories. These are just a few of the topics I want to touch on in the minutes ahead.

The nuclear deal reached with Iran required that they provide the IAEA with around-the-clock, 24/7 access to monitor Iran's entire nuclear fuel cycle. What is a nuclear fuel cycle? It is all the different steps required to go from mining the raw ore to actually producing highly enriched uranium—from uranium mines, uranium mills, centrifuge production workshops, to every known and declared uranium enrichment site connected to Iran's nuclear program.

Simply put, before this agreement—before the JCPOA—Iran could have converted its uranium or its plutonium into material useful for a nuclear weapon. On implementation day, Iran disabled its Arak reactor. They filled the core of that reactor with concrete, shutting off the so-called plutonium pathway to a nuclear weapon.

Today I will focus on the uranium pathway of the commercial nuclear fuel cycle, which includes the four

parts I just mentioned—mills, mines, conversion facilities, and enrichment facilities. These different components of their entire fuel cycle are scattered across the nation of Iran, as you can see in the graphic to my right.

The fuel cycle begins at uranium mines where hundreds of tons of dirt, rocks, and ore which contain tiny, trace amounts of uranium—typically just 0.1 percent—are dug up, blasted into smaller pieces, dumped into huge trucks, and then transported to the next stage, uranium mills.

Two mills exist in Iran near Gachin and Saghand. Under the JCPOA, the IAEA will maintain continuous access to these mills. In these uranium mills, the rocks retrieved from mines are then ground into dust from which uranium is extracted. This raw uranium ore concentrate is then transported—again, under the supervision of the IAEA—to a uranium conversion facility at Isfahan, where it is converted into uranium hexafluoride gas, or UF-6.

The final and most critical step of the fuel cycle takes place at so-called enrichment facilities where rapidly spinning centrifuges enrich uranium hexafluoride to the point where it can be used for research and development, industrial purposes, or, if enriched to a very high level as fissile material, it can be used for a nuclear weapon.

Critically, the nuclear deal gives the IAEA access to inspect and oversee every one of these stages, not just enrichment facilities, as other deals with other countries previously required. If the JCPOA only required the Iranians to give nuclear inspectors access to their enrichment facilities, Tehran could easily continue to mine, meld, convert, and then quite likely enrich uranium undetected elsewhere, such as undeclared secret facilities. That is why it is so important that mills, mines, and the whole rest of the fuel cycle are subject to regular inspections and continuous oversight. Access to the entire fuel cycle means that the IAEA—and thus the world—will know if Iran tries to move any nuclear material to undeclared covert facilities.

One of the biggest advances in this new, continuous monitoring approach is a whole new series of inspection techniques and technologies. It is not enough for nuclear inspectors themselves to be able to access every step of the fuel cycle because it is impossible for even the best inspectors to be physically present everywhere all of the time in a nuclear fuel cycle system as complex as Iran's. That is why effective oversight and enforcement demands that the IAEA be able to monitor enrichment efforts remotely and constantly. That level of monitoring is provided by the continuous real-time monitoring of all of Iran's declared nuclear facilities.

Here is one of the ways that works. The small device to my right here is an IAEA monitoring device—known as an online enrichment monitor, or an

OLEM—which is installed at the Natanz fuel enrichment plant in Iran. The pipe labeled “A” is a processing pipe that transports gaseous uranium hexafluoride gas from cascades of spinning centrifuges. These centrifuges are the devices that take the uranium previously mined from the ground and then milled to be transformed or enriched into uranium possibly useful for either civilian or military purposes.

Inside the box at the bottom right, this “B,” is a gamma ray detector which measures the amount of uranium hexafluoride gas flowing through the centrifuge at key measurement points. These gamma ray detectors send continuous, real-time, 24/7 information to the IAEA so it can make sure that Iran's uranium enrichment levels remain at or below the agreed-upon 3.67 percent—dramatically lower than the 90 percent enrichment threshold required for fissile material useable for a weapon.

In addition to these gamma ray detectors, pressure and temperature sensors continuously monitor the present quantities of gaseous uranium hexafluoride gas. Measurements from these sensors, combined with data from the gamma ray detectors, allow the IAEA to effectively monitor all uranium enrichment. This monitoring equipment runs autonomously, has backup battery power to ensure reliability, and is encased, as you can see, in sealed containers that contain tamper-resistant equipment to allow the international community to know if Iran tries to alter or tamper with the monitoring equipment.

Before the IAEA developed and implemented these continuous monitoring devices, nuclear inspectors had only two options for verifying compliance: Send inspectors directly, physically into each facility to retrieve physical samples or attempt to measure compliance, even remotely, by taking environmental samples. As a stand-alone method, these two techniques were unreliable and time-intensive, requiring weeks to collect, ship, and analyze samples. Today, instead of waiting weeks or months for results, the IAEA now has real-time, around-the-clock access, so it is aware of exactly what Iran is doing at its enrichment facilities.

These nonstop monitoring devices that were recently developed will also be supplemented by traditional sampling and analysis performed in person by IAEA inspectors. Continuous monitoring devices are in place at all of Iran's uranium enrichment facilities, as well as every known site at which Iran mills and converts uranium and manufactures or stores centrifuges.

That represents every single location involved in Iran's fuel cycle—except uranium mines. That is because real-time monitoring of a mine would serve no scientific purpose. Uranium mines consist of thousands of tons of raw dirt, rock, and ore. Only a minuscule amount of uranium is naturally

present, and even that raw uranium is typically present in such tiny concentrations—just a fraction of a percent—that they are unusable without further processing and enrichment.

IAEA inspectors have regular access, as I have said, to all known uranium mines, and because of the huge amount of activity required to process and mine uranium, regular inspectors are more than sufficient to uncover and monitor Iran's behavior at mines.

Throughout Iran's nuclear facilities, the IAEA has also installed both still and video cameras. These cameras provide a 90-percent increase in the number of images generated per day compared to before the nuclear agreement, giving the international community another vital window into Iran's activities.

In addition, gamma ray monitors—as well as all nuclear material, centrifuges, and equipment—are all secured with tamper-evident seals to protect the integrity of the equipment.

In our Nation's history of dealing with rogue states seeking a nuclear weapons capability—from Saddam Hussein's Iraq to Qadhafi's Libya to North Korea—there has never been an inspection protocol that allowed the IAEA this level of access to monitor and oversee every stage of the nuclear fuel cycle. Under this level of oversight, to produce a nuclear weapon, Iran would need to construct an entirely separate fuel cycle—a whole supply chain, including mining, milling, conversion, and enrichment facilities—completely in secret—an exceptionally difficult undertaking.

But access alone is not enough. For us to be ensured that Iran is not developing a nuclear weapon, the IAEA must also have the resources to turn that access into effective oversight.

Under the terms of the JCPOA, Iran must declare every nuclear and nuclear-related facility that exists within its borders. In response, inspectors have three roles: first, to confirm that Iran's site declarations are accurate and comprehensive; second, to monitor all declared sites to make sure Iran's behavior complies with the terms of the deal; and, third, to track material that leaves each facility to make sure Iran is not pursuing illicit nuclear activity at undeclared sites elsewhere in the country.

Inspectors have regular, complete access to every segment of the nuclear supply chain: conversion, enrichment, mines, mills, fuel manufacturing, the reactors themselves, and spent fuel. To reach the level of necessary oversight, the IAEA has increased its number of inspectors by 120 percent. But I will remind my colleagues that for the next 25 years or more, these physical inspections will have to be sustained to provide a critical supplement to the continuous monitoring technology I referenced before.

Even so, if the IAEA doesn't have enough capable nuclear scientists to effectively monitor, evaluate, and investigate every aspect of Iran's nuclear

fuel cycle, the international community will not, for the decades to come, be able to effectively enforce the terms of the JCPOA.

It takes years to train capable nuclear scientists and even longer to develop new and better monitoring technologies.

As the name of the IAEA implies, fully supporting the IAEA requires support from each of our international partners. But Congress can and should take a step forward by providing reliable, continuous, long-term funding for the IAEA so they can increase the number of their fully trained and available inspectors. It would send a strong signal to both our allies and to Iran that we are serious about holding Iran to the terms of the deal not just this year but over the decades to come.

The IAEA needs the resources to do its job effectively and efficiently. Working effectively means the inspections are not only uncovering violations or potential violations of the deal but also deterring Iran from covert action by knowing with certainty that they will be caught. Working efficiently means the IAEA can devote as many resources as necessary to searching for undeclared sites and monitoring those that are known. To this end, I hope that when the President's budget is released next week, it will include a significant increase in resources for the IAEA.

Adequately funding the IAEA is something I will be speaking about in greater detail in the weeks to come, but it is also important to note that there is a direct correlation between our investments in Federal research and development—specifically, in our National Laboratories—and our effectiveness in keeping Iran's nuclear ambitions and the threat of proliferation throughout the rest of the world in check.

For over 35 years—back to 1980—every single IAEA inspector has been trained at least once at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

The Idaho, Oak Ridge, and Brookhaven National Labs are also part of the vital training network for IAEA inspectors. On average, our national labs are training 150 IAEA inspectors every year—about one-fifth of the entire inspection staff—every single year, developing key skills to keep us and the world safe, like learning how to make accurate, prompt measurements of nuclear material.

Our National Labs also play a key role in improving existing technologies and developing new ones that we can't even imagine today. The online enrichment monitors I described earlier, which will allow for continuous, real-time oversight of Iran's enrichment activities, were originally developed at Oak Ridge National Lab in Tennessee.

In fact, most of America's 17 National Labs have supported or are currently supporting some element of the IAEA safeguards technology, both as individual labs and as part of a 10-na-

tion, 20-lab network of analytical labs that include Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, Lawrence Livermore, Pacific Northwest, and New Brunswick National Labs.

In conclusion, congressional oversight is essential to the most stringent implementation of the nuclear deal with Iran and for our national security as a whole. Making investments in our National Labs and in Federal research and development today means better trained, better equipped nuclear inspectors for the years and the decades to come. Adequately funding the IAEA today means the international community takes full advantage of the unprecedented access we negotiated in this deal.

Effectively enforcing the JCPOA and pushing back on Iran's bad behavior today makes it clear that we intend to hold Iran accountable and to lay the groundwork for security for generations to come.

If we are serious about enforcing the terms of the nuclear deal, we need more than access; we need action.

Thank you, Mr. President.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I came to the floor to listen to my friend talk about one of the most important issues that we have dealt with in this body for many years. There is no one who is more articulate and more understanding of the issues that face us in foreign policy than the junior Senator from Delaware. So I extend my appreciation to him, and I am glad I had the opportunity to come and listen to what he had to say. The stuff he talked about is not simple stuff. It took someone of his ability to explain so we all understand what he has said, and pointing the way forward for peace and security not only in that part of the world but the other work he has done on the Foreign Relations Committee to promote peace and security around a lot of the world.

STATE DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR GENERAL MEMO

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have always known that the Republicans have an obsession with Secretary Clinton's emails, but their obsession is a trumped up, partisan political crusade.

Today we received a new revelation about just how bankrupt the Republicans' campaign against Secretary Clinton truly is. The inspector general of the State Department issued something that is quite important. It is unclassified. He wrote a memo stating that emails received by former Secretary Colin Powell and aides to Secretary Condoleezza Rice may contain classified information.

This is the same trumped up allegation for which Republicans are currently trying to railroad Secretary Clinton.

As vice chairman FEINSTEIN said last week: "It has never made sense to me

that Secretary Clinton can be held responsible for e-mail exchanges that originated with someone else."

Yet Republicans would have us believe that these emails posed a grave threat.

Secretary Colin Powell said it best. Here is what he said upon reading such emails: "A normal, air-breathing mammal would look at them and say, 'What's the issue?'"

Just like they turned Benghazi into a political issue, Republicans are looking for anything that can be twisted into a partisan political tool—for former Senator and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—and for obvious reasons.

The pursuit of her email records has caused the Republicans to waste millions of dollars of taxpayers' money and, of course, abuse the congressional oversight process. They have held up scores of State Department nominees—from USAID workers in Africa and around the world to the State Department's Legal Adviser. Because of what is being done here, the State Department—they have numerous people, I say numerous people, who should be confirmed so the State Department can operate. But, no, they are being held up—even the Legal Adviser. The State Department does not have its own lawyer because it is being held up. All they say is opposition to emails. It is an effort to develop opposition research for the campaign trail. This is what some would say is a watershed moment.

We can now hold Republicans' allegations up to the light and see them for the flimsy, transparent attempts to score political points that they always have been.

If we were to believe Republicans, then we would have to criminally charge Secretary Rice, Secretary Powell, their senior staff, and everyone else who received these emails. We might have to indict the entire senior level of America's national security community.

Of course General Powell should not be indicted. Of course Secretary Rice should not be indicted. But by Republicans' logic, they should be. This is absurd. It is absurd because the inspector general makes it very clear: These charges are a bunch of trumped up baloney. It is absurd because this campaign against Secretary Clinton has always been a ridiculously partisan, political waste of time and taxpayer dollars.

Today we see this more clearly than ever before, but no one has seen it more clearly than Secretary Powell. This man has held numerous positions in our government—Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a four-star general. I repeat what he said today, and I quote again: "A normal, air-breathing mammal would look at them and say, 'What's the issue?'"

There is no issue.

I yield the floor.

Seeing no one on 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. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO TODD WEBSTER

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my thanks to my chief of staff of the last 5 years, Todd Webster. It is a bittersweet day for me because my office says farewell to someone who has been a trusted, loyal, reliable, energetic, patient, faithful leader of the Coons team for my first 5 years here in Washington. He is someone who has been warm and humorous, caring, and always ready with a funny story to tell. He is down to earth, someone who takes interest in whomever he is speaking to; who seems to know everyone here, and who is well liked and well respected. He is a true family man who helped plan a surprise birthday party for his father Peter who recently turned 75; whose delightful and beautiful wife Lisa last fall was named president and CEO of Physicians for Peace and who joins him in their commitment to public service; and whose wonderful children, his daughter Sydney, son Peter, and daughter Catherine have sustained and supported him in his service—his 5 years with me in the Senate and his years before that with other Senators. Even their dog Kili, an Irish doodle, has been a part of the extended Webster family that has helped engage and entertain and support my office these last 5 years.

When I first came to Washington, under the most unlikely circumstances in 2010, I was looking for someone who could help me navigate the culture and folkways of this building, and there was no one better suited for that than Todd Webster. He worked on the campaigns of Senators Harkin and Byrd, as the deputy communications director for the Gore-Lieberman campaign, and as the communications director for Senator PATTY MURRAY. After that he was the communications director for Senator Tom Daschle.

After those years of service in the Senate, he had gone off on his own to form the WebStrong Group, and he was the owner of Webster Strategies and a regular commentator on MSNBC.

So when I had the chance to first meet him in 2010, I was encouraged that he was willing to offer his significant skills and talent to the challenge of helping me shape my team and decide on my trajectory here in the Senate. So this 9-year Senate veteran, this graduate of Bowdoin College and possessor of a master's degree from the GW Graduate School of Political Management set off with me on a fascinating and at times challenging trip.

Todd is a great athlete. He is someone who is a dedicated golfer, "an honorable player," as was commented by JJ Singh, one of our great team mem-

bers in the office. You can tell a lot about a person by how they behave on the golf course, and Todd is a gentleman. He plays fast so as not to hold up others, but will go out of his way to look for your lost ball in the woods.

If Todd left the office a few minutes early on Fridays, he would announce that he was "going to investigate some greenspace." Although rare, his outings on golf courses, I know, were a source of encouragement and relief.

On the softball field he was also a great contributor. A member of my team commented that "he was a valuable member" of our team, known as the Small Wonders, after Delaware's nickname, "and was known for his ability to turn triples into doubles and sacrificing his body at first base to get much-needed outs."

"He was also instrumental," JJ wrote, "to the team's magical 2014 turnaround season and Cinderella run to the playoffs."

On the management side, Todd would constantly walk around the office unannounced, just to check in and see how folks were doing. Rather than making staff find him, he would proactively seek out staff. His door was always open, whether to chat about something work-related or to vent or to listen about something personal. He always had a funny story to tell and was willing to listen and offer meaningful advice.

When Tom sensed that the afternoon was dragging on and our subterranean executive suite was in need of a pick-me-up, he would go on what we call in Delaware a "WaWa run," picking up snacks and caffeinated beverages to keep everybody focused until the end of what are sometimes very long days.

I got one interesting comment from a constituent staffer who has worked for me and for several other Senators in her many long years at the Senate. She commented that on one visit to DC, Todd cared enough to make sure our whole constituent relations team had lunch in the Senate dining room. She was astonished that he took time out of his busy day to have lunch and get to know them and get to know what they do on behalf of the people of Delaware every day.

Todd also understood and connected with my commitment to my home State and enthusiastically made an annual trek to the Delaware State Fair and devoted himself to learning more about Delaware's all-important poultry business. I will say that in equal part I did my best to learn more about sports, going to Caps events, Wizards events, and on golf outings with Todd. He joined me in going to memorable visits of processing plants where thousands of chickens made the eye-opening transition from being broilers to being dinner. In addition, I want to thank him for his strong constitution and his dedication for advancing the agricultural interests of my home State, which even included trying scrapple on one occasion.

At a time when congressional budgets have constantly been under pressure and many in America believe our political system is dysfunctional, Capitol Hill depends on dedicated, loyal, optimistic, and positive public servants like Todd—not only for the kind of policy and political accomplishments that ultimately show up on a resume or a job description but even more for the qualities and characteristics that make this place function—an unquestioningly positive attitude, a management style that makes everyone from interns to seasoned professionals feel welcome and valued, a willingness to speak candidly about himself and the office, about our challenges and prospects, a keen perspective on the absurdity of the many aspects of the modern political process, and the relentless idealism that inspires those around him to keep believing and working hard. These are the hallmarks of Todd's time over the past 5 years.

In the 5 years I have had the joy of working with him. He has always been at my side, helping my office get up and running and teaching me the ways of this town and this institution. Walking around Capitol Hill with him was often like walking beside the "mayor of the Senate." Every few steps, every few minutes, someone would stop to say hello, to catch up, to reconnect or talk about what is next. Far too often, people leave the Hill, having forgotten long ago why they ever got into public service in the first place. Todd never has. Throughout his 9 years serving three different Senators, he has remained cheerful, optimistic, tireless, and committed.

His car is often the very first one in the Russell garage in the morning, and he often has been the last staffer to leave and go home at the end of a long workday. Whether it is his willingness to call a staff member after the passing of a family member or bounding into the office every morning with a smile, saying, "top of the morning to you, hello friends, hello Meg, hello T, hello Chels," my office will simply not be the same without him—without his cheer, without his loyalty, without his hard work, without his energy, and without his optimism about what we can still do together here in this greatest institution in the American constitutional order.

So with that, I would like to offer my thanks and best wishes to my departing chief of Staff, Todd Webster.

Thank you.

REMEMBERING U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER VERNON ALSTON, JR.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a fellow Delawarean, U.S. Capitol Police Officer Vernon Alston, who passed away unexpectedly last month at the much too young age of 44.

Officer Alston was a fixture in the House of Representatives, spending

nearly 20 years on the Hill with the Capitol Police. As one of his colleagues, Officer Scott McBane, noted, Vernon was a “gentle giant.” His wife Nicole describes him as “a very genuine man” who had a deep and genuine love for people.

While I didn’t have the privilege of knowing Officer Alston personally, we shared at least two commitments: to be in Washington each morning to go to work and to be back home in Delaware to see our kids each night.

For years, Vernon’s shift started at 5 a.m., meaning he would be beginning his 90-minute commute from Magnolia, DE, at a time when few, if any, of the people he would soon be protecting would even be awake. For those who knew him, Vernon’s willingness to drive 3 hours a day just to be home with his family every night wasn’t the only reflection of his commitment to service and his family.

In fact, Vernon’s entire career is a testament to his passion for helping others. While still a student at Howard University, he joined the U.S. Army Reserve and served as an Army reservist until 1994. After graduating from college in 1995, Vernon joined the DC Army National Guard and served as a member of the Guard for another decade.

In 1996, Vernon joined the U.S. Capitol Police and spent the next two decades dedicated not just to keeping lawmakers and their families and our offices’ visitors safe but doing so with humility, a smile, and with a relentlessly positive attitude.

It is not just the job Vernon chose to dedicate his life to that says so much about his character but how he did it. Those who served with him will tell you how he always wore a smile on his face and never had a harsh word to say.

Two weeks ago Vernon died as he lived both his professional and personal life—helping people around him. In this case, he was shoveling snow for his next door neighbor in the aftermath of one of the biggest storms to hit our beloved home State of Delaware in years.

From the employees of the House and Senate who work around-the-clock to keep the lights on to the Members of Congress ourselves, everyone plays their part in keeping this institution working and in making our country’s legislative process functional and accessible. That accessibility, that openness, is a guiding light to which nations around the world aspire, and that is in many ways a direct reflection of the efforts of Officer Alston and fellow Capitol Police officers who serve with bravery and tirelessness, day in and day out.

When we talk about public service on this floor, we are often referring to our country or our constituents, but just as important is service to our colleagues, family, and friends.

Vernon first met his wife Nicole when they were both students at Howard in 1992, but they didn’t truly connect until running into each other near

this Capitol 15 years ago. It was just 6 months after that, Nicole remembers, that she married the man of her dreams.

Let me leave with you a passage from the Scriptures, Galatians 6:9–10, which teaches us:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.

Whether in the Army Reserve, at his post outside the Cannon House Office Building or at his home in Delaware, Vernon sought the opportunity to do good to all people, and in doing so he made a real difference in the lives of those he knew and those he served.

While the words and tributes to Officer Alston that have poured forth from his colleagues and his friends may provide little comfort today to his friends and family, it is my hope and prayer that Nicole, Brittany, Yasmeen, Brandon, Israel, and Breyden can take solace in knowing in the years to come that the man they so loved was beloved by so many people.

Thank you.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, the Senator, my colleague from Delaware, and I are close friends and we ride the same train together a lot of days, coming and going to Delaware. I would like to think that we think alike and share a lot of the same values. It was interesting to listen to his remarks about Vernon Alston, which actually reflect and track very closely with what I am prepared to say. But there are some differences. I am happy to be here with him, and I think it is great that we are here. I think we are also speaking for JOHN CARNEY, who is our Congressman, and who would, if he could speak on this floor, join us today as well.

Mr. President, I also want to join Senator COONS and the Presiding Officer, who presides in the chair almost every time I speak on this floor. I don’t know how this works out, but it is good to see the Presiding Officer and this new group of pages who have joined us this week to tell you about a man you never had a chance to meet who was a Capitol policeman for almost 20 years.

Senator COONS talked about him. I am going to say a few words about him, and then we will probably head for the train and head home.

Let me just say a few things about Vernon J. Alston, Jr. His Dad is also Vernon J. Alston. As Senator COONS said, he passed away at the age of 44. We did have a big snowstorm. We had a lot of snow. We had a couple of feet here and almost that much in parts of Delaware.

When Vernon died, he had actually just finished helping a neighbor shovel out after the snowstorm, and that sort of epitomized his life. He was always helping other people, not asking for anything much in return but setting a good example to every one of us. But in

life and death, Vernon epitomized the best of our country—people who put their lives on the line to protect and serve in this Capitol Complex and those of us who live and work in this part of the Nation.

The U.S. Capitol Police are some of the finest men and women in uniform. I say this as a former naval flight officer and a retired Navy captain. We have wonderful men and women who serve us and all the folks who come from all over the world to visit this place throughout the year. But each day these officers perform perhaps the most important jobs here on the Hill—protecting those of us who are privileged to work here either as Members of the Senate and the House or staff and also the millions of visitors and folks who travel here from not just the 50 States but from a lot of places around the globe.

Whether these officers are patrolling the ground to prevent or detect mischief, investigating suspicious activity or responding to emergencies, their mission is the same. Their mission is to protect one of our country’s principal symbols of democracy—the United States Capitol. Their mission is not one that comes without sacrifice. Just 17 years ago, I remember this to the day, in 1998, two of our Capitol Police officers, not far from the sound of my voice, were gunned down in the line of duty when a gunman opened fire, trying to force his way into the Capitol.

Vernon, in his service with the U.S. Army Reserve, with the National Guard, and with the Capitol Police force, consistently exhibited unwavering courage, devotion to duty, and, above all, honor. In the way he lived his life and how we remember him, Vernon reminds each of us just how good we can be and ought to be.

Vernon Alston was born in 1971 to his mom Barbara Alston and Vernon Alston, Sr.—and not in this country. He was born in Vincenza, which is a town in Italy where his dad Vernon, Sr., was stationed in the U.S. Air Force. Vernon spent the first 10 years of his life in Italy before his father was transferred to Dover Air Force Base in Dover, DE. There Vernon attended grade school on the Air Force base and later graduated from Dover High School, a school that I have been privileged to visit many times. He went on to attend Howard University in Washington, DC, and graduated from there about 20 years ago in 1995.

Vernon was still a student at Howard University when he answered the call of duty, following the footsteps of his dad Vernon, Sr., and his grandfather David Alston, who was a U.S. Army World War II veteran. In 1991, Vernon—this is the son—joined the U.S. Army Reserve, and he served in the Army Reserve until 1994. After graduating from college in 1995, Vernon joined the District of Columbia Army National Guard and served as a member of the Army National Guard for another 10 years.

I am sure our Presiding Officer spends time with his Guard troops in his home State. We do, too. We have an Army Guard and an Air Guard in Delaware. We are very proud of the literally thousands of men and women who serve our country. I think 300 are in Afghanistan. We will welcome some folks home this weekend. We are welcoming some folks home this weekend.

But this is what Winston Churchill used to say about people who serve in the Guard or Reserve and have their own day jobs. Winston Churchill said they are twice the citizen. Think about that—twice the citizen.

I know a lot of people who are in the Army Guard who used to be in the Army, and a lot of folks in the Air Guard in Delaware who used to be in the Air Force. They have their day jobs, and they serve our State and our Nation through the Guard. They are two-times the citizen. So was Vernon.

He began his service with the Capitol Police Force 20 years ago, and for those 20 years he protected and served the Capitol Complex and its community, including folks such as us here: Senators, staff, our pages sitting here at the dais today, members of our families, staffs, members of their families, and millions of folks who visit our Capitol throughout each year. Vernon's positive energy, which Senator COONS has alluded to, and his attitude made a lasting impression with his Capitol Police colleagues.

In the latter part of his career, most recently Vernon was stationed at the Capitol powerplant, which provides steam and water that is used to heat and cool buildings across the Capitol Complex. At that plant, it was his responsibility to check visitors and staff at the door and work to keep that facility safe and secure every day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the year.

According to his colleagues, he always found time to ask others: Well, how are you doing? And he possessed the all-too-rare quality of being a patient listener. My dad used to say to my sister and me that God gave us two ears, one mouth, and we should use them in that proportion—listen a lot more than we talk. I always admire good listeners, and Vernon was one of those.

One of his fellow officers described Vernon as a “beacon.” A beacon of what? Well, a “beacon of positivity,” a positive force. No matter the mission—an early morning for a Presidential inauguration or a late night for the State of the Union Address at the other end of the Capitol—Vernon always wore a smile on his face.

In 2008, while Vernon was on the job and patrolling the Capitol grounds, he ran into a woman whom he had actually run into before named Nicole Davis. Despite attending Howard University at the same time, Vernon and Nicole never really knew each other. But earlier this week, I talked to Nicole, who for years also made the com-

mute from Magnolia, DE—just south of Dover—to serve not in the Capitol Police but to serve our country in another capacity here in our Nation's Capital. She told me their love story or an abbreviated version of it. When they were at Howard University at roughly the same point in time, Vernon would see her from afar and would admire her. He never really summoned the courage—if you will, the temerity—to go up to her and say: Here is who I am; who are you? But he sort of admired her from afar and wished he could get to know her.

Many years later, while he was on patrol, I think at the corner of First and Independence, guess who comes walking along—that same woman whom he had admired from afar all those years ago. They struck up a conversation, hit it off, and went out on a date together. The rest is history. Six months later they were married. I know some people who married that quickly, and I am one of them. Vernon and Nicole knew what they were looking for. They were looking for each other, and they found each other. They have a wonderful family they have raised.

Later when they were onboard the *Spirit of Washington*, they became husband and wife. After they married, they moved, in this case to Delaware. As I said, people in Magnolia—their claim to fame is that Magnolia, DE, is a little town that is the center of the universe. There are probably other places where people think they are the center of the universe, but the Alston family lived in Magnolia, the center of the universe, for a number of years.

Nicole, as Senator COONS said—not only did Vernon get up and drive to work every day, so did Nicole. And they didn't carpool many days; they each drove separately. They both loved Delaware, but they wanted to work here and to serve our Nation in different roles. Nicole served and worked for a number of years at the Smithsonian's National Zoo, while Vernon was keeping things safe here in our Capitol. Together they have five children: Brittany, a sophomore at Delaware State University, the home of the Hornets in Dover; Yasmeen, a senior at Polytech High School in Delaware, the home of the Panthers, just south of Dover; Brandon, a sophomore at Paul Public Charter School in DC; and Israel and Breyden, who are both in preschool.

I am close to closing, but I want to share a story that we heard from Vernon's mom the other day. It deals with the time when he was in the fourth grade. Vernon's principal told Vernon's parents that he was a great example to his peers, to other students. The principal said he knew he would come to learn about Vernon's accomplishments and achievements in the newspapers years down the road.

Think of that. I don't know what my principals were thinking about me when I was in the fourth or fifth or sixth grade, but I don't think any of

them thought that I would end up in the Senate or that they would be reading about me in the newspaper or watching me on television. But when Vernon was not even 10 years old, his principal knew he was a guy who was on his way to being somebody his parents could be enormously proud of.

I think it is clear through the outpouring of love and accounts of so many others after Vernon's untimely passing that Vernon's principal was right. If he is out there listening somewhere and if his teachers are out there listening somewhere, I thank them for helping—along with Vernon's parents—raise a remarkable young man.

Today I rise to commemorate Vernon, to celebrate his life with Senator COONS by my side, and on behalf of Congressman JOHN CARNEY, our at-large Congressman from Delaware. We want to offer to Vernon's family—particularly to Nicole, their children, their friends, and family—our support and our deepest sympathy on their tragic loss and really the loss to all of us here. We consider Vernon and those with whom he served as part of our family.

I asked my staff to see if they could find a couple of people who serve in the Capitol Police who might have something to say about Vernon, and I want to quote them and maybe close my remarks with their words.

These are the words Officer Scott McBane said about Vernon Alston:

Vern Alston was an outstanding human being. To know Vern was to love him. I was privileged to work with Vern for three years at the Traffic One checkpoint of the House Division [on the House side]. He treated everyone he met with patience, good humor, and remarkable kindness. A great talker who told very funny stories, he also had that rare quality of being a sympathetic and a patient listener.

We heard that before, didn't we?

Continuing:

Smart, positive, and always supportive, people would stop by all day to see Vern and share their stories with him. A warm and sympathetic friend to so many, Vern will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Thank you, Scott McBane, an officer with the Capitol Police, for sharing those memories of Vern Alston.

I have one more from another Capitol Police officer who knew and worked with Vernon. This officer's name is Michael Woodward. Michael said these words about Vernon Alston:

Of all the people I have had the honor to work with Vernon Alston was by far the most positive, warm, friendly and outgoing person I have ever met.

Let me just stop there. How many people in the world do you suppose there are who would say those words about us? Whether we happen to be Senators, our staff, our families, those are wonderful words for someone to say about us, that we were the most “positive, warm,” or “friendly and outgoing person” that someone ever met. What a compliment.

He continues:

He was always one to greet you with a smile, and ask how you and your family were

doing. It doesn't matter what was going on—if we were coming in early for the Inauguration or staying late for the State of the Union—he always had a smile. I never heard him speak a negative word or raise his voice. He treated everyone as a close friend and was a beacon of positivity. His passing leaves a hole that cannot be filled.

Senator COONS closed with a little Scripture from the New Testament. I think it was Galatians, if I am not mistaken. I will try to paraphrase a little something maybe from Luke and from the Book of James: People may not believe what we say; they will believe what we do. We lead by our example. And in our lives, it cannot be do as I say, but really do as I do.

Throughout his life, Vernon was a great example, not just for the people with whom he worked on the police force here, not just for all of us who came into contact with him throughout the day or week, but for some of those millions of people whose only lasting impression of our country that they took home with them wherever they came from around the world was this wonderful Capitol Police officer who took the time to talk with them, to listen to them, to be patient, to be helpful, and to be friendly.

There is a great lesson for all of us in that—a great lesson for all of us. For that, Vernon, we thank you. God bless you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AGRICULTURAL EXPORT EXPANSION ACT

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a bill which I introduced that I would love to have the Presiding Officer's sponsorship, given how important the Port of Louisiana is to American agriculture and certainly commodities that we ship across the world. It is called the Agricultural Export Expansion Act that I introduced with Senator BOOZMAN as my cosponsor. We have a great bipartisan lineup of people who are interested in this.

So what does this bill do? I will say, very rarely does a day go by—whether I am in North Dakota or whether I am here in Washington, DC—that I don't speak with or hear from North Dakota farmers and ranchers. The agriculture economy is absolutely critical to North Dakota. Almost one-quarter of North Dakota workers are farmers and ranchers or they are employed in farm-related jobs. During every meeting, farmers and ranchers express the urgent need—the urgent need—to open trade with Cuba and to stop tying the hands of our producers.

Just on Tuesday our barley growers were in my office telling me about how

important the market in Cuba could be. Last week it was the Dry Bean Council telling me what I already know from my visit with Cuba: The products we grow in the United States—like North Dakota pinto beans or Arkansas rice—are compatible with the Cuban diet, and there is high demand for our high-quality products.

These aren't just crops that North Dakota grows. These are crops that North Dakota knows exceptionally well and that we excel in. My State is the No. 1 producer of barley, multiple varieties of beans, lentils, and certain types of wheat. Enabling agriculture exports to Cuba would be a huge boon for North Dakota farmers and ranchers, as well as those from many other States.

Unfortunately, because of trade barriers the United States puts on itself, the Cuban people aren't eating North Dakota beans, Kansas wheat or Arkansas rice. Instead, they are importing those products from countries much further away—like Brazil, Canada, Europe, and even Vietnam. I would say not only in terms of proximity of our product to the Cuban market—which is a huge freight advantage—we also have the highest quality of products. So we are forfeiting what in fact would be a natural market for us. Think about that. In this day, where trade is so important—where improving our balance of trade is so important—we will not be able to access the Cuban market.

Congress has eased some restrictions on exports to Cuba for agricultural products. They did that back in 2000 with the passage of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act. That was a great first step. We did make some progress in increased sales to Cuba. Unfortunately, now that same law is holding us back.

The administration made important changes to U.S. policy and opened some travel and some trade to Cuba starting with their January 2015 changes. Most recently, including last month, the administration made more changes, including allowing for financing of authorized exports to Cuba. Unfortunately, those exports are other than agricultural exports. Because of our once forward-looking bill, agricultural exporters are prohibited now from offering financing that all other exporters can provide to Cuba. That needs changing.

In 2014 I visited Cuba. I met with Cuban agricultural trade officials to discuss bilateral economic benefits of expanding agricultural exports from North Dakota and the United States to Cuba. These are conversations we need to continue to have.

Last April I and Senator BOOZMAN introduced our bipartisan bill to level the playing field for our farmers and ranchers and make sure we can compete with the rest of the world in Cuba. What does that bill do and how does it improve our trade relationship with Cuba? One of the greatest barriers we have in getting our products to Cuba is

we can't finance it. Some might say: Well, we don't want to put government taxpayer dollars at risk. This bill does not put one taxpayer dollar at risk. We are talking about opening the market so we can access private financing for agricultural exports to Cuba. Let me repeat that. No taxpayer dollars are at risk. It is based entirely on individual risk assessment and decisions. Our bill is supported by the U.S. Agricultural Coalition for Cuba, a wide-ranging coalition including every grower group and industry association.

This week, the Cuban Government announced that El Nino is going to create an even greater loss of agricultural products in Cuba. This is going to create an even greater opportunity for our agricultural exports—a greater opportunity. Why—why—why would we let other countries keep eating our lunch and dominating this important market, especially given our proximity? It is time for Congress to get out of American agriculture's way and let private businesses make exporting and financing decisions.

I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor and help pass our bill, S. 1049, the Agricultural Export Expansion Act.

Finally, I want to talk about the challenges that American agriculture has. Higher-dollar value has put tremendous stress on our products. We have seen corn prices drop, we have seen soybean prices drop, we have seen American agriculture challenged in ways we haven't seen for the last decade. How do we fix that problem? With another government program? Maybe we will have to help or expand the farm bill to deal with our food security issues created by low commodity prices. I will not take that off the table, but I will say the surest way that we can get out from underneath these challenges is export, is to provide for trade. It is one of the reasons I supported TPA. I believe it is great for American commodities to access additional markets and take down trade barriers to provide us with market, but why are we artificially standing in the way of private investment and private financing of American agricultural products? It is time that we do the right thing by American agriculture and open this market. We can take this incremental step without having this body agree to lifting any kind of embargo. We can take this incremental step without changing the prohibition we have on Federal-sponsored marketing programs. We can begin to access the Cuban market and introduce our high-quality beans, edible peas, and lentils. We can do that.

I will close with a story about my great friend MARIA CANTWELL from the State of Washington. Washington also grows what we call a lot of cross crops—although, I would argue that ours are probably even lot better than what is grown in the State of Washington.

MARIA CANTWELL went on a trade mission to try to sell Washington State

lentils. After hours of listening to the trade officials and Mr. Castro, she was successful in convincing him to buy lentils. The lentils he eventually bought were from North Dakota.

We have an opportunity to access this market—not just for North Dakota but for the State of Washington, for the State of Louisiana, for the State of Arkansas, for the State of Kansas. For all of our agricultural producers, open this market, give us the ability to do what we do in every other place. We aren't putting taxpayer dollars at risk. We are simply asking for access to markets.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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. SASSE. 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 GEORGIA POWERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to mourn the loss of an honored Kentuckian and civil rights icon, Georgia Powers, who fought for civil rights and marched in protest of racial injustice, died on January 30. She was 92 years old.

As the first African American to serve in Kentucky's State Senate, Georgia Powers paved the way for African Americans in Kentucky to enter public service. Even before her election to the senate, she had earned recognition across the State for her efforts to fight for equal rights.

In 1964 she helped organize a march on Frankfort to support a bill that would open public accommodations to African Americans. In 1966, thanks in part to her work, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a civil rights law, making Kentucky the first southern State to do so.

Among the many supporters Powers brought to Frankfort for the 1964 march were baseball legend Jackie Robinson—the man who broke the color barrier in professional baseball—and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Powers remained a close confidant of King's until his death in 1968.

Georgia Powers was born in 1923 in Washington County, KY, as one of nine children. Her family moved to Louisville when she was a little girl, and Louisville was the city that she loved her whole life and represented in the Kentucky Senate.

Georgia Powers' political career was born out of her fight for civil rights. She tried to work with members of the Kentucky Legislature on antidiscrimination laws and found them unresponsive. So when the incumbent senator in her home district in Louisville chose not to run again in 1967, she moved from protest to politics.

The first piece of legislation she sponsored in the senate, a bill for open housing, passed 28 to 3. That was the beginning of a successful 21-year political career. She would go on to become the chairwoman of the senate's labor and industry committee and the sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment in Kentucky.

One of the earliest bills she introduced in the State senate was to remove racial identification from State drivers' licenses. Powers has said that she was prompted to do this based on her own experience as a 16-year-old trying to get a drivers' license. She was asked her race and the sting of discrimination stayed with her.

Georgia Powers built a stronger, fairer Kentucky by her life's work and her leadership. She was an inspiration to many, including me, for her determination in the face of injustice. I knew and worked with Senator Powers back when I served as the Judge-Executive of Jefferson County. I can personally attest that she was funny, tenacious, and tough as nails—an admirable woman and a respected senator.

Georgia Powers is remembered and mourned by many, including Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin, and even boxing legend Muhammad Ali. Many Kentuckians in public service today cite her as a guiding influence.

Georgia Powers made fighting discrimination her legacy. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in honoring her as one of Kentucky's most important leaders and a champion of civil rights. She will be remembered as a Kentuckian of courage and conviction, and she is greatly missed.

REMEMBERING U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER VERNON ALSTON, JR.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to remember U.S. Capitol Police Officer Vernon Alston, who passed away on January 23, 2016. Officer Alston was a fixture on the Capitol Grounds for 20 years, and he is missed by the many who were honored to have known him.

Those who knew Officer Alston best describe him as someone who loved his family, his job, and helping others. For two decades, he helped members of the Capitol Hill community by keeping us safe, and on the day he passed away, he helped members of his own community in Magnolia, DE, by shoveling snow for his neighbors.

Officer Alston was a caring and modest man who took great pride in his work. As a former Capitol Police officer myself, I understand the dedication and sacrifice required of members of the Capitol Police force, and Officer Alston was an exemplar of these traits. I am saddened that the U.S. Capitol Police has lost one of our own, but I will always be grateful for Officer Alston's service to the Capitol Police force and to our Nation.

Officer Alston was loved dearly by his friends and family. He is survived by his wife Nicole; daughters Brittany and Yasmee; and sons Brandon, Israel, and Breyden. My condolences go out to Officer Alston's family during this difficult time.

RECENT REGULATORY CHANGES RELATED TO CUBA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week the administration took another step in unraveling the web of onerous, misguided, and self-defeating restrictions on the ability of American citizens to travel to Cuba and to interact with the people of Cuba.

Effective as of January 27, the Departments of Treasury and Commerce published revised regulations that end certain payment and financing restrictions, allow for more authorized exports to Cuba in a variety of sectors, and expand authorized travel categories and allow additional travel-related transactions.

Restrictions on providing access to credit, which have been among the most commonly cited barriers to exporting to Cuba, were removed. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control amended regulations regarding non-agricultural exports, and it is now possible for U.S. banks to provide direct financing for authorized exports to Cuba, as opposed to requiring cash in advance or routing through a third country which had stymied many transactions that could benefit American companies and Cuban consumers.

General licenses, meaning that a specific license application is no longer required, are now provided for a variety of categories, including telecommunications items that improve communications to, from, and among Cubans; certain agricultural items, such as insecticides and equipment, although not agricultural commodities; items for the safety of civil aviation and safe operation of commercial aircraft; and items necessary for the environmental protection of U.S. and international air quality, waters, or coastlines including items related to renewable energy or energy efficiency.

And it is now permissible, subject to case-by-case review, to export to some Cuban state-owned enterprises that "provide goods and services to the Cuban people." This includes items for agricultural production, education, food processing, public transportation, wholesale distribution, and construction of facilities for supplying energy, among others. As much as we disagree with many of the policies of the Cuban Government, it is undeniable that it provides health care, education, public transportation, and many other services that the Cuban people rely on.

However, exports to state-owned enterprises that primarily generate revenue for the government remain ineligible to receive U.S. exports along with military, police, intelligence, and security services.

Categories for authorized travel to Cuba have been expanded to include organizing professional meetings and for professional media and artistic productions such as movies, TV, and music, among others. These are long overdue and will be welcomed by American scholars, artists, and journalists. I am disappointed, however, that American tourists are still prohibited from traveling to Cuba, unlike to any other country in the world.

These are all positive steps, for which I commend the White House. Frankly, it is hard to believe that it has taken so long to finally begin to dismantle a policy of unilateral sanctions against Cuba when it has been obvious for so many years that it has failed to achieve any of its objectives, while it was hurting the people of both countries.

But a great deal remains to be done to reverse 50 years of an ill-conceived, punitive policy. It is for that reason that I urge the Administration to act expeditiously to take further action, including amending regulations that would allow Cuba to use the U.S. dollar in third-party country transactions, which would greatly facilitate U.S.-Cuban commerce.

The Treasury Department should also do what the American people want by letting them travel to Cuba on a people-to-people license as individuals and stop treating them like children and making them pay thousands of dollars to large tour group operators. The U.S. Government is not in the business of requiring costly chaperones for Americans who travel anywhere else overseas, and it should not do so for Americans traveling 90 miles to Cuba.

Allowing all Americans to travel under a general license would significantly boost the number of Americans traveling to Cuba, it would create a much richer travel experience, and it would save taxpayers money.

There are some who will undoubtedly continue to insist that any change in policy is somehow a capitulation to the Cuban Government and that, because Cuba's Communist Party remains in control, we should continue supporting a policy that has helped keep them there. That illogical, myopic view has been repudiated by a huge majority of the Cuban people, including some of Cuba's most outspoken critics of the government, and it is rejected by a large and increasing majority of Americans, including Cuban-Americans.

The White House has all the support it needs from the American public, the business community, farmers, ranchers, energy companies, faith-based groups, academia, the media, the scientific and medical community, and so many others across this country to take bold action to expand engagement with Cuba. There is no time to waste.

TRIBUTE TO STEVEN M. DETTELBACH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to recognize U.S. Attorney Steven

M. Dettelbach for his years of excellent public service as he begins a new chapter in his legal career. Steve has served as the U.S. attorney for the northern district of Ohio for nearly 7 years after the Senate unanimously confirmed him to this position in 2009. Steve is a former member of my Judiciary Committee staff, and I have known him for more than a decade. I am very proud of all that he has accomplished.

Steve earned his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and his law degree from Harvard Law School. After law school, Steve clerked for Judge Stanley Sporkin of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He went on to serve in the Department of Justice's civil rights division from 1992 to 1997 and then in the U.S. attorney's office for the district of Maryland from 1997 to 2001.

In 2001, Steve joined my Judiciary Committee staff. Steve impressed me with his sound judgment and his outstanding work with both Republican and Democratic offices. Steve worked on a broad range of issues, including drafting and negotiating key whistleblower and criminal fraud provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. He played a central role on our oversight team and helped draft an important bipartisan report on the implementation of FISA. The report, written with Senators GRASSLEY and SPECTER, was the culmination of the committee's first comprehensive oversight effort of the FBI in nearly two decades. After his tenure with my office, Steve served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the northern district of Ohio. He then joined Baker & Hostetler as a partner before he was nominated to his current position.

As the U.S. attorney for the northern district of Ohio, Steve has been at the forefront of enforcing civil rights laws, including bringing some of the first cases under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009. He has organized educational events on issues such as human trafficking, hate crimes, and police use of force, and formed the United Against Hate religious coalition in the wake of a racially motivated arson at a church in his district.

As a member of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, AGAC, Steve led the AGAC's civil rights subcommittee and worked to establish civil rights units in U.S. attorney's offices across the country. His work will ensure that civil rights remain a Department priority for years to come. Steve is a model public servant who approaches his job with integrity, tenacity, good humor, and sharp negotiating skills that I know will serve him well as he moves back to private practice.

Ohio is a safer and better place because of Steve's tireless effort and dedication. I commend Steve for his years of service and wish him and his wonderful family the best in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO ESTHER OLAVARRIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize Ms. Esther Olavarria, an extraordinary public servant who has worked for decades to build an immigration system that is fair and just for all. I know Esther from her time in the Senate as Senator Kennedy's lead advisor on immigration matters for the Judiciary Committee. In the Senate and more recently in the administration, Esther's intelligent, thoughtful advice and analysis has been invaluable. She is stepping down this week after serving as senior counselor to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Johnson. I have no doubt the Secretary will miss her, as I do here in the Senate.

Esther was an early appointee of the Obama administration, serving first as a member of the President's transition team on immigration, then as the Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Border Security and later as counselor to Secretary Janet Napolitano. During that time she advocated fixing our Nation's broken immigration system and the pressing need to provide protection for asylees and refugees, improve detention conditions, and ensure accountability and transparency in immigration enforcement.

In 2013, Esther was asked to serve as the White House Director of Immigration Reform. Her wealth of experience made her an invaluable asset in our bipartisan effort to pass the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act in 2013. The bill overwhelmingly passed the Senate with the bipartisan support of 68 Senators. I remain disappointed that that important bill was not taken up in the House, and I hope the Senate will one day turn again to this legislation. When we do, I know that Esther will be ready to provide her support once again as she has so many times when the Senate has turned its focus to the issue of immigration.

In the Senate, Esther understood the importance of working across the aisle to get something done. Like her boss, Senator Kennedy, Esther forged unlikely partnerships and found partners who were drawn to her passion, her sense of humanity, and her dedication. She was a key adviser for the comprehensive immigration reform bills of 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Many of us remember Senator Kennedy turning to Esther during the 2007 negotiations not only so that he could seek her counsel, but so that other Senators could benefit from her expertise. Everyone—Republicans, Democrats, advocates, journalists—listened, and everyone was better off for having Esther nearby.

Esther, like her late boss, has always been driven by a deep commitment to making our communities stronger and more vibrant. She has advocated on behalf of immigrant children and she has fought to reform inhumane detention practices. And she has underscored the critical importance of the relationship

between law enforcement and the immigrant community so that all our communities are safe.

A Cuban immigrant who came to the United States at the age of 5, Esther has always sought to advance immigration policies rooted in the American values of fairness and family. Her life experiences as a child led her to a career in immigration law, first helping low-income immigrants in Florida through direct client representation and by cofounding the not-for-profit legal assistance organization Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, and then coming to Washington, DC.

I have no doubt that Esther will continue to be an important adviser, but more importantly a devoted friend to so many who have been fortunate to know her. She is an exemplary public servant. I commend Esther for her years of service and wish her and her family the best in their future endeavors.

STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to speak about the European Union, to both recognize the peace and prosperity that it has brought to Europe for more than 75 years and the unprecedented challenges confronting the union today.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently held a hearing on the threats to the European Union and the implications for U.S. foreign policy. Our committee was also briefed this week by Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland on these issues.

Coming out of these discussions, I am absolutely convinced that the U.S. has an obligation to stand with our friends in Europe during these challenging times in support of the principles that we all share: democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, economic prosperity, and peace and security.

I would like to lay out how I see these challenges threatening the cohesion and stability of the EU. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but is intended to create a sense of urgency among my colleagues regarding the crises faced by the EU and our transatlantic alliance.

First, I want to reiterate the remarkable trajectory of the democratic process and peace in Europe since the World Wars of the last century. Emerging from the ashes of World War II, what started as the European Coal and Steel Community expanded to become the European Economic Community, which created a single market for the free movement of goods, people, capital, and services. The ideal of a single market guaranteeing freedom of movement for all member citizens still underpins the EU today, as it has grown from 6 to 28 members.

This basis in an economic union was always intended to grow into a polit-

ical union as well. Jean Monnet, often regarded as the father of the European Union, stated that “we are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting men.” This principle serves as the basis for cooperation amongst member states as they have pooled diplomatic resources to address some of the most pressing issues around the world, usually in concert and in lock-step with the United States. In capitals around the world, the U.S. works with EU representatives to address vexing regional challenges, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and support for values that we hold dear.

The allure of EU membership has served as a powerful incentive, especially for countries in Central and Eastern Europe, to reform and adopt high governance standards in preparation for EU membership. Nowhere else in the world does such an incentive exist; and, while not without its challenges, this accession process has improved the economic circumstances, political rights, and civil liberties of millions across the continent.

Today, however, the EU is confronting its most serious crises, which collectively threaten the future of the European project. These threats to European cohesion are both internal and external, between north and south and east and west, as well as within and outside individual member states.

First, the refugee and migrant crisis today consumes policymakers in Brussels and across Europe. Tensions have grown among member states on the right approach to accepting them, as more than 1 million entered Germany alone in 2015, with the prospect of more in 2016. The heated debate within the Union on how to deal with the crisis has called into question the ability of Brussels to enforce commitments by its member states on borders, Schengen visa-free travel, and quotas associated with resettlement.

In recent months, member states have agreed to resettlement quotas and border protocols, only to see those agreements fall apart in quick succession. Some are now concerned that this trend could extend to other EU member states’ commitments in areas like sanctions on Russia.

Second, the 2008 financial crisis and the possibility of Greece exiting the Eurozone drew attention to the fiscal policy differences between Europe’s industrialized north and less developed south and shook the foundations of the monetary union. The EU has not yet weathered this particular storm, and while perhaps not as prominent in the news due to other challenges, the fiscal situation in Greece remains very precarious. Member states and the IMF remain focused on resolving the crisis, but the natural tension between painful economic reforms and the associated political and humanitarian costs remains.

Third, governments across the EU are contending with the very real threat of domestic terrorism and for-

eign fighters. Horrific attacks have galvanized European leaders to action, but significant challenges remain as the necessity for enhanced counterterrorism and intelligence measures interact with real concerns regarding privacy.

Fourth, an alarming nationalist trend has emerged in several countries across the Union. Although nationalism has, of course, existed for years across the Continent, it has been exacerbated by the migrant crisis. In some countries, governments have embraced a brand of “illiberal democracy” which calls into question the very democratic values of the EU and the four freedoms that make up its core.

Every member state signed up for these values when they joined the Union—many of which had to enact difficult reforms to make them a reality. It is unfortunate and worrying that we have seen an erosion of support for these principles in some corners, a dynamic that deserves increased attention and understanding.

Fifth, Russia continues to place pressure on the EU and poses a threat to the security of EU countries in the east. Ukraine is the clearest example, where Ukrainian aspirations for an association agreement with the EU were met with the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea and subsequent invasion of eastern Ukraine.

We have worked closely with the EU to establish and maintain a sanctions regime on Russia that is having a measurable impact. We must stay united on sanctions until the Minsk II agreement is fully implemented and Crimea is returned to Ukrainian control.

For years, Russia has also sought to erode support for EU institutions through a sustained propaganda campaign across the Union. We understand that Russia works to fund and influence anti-EU political parties, think tanks, NGOs, and media voices within the Union and among aspirant countries.

Russia is using the very strengths of Europe’s democratic societies against it—free press, civil society, and open debate. We should be prepared to push back against these revanchist efforts, not through propaganda, but a clear and forceful debate on facts.

Russia has not been reluctant to use its energy resources as a weapon as it seeks to pursue its ambitions, including by withholding energy exports to Europe in order to extract concessions on other issues. Much of Europe imports a considerable share of its oil and gas supplies from Russia.

The EU plays an important role in negotiating energy deals with Russia and must constantly contend with the threat that the country poses to the energy needs of member states. The collective negotiating power the EU wields with Russia is critical to ensuring the individual energy security of all EU nations.

Finally, UK Prime Minister Cameron is negotiating a new settlement between Britain and the 27 other members of the EU prior to a referendum this summer on the UK's continued participation in the EU. Although the Prime Minister has said that the "best answer" is for the UK to remain part of a reformed EU, it is up to the British citizens to vote to remain within the Union.

All of this matters greatly to the United States. EU member states include some of our oldest and closest allies in the world. Our partnership with the EU has afforded us the possibility of addressing some of the most challenging international issues—this partnership has made us safer and stronger.

We also draw great economic benefit from a stable EU—the Union is our largest trading partner and our economies are intertwined in beneficial ways for citizens on both sides of the Atlantic. This partnership is vital to our interests, but only works if the EU's institutions are vibrant and able to respond to the challenges before it.

While many of these problems will be up to the EU member states to resolve, I strongly believe that we should stand in solidarity with the Union through this difficult period and take tangible action to support our friends.

First, we must continue to make clear our support for the democratic principles that serve as the basis for the EU and should be clear in speaking out against the growing chorus of illiberal voices. The U.S. should reenergize ties with civil society across the continent, especially in Central and Eastern Europe where strong civil society connections established after the Cold War atrophied as attention shifted elsewhere.

We also need to reinvigorate the transatlantic dialogue—among governments, think tanks, NGOs, and civil society organizations—on these issues. The transatlantic relationship always has and always will benefit from enhanced ties among our people.

The U.S. should also work to develop a new generation of foreign policy and security policy leaders and analysts that focus on Europe and the centrality that the continent has for our interests.

Second, we should support European efforts to bolster energy security across the continent in a way that ensures reliability and decreased dependence on Russian supply.

Third, we should continue to work with Europe on strengthening security, its border controls, and the vitality of the Schengen visa-free zone. This means sharing of intelligence and best practices on how to prevent terrorist attacks before they happen. I also want to applaud the administration's intention to invest \$3.4 billion into the European Reassurance Initiative, which will ensure a sustained U.S. military presence in Europe to help deter further Russian aggression.

Fourth, we should continue our robust support for the UN High Commis-

sioner for Refugees, International Organizations for Migration, and several outstanding NGOs which work directly with refugees and migrants across Europe. We should be proud of this commitment and continue to support the most vulnerable populations.

Fifth, we should continue to work closely with the EU and member states on working to ensure that the Minsk II deal is fully implemented. Success to date has been rooted in U.S.-EU solidarity, and we must finish the job—the sanctions regime must remain in place until Minsk II is realized and Crimea is returned to Ukrainian control.

Finally, we should continue our robust support for Ukraine while holding the government accountable to progress in the fight against corruption. I am concerned by the recent departure of Ukraine's Minister of Economy who resigned in protest against the slow pace of reform and anticorruption efforts.

The U.S. Congress passed two pieces of legislation last year supporting Ukraine's economy, Ukrainian civil society, and the government's broad-based reform efforts. Although some progress has been made, we must finish the job.

The success of Ukraine will be the success of Europe and the ideals that have drawn sovereign states to join its ranks for the last 75 years. I call on this body to continue to support Ukraine's reformers throughout civil society and government as they continue to make real strides towards integration with the west and adoption of the democratic ideals that we uphold.

More importantly, I again call upon Ukraine's leaders to prove that they are serious about countering corruption. The international community's patience in this regard exists, but is not limitless. We need to see concrete results soon.

In 2012, the Nobel Peace prize was awarded in recognition of the EU's central role in providing stability in Europe. The chairman of the Nobel committee said the following at the ceremony: "We are not gathered here today in the belief that the EU is perfect. We are gathered in the belief that here in Europe we must solve our problems together. For that purpose we need institutions that can enter into the necessary compromises. We need institutions to ensure that both nation-states and individuals exercise self-control and moderation. In a world of so many dangers, compromise, self-control and moderation are the principal needs of the 21st century."

These words continue to ring true today as pressure on the Union grows. Across the ocean here in the U.S., we should resolutely stand in solidarity with our friends in Europe and the principles they embrace. Never before has the EU been so challenged or our transatlantic alliance so valuable. We must bolster our ties this year and renew our commitment to a robust transatlantic relationship.

GENERIC DRUG USER FEE AMENDMENTS: ACCELERATING PATIENT ACCESS TO GENERIC DRUGS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

GENERIC DRUG USER FEE AMENDMENTS: ACCELERATING PATIENT ACCESS TO GENERIC DRUGS

In December, the president signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act, a bill to fix No Child Left Behind and proof that this committee can work together to tackle very difficult issues.

But a law not properly implemented isn't worth the paper it's written on, which is why I'm going to be working with Senator Murray to set up a strong oversight process during 2016 to make sure the teachers, governors, chief state school officers, parents and students who counted on us to fix that law see that it's implemented properly.

We're here today for a similar purpose: to conduct oversight of the 2012 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Safety and Innovation Act—specifically the law's Generic Drug User Fee Amendments, which are fees negotiated between the FDA and generic drug makers to give the agency additional resources intended to speed the review of generic drugs.

This is Congress' first oversight hearing since these agreements were passed in 2012, and it comes at a critical time for patients: Despite the FDA receiving nearly \$1 billion in user fees since 2012 as a result of these user fee agreements, performance is not living up to Congress' or patients' expectations, as the number of generic drugs approved per year remains about the same.

The user fee agreements are due to be reauthorized next year, and discussions between the FDA and industry are already underway—making now the appropriate time for us to better understand whether or not these 2012 agreements are working to give Americans better access to generic drugs.

The generic drug program, established by the Hatch-Waxman Amendments over 30 years ago, has had great success increasing competition and lowering drug prices.

The program was created to make it easier for generic drugs to enter the market.

Let me quickly explain how this works: Once a drug is approved by the FDA, for example, Lipitor—which is widely used to help lower cholesterol—no other manufacturer can make that drug for a period of time. When that period of time expires, a manufacturer may make a copy of that drug—and we call that a generic drug.

That generic copy must also have FDA approval.

This generic approval process doesn't include full clinical trials, which often are long and expensive, contributing to higher prices for brand drugs.

As a result, more generic drugs in the market creates competition and lowers prices for consumers.

And today, 88 percent of prescription drugs purchased in the United States are generic drugs.

However, in 2012, 26 years after the law first passed, it became clear the generic drug approval program needed an overhaul.

More generic drugs were coming from overseas. Generic drug companies in China and India were inspected much less frequently than American companies, putting American

companies at a disadvantage and, more importantly, putting patients at risk.

There was a backlog of 4,700 applications waiting to be reviewed, and the median approval time to get review of a generic drug was 30 months, far surpassing the 180-day timeframe for review as laid out in the Hatch-Waxman amendments in 1984.

Additionally, in 2012, many generic sterile injectable drugs were in shortage, causing doctors and hospitals to scramble to ensure patients were getting the best treatment possible.

To address these problems, Congress passed the first Generic Drug User Fee Amendments (often referred to by its acronym GDUFA or as congressional staff and industry insiders call it—"Ga-DOO-Fa") as part of the FDA Safety and Innovation Act.

This built on the success of similar agreements that Congress had previously passed between drug and device manufacturers and their regulators in the FDA.

This user fee agreement was the first agreement between the generic industry and the FDA on how to improve the review process for generic drugs.

With the enactment of these amendments, Congress anticipated:

One: that generic drug facilities abroad would be brought up to the same standards as facilities in the United States; and

Two: that American patients would benefit from faster approval of generic drugs. These two actions would bring more competition to the market and lower the price of drugs for consumers.

But there are concerns about the implementation of this program.

Some progress has been made on the backlog of applications for generic drugs—some progress, but certainly not enough. In 2012 there was a backlog of 4,700 pending applications and that has now dropped to just over 3,500 applications pending approval, according to the Generic Pharmaceutical Association.

The HHS Inspector General has reported that the FDA is improving its inspections abroad, one of the important goals of the user fee agreements.

But, the troubling news is that it is taking longer for the FDA to get drugs through the approval process, and according to a survey of generic drug makers, the median approval times have slowed from 30 to 48 months.

According to one estimate, once there are six or more generic competitors, a drug costs about 10 percent of the brand price—so, these slower approval times mean less competition and higher costs for consumers.

This slowdown in approval time is despite the fact that the FDA has received nearly \$1 billion in user fees since this law was passed—that's funding that is on top of the money that Congress annually provides to the FDA through the appropriations bill.

That's about \$300 million a year, or 20 percent of the total amount that the FDA spent researching, inspecting, and reviewing all drugs—generic and brand name alike—in fiscal year 2015.

I understand that the FDA has met most of the goals laid out in the agreement for industry user fees for regulatory actions, hiring staff, and increasing inspections.

But I look forward to hearing whether these metrics are the most appropriate, given I continue to hear that generic drug approval is too slow from manufacturers and patients.

While industry provides funding according to the agreement, the American taxpayer, through the Congressional appropriations process, provided over 40 percent for the generic drug review program in fiscal year 2014, according to the FDA's financial report.

But the data points that matter to American people are generic drug approval times

and the number of approvals, which to them mean increased market competition, a reduction in drug shortages, and more, lower-cost drugs available for patients.

Another issue we're hearing a lot about is drug pricing—and here are some points to consider:

One: While the cost of drugs is a legitimate concern for many Americans—it's part of an even larger problem of rising health care costs.

Just this week, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) announced in its annual "Budget and Economic Outlook" that for the first time, federal spending for the major health care programs (Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, Obamacare) represents the largest fraction—more than 60 percent—of the projected growth in mandatory spending in 2016. CBO notes that this spending is partially driven by the increase in per capita health care costs.

Two: While we work to lower the cost of drugs, we need to invest in and incentivize the development of life-saving therapies.

Congress last year added \$2 billion in the appropriations process, bringing NIH's total budget in FY2016 up to around \$32 billion—but this is still less than what's spent in the private sector.

Members of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers of America, who only represent a portion of the market, spent over \$50 billion in FY2014 alone coming up with new cures and treatments.

The clinical trials required to prove that medicine is safe cost hundreds of millions of dollars, even for the ninety percent of drugs that fail. In addition, the regulatory approval process is lengthy, which also adds costs.

As a result of this effort, biotech and drug companies big and small have done remarkable things to help patients with diseases like HIV, Cystic Fibrosis, and cancer live longer, healthier lives—a critical development we do not want to interrupt.

Third: To best restrain the growth of drug prices we must encourage investment in life-saving therapies, avoid unnecessary regulatory burdens that slow down development and drive up costs, and ensure the marketplace remains competitive.

For the past year, this committee—in a bipartisan way—has been looking at ways to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden so we can get safe, innovative, life-saving therapies into patients' medicine cabinets more quickly.

At the same time, Sens. Collins and McCaskill, leaders of the Aging Committee, have been examining what improvements may be necessary to ensure that the FDA expedites applications for generic drugs to keep the marketplace competitive, which will help keep drug prices down, and I look forward to working with them on that effort.

The generic drug industry really is a remarkable story. Over the last 30 years—generic drugs have gone from a very small fraction of the marketplace to 88 percent. It's hard to imagine what the prescription drug market would look like today without generic drugs.

I look forward to hearing from our witness today to learn more about where Congress can help make improvements to the regulatory process and ensure that the FDA has the tools it needs to create a generic drug review system that functions as Congress intended and as American patients and taxpayers deserve.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DWAN EDWARDS AND BROCK OSWEILER

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize two outstanding and nationally prominent pro athletes, Carolina Panthers defensive tackle Dwan Edwards and Denver Broncos backup quarterback Brock Osweiler.

I am so proud that Montana will be well represented in this year's Super Bowl, and I am so proud to honor these men for their leadership and athletic accomplishments.

Dwan grew up in Columbus, MT, and graduated in 1999 from Columbus High School. He then went on to play for Oregon State University and eventually was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens in 2004, where he played for five seasons. In 2010, he was picked up by the Buffalo Bills for two seasons. He signed with the Carolina Panthers in 2012 and is now playing in his 12th NFL season.

Dwan has certainly not forgotten where he is from. He is currently making arrangements to bring former Columbus High School football coach John Smith out to watch Dwan play in his first Super Bowl game. This summer, he will put on the eighth Dwan Edwards Elite Football camp, where he spends a week in Billings helping young players develop their football skills.

Brock represents Kalispell, where he attended Flathead High School. He graduated in 2009 as an honor roll student and was coached by Russell McGarvel. Brock played college football for Arizona State and was drafted by the Denver Broncos in 2012.

During his time playing in the NFL, he has given back to Flathead and its football program by regularly sending letters of encouragement to the high school team and donating a Flathead Football captains board in 2014. The football team's captains' names are etched into the board each year, which serves as a great honor for these young leaders.

My biggest congratulations goes out to both of these fine men for representing the great State of Montana well, both on and off the field. Best of luck to you both in Super Bowl 50 this Sunday. Keep making Montana proud.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JEANNIE LEAVITT

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Col. Jeannie Leavitt on her recent selection as commander of the 57th Wing at Nellis Air Force Base. Colonel Leavitt is the first woman to command the wing, making her the highest ranking female officer to command at Nellis AFB. It gives me great pleasure to recognize her achievement in this historic moment.

Colonel Leavitt joined the U.S. Air Force in 1992 after earning her bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Texas and her

master's degree in aeronautics and astronautics from Stanford University. She completed pilot training at the top of her class in 1992, kicking off the start of her successful career. Since then, she has logged over 300 hours of combat, serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Operation Southern Watch.

In 1993, Colonel Leavitt became the first female fighter pilot and later the service's first woman to graduate from the Air Force Weapons School at Nellis AFB. In addition, in 2012, she became the Nation's first female fighter wing commander when she assumed command of the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina, and she will now be the first woman to assume command of the 57th Wing at the Silver State's Nellis AFB. She is truly a role model, demonstrating a great amount of strength and courage.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Colonel Leavitt for her courageous contributions to the United States of America. Her unwavering dedication to her career is commendable, and she stands as a shining example for future generations of heroes. Colonel Leavitt's service to her country and her bravery earn her a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our nation.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. Equally as important, it is crucial that female servicemembers and veterans have access to their specific health care needs. There are countless distinguished women who have made sacrifices beyond measure and deserve nothing but the best treatment. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation and will continue to fight until this becomes a reality.

During her tenure, Colonel Leavitt has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards of the Air Force. I am both humbled and honored by her service and am proud to have such a distinguished member of the Air Force serving in the State of Nevada. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Colonel Leavitt for all of her accomplishments and wish her well in all of her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO JANE ALBRIGHT

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate a true role model in the Nevada Wolf Pack community, women's basketball coach Jane Albright, on reaching a significant milestone of 500 collegiate basketball wins. This is a tremendous accomplishment for Ms. Albright, who has dedicated eight seasons to making Nevada women's basketball the best it can be.

Ms. Albright began her career coaching collegiate basketball in 1981, when she served as a graduate assistant for the University of Tennessee. She later spent one season as an assistant coach at the University of Cincinnati before taking on her first role as head coach at Northern Illinois. During her 10 seasons with this university, Ms. Albright led the women's basketball team in its most successful run in Northern Illinois history with a record of 188 wins to 110 losses from 1984-94.

Following her tenure at Northern Illinois, Ms. Albright coached the women's basketball team at the University of Wisconsin, where she revitalized the program. Ms. Albright led this team, which previously had experienced nine losing seasons, to eight consecutive winning seasons. Prior to her tenure with the University of Nevada, Reno, UNR, Ms. Albright served as head coach at Wichita State.

Beginning in 2008, Ms. Albright became a member of the Pack, taking on the role of UNR's head women's basketball coach. Throughout her first year at Nevada, Ms. Albright achieved the most wins as a first-year coach, with an overall record of 18 wins to 14 losses. In that same season, she also picked up her 400th career win when Nevada defeated Northern Iowa. In the 2013-14 season, Ms. Albright led the Wolf Pack in winning 12 Mountain West games, setting a program record for most conference wins in a single season and securing the number three seed for the Mountain West Championships.

She was also awarded the 2014 Carol Eckman Award this season, recognizing her for her commitment to the incredible student athletes on her team. On January 27, 2016, Ms. Albright reached her 500th career win, leading the Pack against San Diego State. Her ability as a coach is remarkable, and we are lucky to have someone like Ms. Albright representing UNR.

Aside from her incredible record as a coach, Ms. Albright also goes above and beyond to keep her team involved in the community, as well as in the classroom. In 2009-10 alone, UNR logged more than 530 hours of service to the city of Reno. Ms. Albright is a shining example of true leadership for our community.

Ms. Albright is an inspiration to many across northern Nevada both on and off the basketball court. Her enthusiasm and passion for her team have not gone unnoticed. Today I join citizens across the Silver State in congratulating Ms. Albright on this incredible achievement and wish her well as she continues to lead the Nevada Wolf Pack.●

REMEMBERING MICHAEL A. WERMUTH

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the life of Michael Wermuth of Birmingham, AL.

Michael Anthony Wermuth was born in Birmingham, AL, in 1946, was com-

missioned in the U.S. Army upon graduating from the University of Alabama, earned his law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law, and practiced law in Mobile, AL, as a partner of the firm Wilkins, Druhan & Wermuth. While in Mobile, Mike became involved in local politics and worked on the senatorial campaign of ADM Jeremiah A. Denton. Upon Admiral Denton's election to the Senate, Mike and his family moved to Washington where he served as Senator Denton's chief counsel and legislative director from 1980 to 1987.

After his time in the U.S. Senate, Mike served in the Department of Justice as a legislative counsel for civil rights and was Deputy Assistant Attorney General for legislative affairs. In 1989, he was named Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for drug enforcement policy and was instrumental in the implementation of President George H.W. Bush's national drug control strategy that was highly effective in reducing drug use and importation.

After 30 years of service, Mike retired as a colonel in the Army Reserves. That same year, he joined the RAND Corporation as the director of its homeland security program and was the executive director of a Federal advisory panel on terrorism. During his time at RAND, he worked on a variety of issues including infrastructure protection, emergency preparedness, risk management, border control, and intelligence.

After leaving RAND in 2010, Mike continued his work as a consultant there and served as an adjunct faculty member at the Texas A&M University Bush School of Government and Public Service. He taught graduate level online courses in homeland security defense. His influence in terrorism defense strategy was vast, and his enduring legacy will be his dedication to the stewardship of the next generation of policymakers.

I knew Mike for many years. In Mobile, we served in the same Army Reserve center. He was a conscientious and superior officer with a steady sense of duty and love of country. As a top member of Senator Denton's staff, he was dedicated, loyal, and effective. He was tireless in his work to advance the agenda in which Senator Denton so deeply believed. I can say his support and that of Senator Denton was critical to my appointment as U.S. attorney. In the U.S. Army, the U.S. Senate, the Department of Justice, the RAND Corporation, and as a teacher and lawyer, Mike always excelled. Discipline, work, loyalty, and patriotism were his hallmarks. He was indeed a talented American patriot.

Michael passed away on November 1, 2015. He is survived by his wonderful wife of 35 years, Fran; his children, Ken and Heather; and numerous other family members. His partner throughout, Fran is highly accomplished in her own right having served in top positions within the U.S. Marshals Service. Our

sympathy is extended to her, the family, and friends upon his passing.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEWPORT WINTER CARNIVAL

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, the 100th anniversary Newport Winter Carnival opens this week to great expectations. Citizens in Newport, NH, are pretty confident that theirs is the oldest continuous winter carnival in the Nation, and they are certain it is the very best.

Newport is a town of classic New England charm, nestled in the scenic hills of western New Hampshire. Much has changed in Newport since the town held its first winter carnival. A century ago, the swift currents of the Sugar River turned water wheels that powered the town's prosperous textile mills. During long winters, townspeople enjoyed skiing, skating, snowshoeing, and other activities that were at the heart of the first Newport Winter Carnival.

Today those mills are no longer in operation, but their handsome brick buildings have been repurposed as offices, shops, restaurants, and apartments. Like many other former mill towns in rural New Hampshire, Newport has weathered economic challenges in recent decades. During many visits over the years, I have admired the town's resilience and indomitable spirit, which have earned it the nickname "the Sunshine Town."

Despite a century of dramatic changes and challenges, the Newport Winter Carnival has been a proud constant. People from neighboring communities come to Newport in mid-winter to enjoy the warmth and friendliness of their neighbors and to have lots of old-fashioned fun.

This year's carnival will begin with a reenactment. In 1917, a Dartmouth student from Newport skied the 29 miles from Hanover to his hometown to enjoy the Winter Carnival. His feat will be reenacted on Friday by his grandson and five others, who will light the ceremonial torch on Newport Common to start the festival. Festivities this year include the traditional Carnival Queen contest, a parade and talent pageant, broom hockey games, skijoring, and an arm wrestling competition with "armed and ready" Cathy Merrill, a Newport resident who recently won gold medals at the U.S. Arm Wrestling Nationals. The carnival will close on Sunday evening, February 14, with a fireworks display.

I salute the Newport carnival committee and the scores of additional volunteers who put in countless hours to make the carnival a success. For them, this is truly a labor of love. I also salute the townspeople and families of Newport, who warmly welcome visitors not only for the carnival, but year-round, and always make us proud to be Granite Staters.

Congratulations to the entire Newport community, and I wish everyone

yet another successful Newport Winter Carnival.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) reported that he had signed the following enrolled bills, which were previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

H.R. 515. An act to protect children and others from sexual abuse and exploitation, including sex trafficking and sex tourism, by providing advance notice of intended travel by registered sex offenders outside the United States to the government of the country of destination, requesting foreign governments to notify the United States when a known sex offender is seeking to enter the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4188. An act to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2016 and 2017, and for other purposes.

At 11:45 a.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 bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1675. An act 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.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 28) to establish the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2017.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 29) to authorize the use of the rotunda and Emancipation Hall of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in connection with the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 109. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the foot soldiers who participated in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1675. An act 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 Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Army nomination of Lt. Gen. John W. Nicholson, Jr., to be General.

*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. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KIRK, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2497. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 2498. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a pilot program to improve care for the most costly Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries through the use of comprehensive and effective care management while reducing costs to the Federal Government for these beneficiaries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 2499. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve access to health care through expanded health savings accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BENNET:

S. 2500. A bill to provide for the establishment of a health insurance premium reduction program to ensure that health insurance premiums remain low for American families; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2501. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the exemption for certain aircraft from the excise taxes on transportation by air; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. COTTON, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2502. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 2503. A bill to establish requirements for reusable medical devices relating to cleaning instructions and validation data, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2504. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow for advertising relating to certain activities in compliance with State law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2505. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2506. A bill to restore statutory rights to the people of the United States from forced arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SULLIVAN:

S. 2507. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide payment of Medal of Honor special pension under such title to the surviving spouse of a deceased Medal of Honor recipient, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2508. A bill to reduce sports-related concussions in youth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KING, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 2509. A bill to improve the Government-wide management of Federal property; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 362. A resolution recognizing the contributions of the Montagnard indigenous tribespeople of the Central Highlands of Vietnam to the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War, and condemning the ongoing violation of human rights by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. Res. 363. A resolution congratulating the University of Mount Union football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Football Championship; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr.

CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 364. A resolution relative to the death of Marlow Cook, former United States Senator for the Commonwealth of Kentucky; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 356

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 356, a bill to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications.

S. 524

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

S. 591

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 728

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 728, a bill to provide for programs and activities with respect to the prevention of underage drinking.

S. 800

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr.

ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 800, a bill to improve, coordinate, and enhance rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health.

S. 979

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 979, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 1049

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1049, a bill to allow the financing by United States persons of sales of agricultural commodities to Cuba.

S. 1239

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1239, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to the ethanol waiver for the Reid vapor pressure limitations under that Act.

S. 1302

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1302, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 1455

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1455, a bill to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance.

S. 2021

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2021, a bill to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, and for other purposes.

S. 2185

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the names of the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 2185, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the fight against breast cancer.

S. 2332

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2332, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system.

S. 2373

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 2377

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HENRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2377, a bill to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and protect and secure the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2415

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2415, a bill to implement integrity measures to strengthen the EB-5 Regional Center Program in order to promote and reform foreign capital investment and job creation in American communities.

S. 2423

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2423, a bill making appropriations to address the heroin and opioid drug abuse epidemic for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

S. 2446

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2446, a bill to amend subtitle D of the Solid Waste Disposal Act to encourage recovery and beneficial use of coal combustion residuals and establish requirements for the proper management and disposal of coal combustion residuals that are protective of human health and the environment.

S. 2452

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2452, a bill to prohibit the use of funds to make payments to Iran relating to the settlement of claims brought before the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal until Iran has paid certain compensatory damages awarded to United States persons by United States courts.

S. 2464

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr.

COATS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2464, a bill to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person.

S. 2466

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2466, a bill to amend the Safe Water Drinking Act to authorize the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to notify the public if a State agency and public water system are not taking action to address a public health risk associated with drinking water requirements.

S. 2487

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2487, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to identify mental health care and suicide prevention programs and metrics that are effective in treating women veterans as part of the evaluation of such programs by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

S. 2495

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2495, a bill to amend the Social Security Act relating to the use of determinations made by the Commissioner.

S. RES. 184

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 184, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that conversion therapy, including efforts by mental health practitioners to change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of an individual, is dangerous and harmful and should be prohibited from being practiced on minors.

S. RES. 349

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 349, a resolution congratulating the Farm Credit System on the celebration of its 100th anniversary.

S. RES. 355

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 355, a resolution designating the week beginning February 7, 2016, as "National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week".

AMENDMENT NO. 3249

At the request of Mr. KIRK, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3249 intended to be proposed to S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2504. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow for advertising relating to certain activities in compliance with State law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Marijuana Advertising In Legal States Act to allow small businesses and newspapers in States that have legalized marijuana to advertise marijuana products.

In the last few years, voters in Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Alaska overwhelmingly approved initiatives to legalize the adult use and sale of marijuana. Additionally, 23 States, the District of Columbia and Guam have legalized full medical marijuana programs, and 17 more States have approved more limited medical marijuana programs. In many of these States, State-approved dispensaries are up and running, bringing the industry out of the shadows of the black market and creating a safe, regulated system in much of America.

Despite passage of these state laws, marijuana remains stuck in the past as a Schedule I substance according to the Federal Controlled Substances Act, CSA. This designation means it is a felony to distribute, possess or consume it. Recognizing this discrepancy, the Obama administration issued a memorandum in 2013 which held: so long as certain enforcement criteria were met, Federal law enforcement entities would not interfere with legal state marijuana activity. Congress then followed suit and barred the Department of Justice from expending resources in contravention of state medical marijuana laws.

However, since marijuana is designated as a Schedule I substance, according to Federal law it is still unlawful for anyone to place an advertisement for marijuana, including a medical marijuana product, in any newspaper, magazine, handbill or other publication, even if that activity is legal under State law. This creates a legally conflicted reality in States, like Oregon, where marijuana is legal for those marijuana businesses that seek to advertise in local newspapers, as well as for the many newspapers around the country that rely on advertising revenue.

Further complicating the matter, the United States Postal Service, USPS, recently declared that it is illegal to mail any items, including newspapers, which contain advertisements offering

to buy or sell marijuana, even if the marijuana-related activity is in compliance with a state law. The USPS stated that if it uncovers any items deemed to be “non-mailable,” it would report the item to the Postal Inspection Service, which would refer it to a law enforcement agency for investigation. Despite the 2013 Obama administration memo indicating Federal law enforcement would not interfere, these businesses are concerned. Small businesses and community newspapers rely on the USPS to reach their customers, especially in rural areas. The USPS policy could have the effect of stopping all written marijuana advertisements in states that have already made the decision to legalize marijuana, which would be a blow to newspapers and small businesses that are already struggling financially.

My proposal would create a narrow exception in CSA to allow for the written advertisement of an activity, involving marijuana, if it is in compliance with State law.

I am pleased to be joined on this bill by my colleague from Oregon Senator JEFF MERKLEY who has worked closely with me over the years to ensure that the decision that Oregon voters made at the polls is respected by the Federal Government.

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. 2504

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 “Marijuana Advertising in Legal States Act of 2016” or the “MAILS Act”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT.

Section 403(c)(1) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 843(c)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “This paragraph does not apply to an advertisement to the extent that the advertisement relates to an activity, involving marijuana, that is in compliance with the law of the State in which that activity takes place.”.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2506. A bill to restore statutory rights to the people of the United States from forced arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss legislation I am introducing today to protect workers and families in Vermont and across the country who are being forced to give up crucial rights because of legal fine print forced on them by corporations.

The Restoring Statutory Rights Act combats the injustice of forced arbitration. It will ensure that hardworking men and women can vindicate their rights in court instead of being forced

into a private, shadow justice program. Some of the contracts people sign automatically, with little, tiny type, say: If we overbill you, if we give you defective equipment, if we do anything to you, it will go to arbitration. Guess what. The only people who primarily get to pick the arbitrators are those who side with the corporations.

Mr. President, I am introducing this legislation on behalf of myself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE.

Today I want to speak about a problem that many Americans are unaware of but that affects all of us in our daily lives. When Americans sign cell phone agreements, rent an apartment, or accept a contract for a job, most of us focus on the service we are about to receive or that we are about to provide. What Americans do not realize—until it is too late—is that too often we are also signing away crucial legal rights. Legal fine print tips the scales against us. It is forcing consumers into private arbitration, denying us of our constitutional right to protect ourselves in court and to have others learn about the harm caused by corporations.

This problem has meaningful, real-world implications for Americans’ ability to seek justice. When victims are forced into private arbitration, their cases proceed without public record. The cases cannot serve as precedent for future injustices, and the plaintiffs—hardworking consumers—cannot obtain a meaningful appeal. An arbitrator is selected by the corporate defendant, creating incentives that favor repeat corporate players. In many cases, forced arbitration stops victims’ legal actions altogether: by requiring victims to waive their legal right to join with other victims in a class action, arbitration clauses often remove the crucial tool that plaintiffs need to afford pursuing their claims.

The injustice of forced arbitration affects consumers, workers, seniors, veterans, and families in every State across the country. The cases are heart-wrenching. In one recent case, a pregnant woman suffered a tragic miscarriage and was not able to work for 7 days. When she returned to work, she was fired. When this woman attempted to hold her employer accountable in court for violating the Family and Medical Leave Act and her State’s pregnancy discrimination laws, her case was forced into private arbitration. We do not know the outcome of the case, but that is precisely the problem. In private arbitration, there is no way to know if she obtained justice, no precedent to deter other employers from such behavior, and no public accountability for the corporation that may have violated both State and Federal law.

In another recent case, an hourly employee at a hospital realized she was not being paid for all of the time she worked because her employer’s payroll system was “rounding down” her time. When she attempted to bring a class action on behalf of all the hourly employees at the hospital, her lawsuit was dismissed and forced into individual arbitration. To seek justice, the hospital employees must now pay to bring their complaints case-by-case, even though

the cost of bringing an individual arbitration almost certainly outweighs the lost wages any worker would receive.

Forced arbitration has also been a favorite tool for well-heeled corporations to make an end-run around our civil rights laws. When working women are paid less for doing the same job; when minorities are denied promotions despite their success; or when banks target poor minority neighborhoods with predatory loans, the closed and unaccountable forum of private arbitration lets them conceal their discriminatory actions.

This system of forced arbitration denies individuals access to justice. But it also guts vital protections we have fought for in our laws. Whether we are talking about family and medical leave, equal pay, or crucial civil rights protections, what strength do our laws have when the legal process Congress created to enforce them is stripped away without recourse? Through legal fine print, corporations are giving themselves a “get out of jail free” pass that guts citizens’ rights and shields bad actors from accountability.

When Congress passed the Federal Arbitration Act, it was intended to give sophisticated businesses an alternative venue to resolve their disputes. There is a valid role for arbitration when parties choose it willingly, after a dispute arises, as an alternative to court. But arbitration should not be forced upon consumers and workers through take-it-or-leave-it contracts they have no real choice but to accept. And it should not—it must not—prevent Americans from enforcing their rights under fundamental State and Federal laws.

Nor should Federal law interfere when States take action to address the injustice of forced arbitration. A full 47 of our 50 States have tried to protect their citizens in some way from forced arbitration, but these efforts have been thwarted by Federal law. In Vermont, lawmakers required that arbitration clauses be accompanied by a written acknowledgement signed by both parties, to ensure that consumers were aware of them. This reasonable, commonsense requirement was invalidated because it conflicted with Federal law.

Following a 2011 Supreme Court case, *AT&T v. Concepcion*, other efforts in Vermont and across the country to protect citizens from forced arbitration have also been invalidated. Vermonters who tried to sue their phone service provider for disturbing them with unwanted text messages and Vermont drivers who tried to sue their car insurers over coverage have all been forced into private arbitration despite conflicting measures in Vermont law. This restriction on States’ authority is wrong, especially when the enforceability of contracts is traditionally an area left to State law. This is not a partisan issue. Both Republican and Democratic attorneys general have repeatedly spoken out against the Federal Arbitration Act’s intrusion on State sovereignty and a State’s compelling interest in protecting the health and welfare of its citizens.

Congress must act to stop these abuses. That is why today I am introducing legislation to limit the injustice of forced arbitration and protect Americans' right to seek justice in our courts. The Restoring Statutory Rights Act will ensure that critical State and Federal laws can actually be effective, by ensuring that citizens cannot be stripped of their ability to enforce their rights using our independent justice system. It will also ensure that when States take action to address forced arbitration, they are not preempted by an overbroad reading of our Federal arbitration laws.

This effort is supported by the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, the National Employment Lawyers' Association, Americans For Financial Reform, Alliance for Justice, Earthjustice and consumer groups such as Consumers Union, Public Citizen, the National Consumer Law Center, and Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety. These groups and many others have worked tirelessly to highlight the injustice of forced arbitration and the unparalleled scope and number of people it affects.

All Senators should care about the implications of forced arbitration for statutes that this body writes, debates, and enacts into law. Senators should also care about their home States' ability to protect consumers from unconscionable contracts when their State chooses to act. I urge Members to support this bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the widespread and harmful impact of forced arbitration—mandatory arbitration. Last November, the New York Times published a three-part investigative series, which I recommend to every Member, on the pervasive use of forced arbitration—or mandatory arbitration. Mandatory arbitration is a privatized system of justice that corporations rely on when their customers or workers seek justice for being cheated, injured, or mistreated.

The series in the New York Times, while shocking, illustrates something that I have been saying for a long time: Mandatory arbitration agreements—forced arbitration agreements, which are often buried in the fine print of employment and service contracts, severely restrict Americans' access to justice by stripping consumers and workers of their legal rights and insulating corporations from liability. From nursing home contracts and employment agreements to credit card and cell phone contracts, corporate America uses forced arbitration clauses to rig the system against ordinary Americans in a wide variety of cases.

My staff recently heard from a Minnesota lawyer who represents families with serious injury and wrongful death claims. He told the heartbreaking

story of a man who suffered from dementia and was eventually checked into a nursing home. Twenty-one days after entering the home, it became clear to the man's family that his life was in danger; he was rapidly losing weight and had fallen into a coma. He was then sent to a hospital, where it was discovered that he was suffering from "profound dehydration." Unfortunately, the hospital could not correct the harm caused by the nursing home, and the man died shortly thereafter. He was 71 years old. Then, instead of being able to take the nursing home to court, the man's family was forced to settle their wrongful death claim through arbitration. When all was said and done, the arbitrators actually received greater compensation than the family, and the nursing home got away with a slap on the wrist.

Egregious cases like that of this Minnesota family are not rare. Time and again, arbitration clauses stack the deck in favor of big business and against consumers, as if the deck weren't stacked enough already. As the number of unbelievable stories grows, the need for reform has become clearer and more urgent. That is why I am proud to be joining Senator LEAHY, as well as Senators BLUMENTHAL, DURBIN, and WHITEHOUSE, in introducing the Restoring Statutory Rights Act to ensure that Americans can enforce their civil rights.

As Members of Congress, we have fought hard to pass legislation that will protect Americans from discrimination. This critical work is undermined, however, if we strip away their right to go to court and instead force these claims into a privatized justice system.

Remember that corporations can write the rules for the arbitration proceedings; everything can be done in secret, without public rulings; discovery can be limited, making it hard for consumers to get the evidence they need to prove their case; and there is no meaningful judicial review, so there is not much a consumer or an employee can do if the arbitrator gets it wrong. It is simply not fair.

I have also introduced with a number of colleagues my own bill, the Arbitration Fairness Act, which would fix these unfair practices by amending the Federal Arbitration Act to prohibit the use of mandatory, predispute arbitration agreements in consumer, employment, civil rights, and anti-trust cases. This bill gives Americans a real choice: If a consumer or worker wants to take his claim into arbitration, then, by all means, he is free to do so, provided that the corporation is willing to do so as well. However, if the consumer or employee wants to go to court, that option will once again be available.

To put it simply, both of these bills are about reopening the courthouse doors to American consumers and workers, because the courthouse doors never should have been closed in the first place.

I ask others to please join me in fighting back against mandatory arbitration and cosponsor the Restoring Statutory Rights Act and the Arbitration Fairness Act.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 362—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MONTAGNARD INDIGENOUS TRIBESPEOPLE OF THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM TO THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, AND CONDEMNING THE ONGOING VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 362

Whereas the Montagnards are an indigenous tribespeople living in Vietnam's Central Highlands region;

Whereas the Montagnards were driven into the mountains by invading Vietnamese and Cambodians in the 9th century;

Whereas French Roman Catholic missionaries converted many of the Montagnards in the 19th century and American Protestant missionaries subsequently converted many to various Protestant sects;

Whereas, during the 1960s, the United States Mission in Saigon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and United States Army Special Forces, also known as the Green Berets, trained the Montagnards in unconventional warfare;

Whereas an estimated 61,000 Montagnards, out of an estimated population of 1,000,000, fought alongside the United States and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces against the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong;

Whereas the Central Intelligence Agency, United States Special Forces, and the Montagnards cooperated on the Village Defense Program, a forerunner to the War's Strategic Hamlet Program, and an estimated 43,000 Montagnards were organized into "Civilian Irregular Defense Groups" (CIDGs) to provide protection for the areas around the CIDGs' operational bases;

Whereas, at its peak, the CIDGs had approximately 50 operational bases, with each base containing a contingent of two United States Army officers and ten enlisted men, and an ARVN unit of the same size, and each base trained 200 to 700 Montagnards, or "strikers";

Whereas another 18,000 Montagnards were reportedly enlisted into mobile strike forces, and various historical accounts describe a strong bond between the United States Special Forces and the Montagnards, in contrast to Vietnamese Special Forces and ARVN troops;

Whereas the lives of thousands of members of the United States Armed Forces were saved as a result of the heroic actions of the Montagnards, who fought loyally and bravely alongside United States Special Forces in the Vietnam War;

Whereas, after the fall of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, thousands of Montagnards fled across the border into Cambodia to escape persecution;

Whereas the Government of the reunified Vietnamese nation, renamed the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, deeply distrusted the Montagnards who had sided with the United States and ARVN forces and subjected them to imprisonment and various forms of discrimination and oppression after the Vietnam War ended;

Whereas, after the Vietnam War, the United States Government resettled large numbers of Montagnards, mostly in North Carolina, and an estimated several thousand Montagnards currently reside in North Carolina, which is the largest population of Montagnards residing outside of Vietnam;

Whereas the Socialist Republic of Vietnam currently remains a one-party state, ruled and controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which continues to restrict freedom of religion, movement, land and property rights, and political expression;

Whereas officials of the Government of Vietnam have forced Montagnards to publicly denounce their religion, arrested and imprisoned Montagnards who organized public demonstrations, and mistreated Montagnards in detention;

Whereas some Montagnard Americans have complained that Vietnamese authorities either have prevented them from visiting Vietnam or have subjected them to interrogation upon re-entering the country on visits;

Whereas the Department of State's 2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices ("2014 Human Rights Report") documents that, despite Vietnam's significant economic growth, some indigenous and ethnic minority communities benefitted little from improved economic conditions, even though such communities formed a majority of the population in certain areas, including the Northwest and Central Highlands and portions of the Mekong Delta;

Whereas the 2014 Human Rights Report states that, although Vietnamese law prohibits discrimination against ethnic minorities, such social discrimination was longstanding and persistent, notably in the Central Highlands;

Whereas the 2014 Human Rights Report documents that land rights protesters have reported regular instances of government authorities physically harassing and intimidating them at land expropriation sites around the country;

Whereas, in its 2015 Annual Report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) references the accounts of Montagnards, including children, fleeing persecution in Vietnam to seek refugee status in Cambodia, only to suffer harsh conditions while hiding in the jungles and forcibly returned to Vietnam by Cambodian officials;

Whereas USCIRF reports the Government of Vietnam continues to detain numerous prisoners of conscience and the number of new church registrations is exceptionally low when compared to the thousands of congregations that either choose to remain independent or are denied registration, leaving them no choice but to operate illegally;

Whereas the Department of State's 2014 International Religious Freedom Report documents that leaders of unregistered Protestant denominations continued to report that local authorities in the Central Highlands discriminated against their followers by threatening to exclude them from state programs if they did not denounce their faith and that students who were openly Protestant often suffered discrimination; and

Whereas USCIRF recommends that Vietnam be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) as ongoing human rights violations "serve as a cautionary tale of the potential for backsliding in religious freedoms

when vigilance in monitoring such abuses ceases": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions of the Montagnards who fought loyally and bravely with United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and who continue to suffer persecution in Vietnam as a result of this relationship;

(2) condemns ongoing actions by the Government of Vietnam to suppress basic human rights and civil liberties for all its citizens;

(3) calls on the Government of Vietnam to allow human rights groups access to all regions of the country and to end restrictions of basic human rights, including the right for Montagnards to practice their Christian faith freely, the right to land and property, freedom of movement, the right to retain ethnic identity and culture, and access to an adequate standard of living; and

(4) urges the President and Congress to develop policies that support Montagnards and other marginalized ethnic minority and indigenous populations in Vietnam and reflect United States interests and commitment to upholding human rights and democracy abroad.

SENATE RESOLUTION 363—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2015 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION III FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 363

Whereas, on December 18, 2015, the University of Mount Union Purple Raiders football team (referred to in this preamble as the "Purple Raiders") won the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the "NCAA") Division III Football Championship with a 49 to 35 victory over the University of St. Thomas Tommies;

Whereas the head coach of the Purple Raiders led the team to a national championship win in his third year as the head coach of the Purple Raiders;

Whereas the University of Mount Union has won 12 national championships in NCAA Division III football;

Whereas the victory of the Purple Raiders broke their own record for the most national titles in football held by a program in any division;

Whereas the Purple Raiders defeated the 2014 national champion, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Warhawks, in the semifinal of the 2015 season, 36 to 6, to advance to the national championship game;

Whereas, in the 2015 national championship game—

(1) the running back of the Purple Raiders, number 34, rushed for 220 yards and 2 touchdowns on 25 carries;

(2) the quarterback of the Purple Raiders, number 11, threw for 201 yards and 3 touchdowns with zero interceptions;

(3) the wide receiver of the Purple Raiders, number 3, caught 5 passes for 127 yards, including a 63-yard catch;

(4) the freshman defensive back of the Purple Raiders, number 21, recorded the only interception by any player in the game;

Whereas, in the 2015 football season, the Purple Raiders—

(1) finished with a record of 14 wins and zero losses;

(2) continued a 103-game regular season winning streak, which began in 2005; and

(3) won the Ohio Athletic Conference championship, which was—

(A) the 24th consecutive Ohio Athletic Conference title won by the Purple Raiders; and
(B) the 27th conference title won by the Purple Raiders;

Whereas, in the 2015 football season—

(1) the junior offensive lineman of the Purple Raiders, number 52, was named the winner of the Division III Rimington Award, which is awarded to the most outstanding center in NCAA Division III football;

(2) the senior defensive lineman of the Purple Raiders, number 90, was named to the American Football Coaches Association Division III Coaches' All-America team;

(3) the senior linebacker of the Purple Raiders, number 4, a 3-time team captain, was named—

(A) a winner of the NCAA ELITE 90 award for the third straight year; and

(B) the Academic All-American of the Year for Division III football by the College Sports Information Directors of America; and

(4) the senior safety of the Purple Raiders, number 31, was named 1 of the 10 finalists for the Gagliardi Trophy, which is awarded to the top all-around player in NCAA Division III football;

Whereas the President and the director of athletics of the University of Mount Union have fostered a continuing tradition of athletic and academic excellence at the University of Mount Union;

Whereas the University of Mount Union has proven to be a perennial championship contender in NCAA Division III football; and

Whereas the marching band, cheerleaders, students, faculty, alumni, and fans of the University of Mount Union have supported the Purple Raiders through a season filled with triumph: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Mount Union Purple Raiders football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Football Championship;

(2) recognizes the players, coaches, staff, and fans of the University of Mount Union Purple Raiders football team, whose hard work led to the team winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Football Championship; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate prepare an official copy of this resolution for presentation to—

(A) the President of the University of Mount Union;

(B) the director of athletics of the University of Mount Union; and

(C) the head coach of the University of Mount Union football team.

SENATE RESOLUTION 364—RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF MARLOW COOK, FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. REID of Nevada, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY,

Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 364

Whereas Marlow Cook was born in New York in 1926;

Whereas during World War II, Marlow Cook entered the United States Navy at age seventeen and served in the submarine service in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans;

Whereas Marlow Cook graduated from University of Louisville Law School in 1950, was admitted to the Kentucky bar and practiced law in Louisville, Kentucky;

Whereas Marlow Cook was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives in 1957 in which he served two terms and was elected as a Jefferson County judge in 1961 and re-elected in 1965;

Whereas Marlow Cook as Jefferson County judge purchased and refurbished the boat known today as the Belle of Louisville, an essential element of the famed annual Kentucky Derby Festival;

Whereas Marlow Cook was first elected to the United States Senate in 1968 and served as a Senator for the Commonwealth of Kentucky until 1974;

Whereas Marlow Cook was the first Roman Catholic elected to major statewide office in the Commonwealth of Kentucky;

Whereas Marlow Cook was known for his integrity, humility and dedication to public service: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Marlow Cook, former member of the United States Senate.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable Marlow Cook.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3280. Ms. CANTWELL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3077 submitted by Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and

for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3281. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3263 submitted by Mr. INHOFE and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3282. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3129 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3283. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3247 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3284. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3248 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3285. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3249 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3286. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3287. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3288. Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3289. Mr. CARPER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3290. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3280. Ms. CANTWELL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3077 submitted by Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be stricken, insert the following:

SEC. 4501. STUDY ON ENERGY MARKET REGULATORY COORDINATION AND INFORMATION COLLECTION.

(a) STUDY.—The Energy Information Administration, in consultation with the Com-

modity Futures Trading Commission, the Department of Energy, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, shall conduct a study—

(1) to identify the factors that affect the pricing of crude oil, refined petroleum products, natural gas, and electricity; and

(2) to review and assess—

(A) existing statutory authorities and regulatory coordination relating to the oversight and regulation of markets critical to the energy security of the United States; and

(B) the need for additional information collection for and statutory authority within the Federal Government to effectively oversee and regulate physical markets critical to the energy security of the United States.

(b) ELEMENTS OF STUDY.—The study shall include—

(1) an examination of price formation of crude oil, refined petroleum products, natural gas, and electricity in physical markets;

(2) an examination of relevant international regulatory regimes;

(3) an examination of changes in energy market transparency, liquidity, and structure and the impact of those changes on price formation in physical markets;

(4) an examination of the effect of increased financial investment in energy commodities on energy prices and the energy security of the United States; and

(5) an examination of the owners of the 50 largest volumes of oil and natural gas, as well as storage and transportation capacity for each.

(c) REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Energy Information Administration shall issue a final report not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act that—

(1) describes the results of the study; and

(2) provides options for appropriate additional Federal regulatory coordination of oversight and regulatory actions to ensure transparency of energy product pricing and the elimination of excessive speculation, including recommendations on data collection and analysis to be carried out by the Energy Information Administration.

(d) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study, the Energy Information Administration shall consult, as appropriate, with representatives of the various exchanges, clearinghouses, self-regulatory bodies, other major market participants, consumers, and the general public.

SA 3281. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3263 submitted by Mr. INHOFE and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Prevention and Protection From Lead Exposure

SEC. 4801. DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) ELIGIBLE STATE.—The term “eligible State” means a State for which the President has declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) relating to the public health threats associated with the presence of lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system.

(3) **ELIGIBLE SYSTEM.**—The term “eligible system” means a public drinking water supply system that is the subject of an emergency declaration referred to in paragraph (2).

(b) **STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ASSISTANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An eligible system shall be—

(A) considered to be a disadvantaged community under section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)); and

(B) eligible to receive loans with additional subsidization under that Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), including forgiveness of principal under section 1452(d)(1) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(1)).

(2) **AUTHORIZATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Using funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A), an eligible State may provide assistance to an eligible system within the eligible State, for the purpose of addressing lead or other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(B) **INCLUSION.**—Assistance under subparagraph (A) may include additional subsidization under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), as described in paragraph (1)(B).

(3) **LIMITATION.**—Section 1452(d)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(2)) shall not apply to—

(A) any funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A); or

(B) any other loan provided to an eligible system.

(c) **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING.**—

(1) **SECURED LOANS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may make a secured loan to an eligible State to carry out a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system.

(B) **AMOUNT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(2) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(2)), the amount of a secured loan provided under subparagraph (A) may be equal to not more than 80 percent of the reasonably anticipated costs of the projects.

(2) **FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)), any costs for a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system that are not covered by a secured loan under paragraph (1) may be covered using amounts in the State revolving loan fund under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

(d) **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—Any individual or entity that carries out construction of infrastructure using assistance provided under this section shall develop and implement, in consultation with the Administrator and appropriate officials of the applicable eligible State, a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving affected physical assets, with a focus on engineering and economic analysis based on quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair during the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost.

(e) **NONDUPLICATION OF WORK.**—An activity carried out pursuant to this section shall not duplicate the work or activity of any other Federal or State department or agency.

(f) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **ADDITIONAL SRF CAPITALIZATION GRANTS.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in

the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available for obligation for 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available, to provide additional grants to eligible States pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) **SUPPLEMENTED INTENDED USE PLANS.**—The Administrator shall disburse to an eligible State amounts made available under subparagraph (A) by not later than 30 days after the date on which the eligible State submits to the Administrator a supplemented intended use plan under section 1452(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)) that includes preapplication information regarding projects to be funded using the additional assistance, including, with respect to each such project—

(i) a description of the project;

(ii) an explanation of the means by which the project will address a situation causing a declared emergency in the eligible State;

(iii) the estimated cost of the project; and

(iv) the projected start date for construction of the project.

(C) **UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.**—Any amounts made available to the Administrator under subparagraph (A) that are unobligated on the date that is 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available shall be available to carry out the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.), to remain available until expended.

(D) **APPLICABILITY.**—Section 1452(b)(1) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)(1)) shall not apply to a supplement to an intended use plan under subparagraph (B).

(2) **WIFIA FUNDING.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide credit subsidies and administrative costs, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, for secured loans under subsection (c)(1)(A) in an amount equal to not more than \$600,000,000 to eligible States under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.).

(B) **DEADLINE.**—The Administrator and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to an eligible State a credit subsidy under subparagraph (A) by not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a loan application from the eligible State.

(C) **USE.**—Secured loans provided pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be available for activities to address lead and other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(3) **APPLICABILITY.**—Unless explicitly waived, all requirements under section 1450(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-9(e)) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) shall apply to funding provided under this subsection.

(g) **OFFSET.**—There is rescinded the unobligated balance of amounts made available to carry out section 1703 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16513).

(h) **HEALTH EFFECTS EVALUATION.**—Pursuant to section 104(i)(1)(E) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(1)(E)), and on receipt of a request of an appropriate State or local health official of an eligible State, the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the National Center for Environmental Health shall—

(1) in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, con-

duct voluntary surveillance activities to evaluate any adverse health effects on individuals exposed to lead from drinking water; and

(2) provide for those individuals consultations regarding health issues relating to that exposure.

SEC. 4802. LOAN FORGIVENESS.

The matter under the heading “STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS” under the heading “ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY” in title II of division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113), is amended in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: “or, if a Federal emergency declaration has been issued due to a threat to public health from heightened exposure to lead in a municipal drinking water supply, before the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That in a State in which such an emergency declaration has been issued, the State may use more than 20 percent of the funds made available under this title to the State for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grants to provide additional subsidy to eligible recipients;”.

SEC. 4803. DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Section 1414(c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

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

“(D) Notice of any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

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

“(3) **NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATING TO LEAD.**—

“(A) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Not later than 15 days after the date of being notified by the primary agency of an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis, the Administrator shall notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in the monitoring activity conducted by the public water system if the public water system or the State does not notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity.

“(B) **RESULTS OF LEAD MONITORING.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may provide notice of any result of lead monitoring conducted by a public water system to—

“(I) any person that is served by the public water system; or

“(II) the local or State health department of a locality or State in which the public water system is located.

“(ii) FORM OF NOTICE.—The Administrator may provide the notice described in clause (i) by—

“(I) press release; or

“(II) other form of communication, including local media.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1414 (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “paragraph (2)(E)” and inserting “paragraph (2)(F)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking “subparagraph (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (E)”;

(3) in paragraph (3)(B), in the first sentence, by striking “(D)” and inserting “(E)”.

SEC. 4804. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CENTER.—The term “Center” means the Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure established under subsection (b).

(2) CITY.—The term “City” means a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(3) COMMUNITY.—The term “community” means the community of the City.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(5) STATE.—The term “State” means a State containing a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary may, by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, establish a center to be known as the “Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure”.

(c) COLLABORATION.—The Center shall collaborate with relevant Federal agencies, research institutions, hospitals, Federally qualified health centers, school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and State and local public health agencies in the development and operation of the Center.

(d) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Center shall establish an advisory committee to provide scientific and technical support for the Center and to advise the Secretary, consisting of, at a minimum—

- (A) an epidemiologist;
- (B) a toxicologist;
- (C) a mental health professional;
- (D) a pediatrician;
- (E) an early childhood education expert;
- (F) a special education expert;
- (G) a dietician;
- (H) an environmental health expert; and
- (I) 2 community representatives.

(2) APPLICATION OF FACCA.—The advisory committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Center shall, at minimum, develop and carry out the following components and responsibilities:

(1) Establish a health registry with the following responsibilities:

(A) Survey City residents on a voluntary basis about exposure to lead, and inform City residents of the health and developmental impacts that may have resulted from that exposure.

(B) Identify and provide ongoing monitoring for City residents on a voluntary basis who have been exposed to lead.

(C) Collect and analyze clinical data related to the monitoring and treatment of City residents.

(D) Provide culturally and linguistically relevant personnel and materials necessary for City residents.

(2) Without duplicating other Federal research efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, research on physical, be-

havioral, and developmental impacts, as well as other health or educational impacts associated with lead exposure, including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, neurological impacts, developmental delays, reproductive health impacts, and maternal and fetal health impacts.

(3) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, develop or recommend that the Secretary develop or support the development of, through a grant or contract, lead mitigation recommendations and allocate resources, as appropriate, for health-, education-, and nutrition-related interventions, as well as other interventions, to mitigate lead exposure in children and adults.

(4) Establish a partnership with the Regional Center of Excellence on Nutrition Education of the Department of Agriculture to provide any relevant nutrition information for lead mitigation, including—

(A) identifying and implementing best practices in nutrition education regarding lead-mitigating foods; and

(B) making recommendations and conducting outreach to improve access to lead-mitigating foods in the community.

(5) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, education and outreach efforts for the City and State, including the following:

(A) Create a publicly accessible website that provides, at minimum, details about the health registry for City residents, available testing and other services through the Center for City residents and other communities impacted by lead exposure, any relevant information regarding health and educational impacts of lead exposure, any relevant information on mitigation services, and any research conducted through the Center.

(B) Conduct at least 2 meetings annually in the City to discuss the ongoing impact of lead exposure on residents and solicit community input regarding ongoing mitigation needs.

(C) Establish a navigation program to connect City residents to available Federal, State, and local resources and programs that assist with cognitive, developmental, and health problems associated with lead exposure.

(f) REPORT.—Annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) assessing the impacts of the Center on City health and education systems and outcomes;

(2) describing any research conducted by or in connection with the Center;

(3) describing any mitigation tools used or developed by the Center including outcomes; and

(4) making any recommendations for the City, State, or other communities impacted by lead exposure, as appropriate.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4805. GAO REVIEW AND REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on

Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the status of any ongoing investigations into the Federal and State response to the contamination of the drinking water supply of the City of Flint, Michigan.

(b) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the investigations described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of issues that are not addressed by the investigations and relating to—

(1) the adequacy of the response by the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response, as well as the capacity of the State and City to manage the drinking water system; and

(2) the adequacy of the response by Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response.

(c) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after commencing each review under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a statement of the principal findings of the review; and

(2) recommendations for Congress and the President to take any actions to prevent a similar situation in the future and to protect public health.

SA 3282. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3129 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Prevention and Protection From Lead Exposure

SEC. 4801. DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) ELIGIBLE STATE.—The term “eligible State” means a State for which the President has declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) relating to the public health threats associated with the presence of lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system.

(3) ELIGIBLE SYSTEM.—The term “eligible system” means a public drinking water supply system that is the subject of an emergency declaration referred to in paragraph (2).

(b) STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible system shall be—

(A) considered to be a disadvantaged community under section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)); and

(B) eligible to receive loans with additional subsidization under that Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), including forgiveness of principal under section 1452(d)(1) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(1)).

(2) AUTHORIZATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Using funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A), an eligible State

may provide assistance to an eligible system within the eligible State, for the purpose of addressing lead or other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(B) **INCLUSION.**—Assistance under subparagraph (A) may include additional subsidization under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), as described in paragraph (1)(B).

(3) **LIMITATION.**—Section 1452(d)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(2)) shall not apply to—

(A) any funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A); or

(B) any other loan provided to an eligible system.

(C) **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING.**—

(1) **SECURED LOANS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may make a secured loan to an eligible State to carry out a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system.

(B) **AMOUNT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(2) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(2)), the amount of a secured loan provided under subparagraph (A) may be equal to not more than 80 percent of the reasonably anticipated costs of the projects.

(2) **FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)), any costs for a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system that are not covered by a secured loan under paragraph (1) may be covered using amounts in the State revolving loan fund under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

(d) **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—Any individual or entity that carries out construction of infrastructure using assistance provided under this section shall develop and implement, in consultation with the Administrator and appropriate officials of the applicable eligible State, a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving affected physical assets, with a focus on engineering and economic analysis based on quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair during the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost.

(e) **NONDUPLICATION OF WORK.**—An activity carried out pursuant to this section shall not duplicate the work or activity of any other Federal or State department or agency.

(f) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **ADDITIONAL SRF CAPITALIZATION GRANTS.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available for obligation for 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available, to provide additional grants to eligible States pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) **SUPPLEMENTED INTENDED USE PLANS.**—The Administrator shall disburse to an eligible State amounts made available under subparagraph (A) by not later than 30 days after the date on which the eligible State submits to the Administrator a supplemented intended use plan under section 1452(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)) that includes preapplication information regarding projects to be funded using

the additional assistance, including, with respect to each such project—

(i) a description of the project;

(ii) an explanation of the means by which the project will address a situation causing a declared emergency in the eligible State;

(iii) the estimated cost of the project; and

(iv) the projected start date for construction of the project.

(C) **UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.**—Any amounts made available to the Administrator under subparagraph (A) that are unobligated on the date that is 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available shall be available to carry out the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.), to remain available until expended.

(D) **APPLICABILITY.**—Section 1452(b)(1) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)(1)) shall not apply to a supplement to an intended use plan under subparagraph (B).

(2) **WIFIA FUNDING.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide credit subsidies and administrative costs, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, for secured loans under subsection (c)(1)(A) in an amount equal to not more than \$600,000,000 to eligible States under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.).

(B) **DEADLINE.**—The Administrator and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to an eligible State a credit subsidy under subparagraph (A) by not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a loan application from the eligible State.

(C) **USE.**—Secured loans provided pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be available for activities to address lead and other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(3) **APPLICABILITY.**—Unless explicitly waived, all requirements under section 1450(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-9(e)) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) shall apply to funding provided under this subsection.

(g) **OFFSET.**—There is rescinded the unobligated balance of amounts made available to carry out section 1703 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16513).

(h) **HEALTH EFFECTS EVALUATION.**—Pursuant to section 104(i)(1)(E) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(1)(E)), and on receipt of a request of an appropriate State or local health official of an eligible State, the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the National Center for Environmental Health shall—

(1) in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, conduct voluntary surveillance activities to evaluate any adverse health effects on individuals exposed to lead from drinking water; and

(2) provide for those individuals consultations regarding health issues relating to that exposure.

SEC. 4802. LOAN FORGIVENESS.

The matter under the heading “STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS” under the heading “ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY” in title II of division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113), is amended in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: “or, if a Federal emergency declaration has been issued due to a

threat to public health from heightened exposure to lead in a municipal drinking water supply, before the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That in a State in which such an emergency declaration has been issued, the State may use more than 20 percent of the funds made available under this title to the State for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grants to provide additional subsidy to eligible recipients.”

SEC. 4803. DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Section 1414(c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

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

“(D) Notice of any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

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

“(3) **NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATING TO LEAD.**—

“(A) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Not later than 15 days after the date of being notified by the primary agency of an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis, the Administrator shall notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in the monitoring activity conducted by the public water system if the public water system or the State does not notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity.

“(B) **RESULTS OF LEAD MONITORING.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may provide notice of any result of lead monitoring conducted by a public water system to—

“(I) any person that is served by the public water system; or

“(II) the local or State health department of a locality or State in which the public water system is located.

“(ii) **FORM OF NOTICE.**—The Administrator may provide the notice described in clause (i) by—

“(I) press release; or

“(II) other form of communication, including local media.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 1414 (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “paragraph (2)(E)” and inserting “paragraph (2)(F)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking “subparagraph (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (E)”;

(3) in paragraph (3)(B), in the first sentence, by striking “(D)” and inserting “(E)”.

SEC. 4804. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **CENTER.**—The term “Center” means the Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure established under subsection (b).

(2) **CITY.**—The term “City” means a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(3) **COMMUNITY.**—The term “community” means the community of the City.

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(5) **STATE.**—The term “State” means a State containing a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary may, by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, establish a center to be known as the “Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure”.

(c) **COLLABORATION.**—The Center shall collaborate with relevant Federal agencies, research institutions, hospitals, Federally qualified health centers, school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and State and local public health agencies in the development and operation of the Center.

(d) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Center shall establish an advisory committee to provide scientific and technical support for the Center and to advise the Secretary, consisting of, at a minimum—

- (A) an epidemiologist;
- (B) a toxicologist;
- (C) a mental health professional;
- (D) a pediatrician;
- (E) an early childhood education expert;
- (F) a special education expert;
- (G) a dietician;
- (H) an environmental health expert; and
- (I) 2 community representatives.

(2) **APPLICATION OF FAC.**—The advisory committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Center shall, at minimum, develop and carry out the following components and responsibilities:

(1) Establish a health registry with the following responsibilities:

(A) Survey City residents on a voluntary basis about exposure to lead, and inform City residents of the health and developmental impacts that may have resulted from that exposure.

(B) Identify and provide ongoing monitoring for City residents on a voluntary basis who have been exposed to lead.

(C) Collect and analyze clinical data related to the monitoring and treatment of City residents.

(D) Provide culturally and linguistically relevant personnel and materials necessary for City residents.

(2) Without duplicating other Federal research efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, research on physical, behavioral, and developmental impacts, as well as other health or educational impacts associated with lead exposure, including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, neurological impacts, developmental delays, reproductive health impacts, and maternal and fetal health impacts.

(3) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, develop or recommend that the Secretary develop or support the development of, through a grant or contract, lead mitigation recommendations and allocate resources, as appropriate, for health-, education-, and nutrition-related interventions, as well as other interventions, to mitigate lead exposure in children and adults.

(4) Establish a partnership with the Regional Center of Excellence on Nutrition

Education of the Department of Agriculture to provide any relevant nutrition information for lead mitigation, including—

(A) identifying and implementing best practices in nutrition education regarding lead-mitigating foods; and

(B) making recommendations and conducting outreach to improve access to lead-mitigating foods in the community.

(5) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, education and outreach efforts for the City and State, including the following:

(A) Create a publicly accessible website that provides, at minimum, details about the health registry for City residents, available testing and other services through the Center for City residents and other communities impacted by lead exposure, any relevant information regarding health and educational impacts of lead exposure, any relevant information on mitigation services, and any research conducted through the Center.

(B) Conduct at least 2 meetings annually in the City to discuss the ongoing impact of lead exposure on residents and solicit community input regarding ongoing mitigation needs.

(C) Establish a navigation program to connect City residents to available Federal, State, and local resources and programs that assist with cognitive, developmental, and health problems associated with lead exposure.

(f) **REPORT.**—Annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) assessing the impacts of the Center on City health and education systems and outcomes;

(2) describing any research conducted by or in connection with the Center;

(3) describing any mitigation tools used or developed by the Center including outcomes; and

(4) making any recommendations for the City, State, or other communities impacted by lead exposure, as appropriate.

(g) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4805. GAO REVIEW AND REPORT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the status of any ongoing investigations into the Federal and State response to the contamination of the drinking water supply of the City of Flint, Michigan.

(b) **REVIEW.**—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the investigations described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of issues that are not addressed by the investigations and relating to—

(1) the adequacy of the response by the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of

the response, as well as the capacity of the State and City to manage the drinking water system; and

(2) the adequacy of the response by Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response.

(c) **CONTENTS OF REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after commencing each review under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a statement of the principal findings of the review; and

(2) recommendations for Congress and the President to take any actions to prevent a similar situation in the future and to protect public health.

SA 3283. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3247 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Prevention and Protection From Lead Exposure

SEC. 4801. DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) **ELIGIBLE STATE.**—The term “eligible State” means a State for which the President has declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) relating to the public health threats associated with the presence of lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system.

(3) **ELIGIBLE SYSTEM.**—The term “eligible system” means a public drinking water supply system that is the subject of an emergency declaration referred to in paragraph (2).

(b) **STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ASSISTANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An eligible system shall be—

(A) considered to be a disadvantaged community under section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)); and

(B) eligible to receive loans with additional subsidization under that Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), including forgiveness of principal under section 1452(d)(1) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(1)).

(2) **AUTHORIZATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Using funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A), an eligible State may provide assistance to an eligible system within the eligible State, for the purpose of addressing lead or other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(B) **INCLUSION.**—Assistance under subparagraph (A) may include additional subsidization under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), as described in paragraph (1)(B).

(3) **LIMITATION.**—Section 1452(d)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(2)) shall not apply to—

(A) any funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A); or

(B) any other loan provided to an eligible system.

(c) WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING.—

(1) SECURED LOANS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may make a secured loan to an eligible State to carry out a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system.

(B) AMOUNT.—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(2) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(2)), the amount of a secured loan provided under subparagraph (A) may be equal to not more than 80 percent of the reasonably anticipated costs of the projects.

(2) FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)), any costs for a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system that are not covered by a secured loan under paragraph (1) may be covered using amounts in the State revolving loan fund under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

(d) ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Any individual or entity that carries out construction of infrastructure using assistance provided under this section shall develop and implement, in consultation with the Administrator and appropriate officials of the applicable eligible State, a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving affected physical assets, with a focus on engineering and economic analysis based on quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair during the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost.

(e) NONDUPLICATION OF WORK.—An activity carried out pursuant to this section shall not duplicate the work or activity of any other Federal or State department or agency.

(f) FUNDING.—

(1) ADDITIONAL SRF CAPITALIZATION GRANTS.—

(A) APPROPRIATION.—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available for obligation for 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available, to provide additional grants to eligible States pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) SUPPLEMENTED INTENDED USE PLANS.—The Administrator shall disburse to an eligible State amounts made available under subparagraph (A) by not later than 30 days after the date on which the eligible State submits to the Administrator a supplemented intended use plan under section 1452(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)) that includes preapplication information regarding projects to be funded using the additional assistance, including, with respect to each such project—

- (i) a description of the project;
- (ii) an explanation of the means by which the project will address a situation causing a declared emergency in the eligible State;
- (iii) the estimated cost of the project; and
- (iv) the projected start date for construction of the project.

(C) UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.—Any amounts made available to the Administrator under subparagraph (A) that are unobligated on the date that is 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available shall be available to carry out the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.), to remain available until expended.

(D) APPLICABILITY.—Section 1452(b)(1) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)(1)) shall not apply to a supplement to an intended use plan under subparagraph (B).

(2) WIFIA FUNDING.—

(A) APPROPRIATION.—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide credit subsidies and administrative costs, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, for secured loans under subsection (c)(1)(A) in an amount equal to not more than \$600,000,000 to eligible States under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.).

(B) DEADLINE.—The Administrator and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to an eligible State a credit subsidy under subparagraph (A) by not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a loan application from the eligible State.

(C) USE.—Secured loans provided pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be available for activities to address lead and other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—Unless explicitly waived, all requirements under section 1450(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-9(e)) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) shall apply to funding provided under this subsection.

(g) OFFSET.—There is rescinded the unobligated balance of amounts made available to carry out section 1703 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16513).

(h) HEALTH EFFECTS EVALUATION.—Pursuant to section 104(i)(1)(E) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(1)(E)), and on receipt of a request of an appropriate State or local health official of an eligible State, the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the National Center for Environmental Health shall—

(1) in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, conduct voluntary surveillance activities to evaluate any adverse health effects on individuals exposed to lead from drinking water; and

(2) provide for those individuals consultations regarding health issues relating to that exposure.

SEC. 4802. LOAN FORGIVENESS.

The matter under the heading “STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS” under the heading “ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY” in title II of division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113), is amended in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: “or, if a Federal emergency declaration has been issued due to a threat to public health from heightened exposure to lead in a municipal drinking water supply, before the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That in a State in which such an emergency declaration has been issued, the State may use more than 20 percent of the funds made available under this title to the State for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grants to provide additional subsidy to eligible recipients.”.

SEC. 4803. DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.—Section 1414(c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

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

“(D) Notice of any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.—Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

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

“(3) NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATING TO LEAD.—

“(A) EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.—Not later than 15 days after the date of being notified by the primary agency of an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis, the Administrator shall notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in the monitoring activity conducted by the public water system if the public water system or the State does not notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity.

“(B) RESULTS OF LEAD MONITORING.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may provide notice of any result of lead monitoring conducted by a public water system to—

“(I) any person that is served by the public water system; or

“(II) the local or State health department of a locality or State in which the public water system is located.

“(ii) FORM OF NOTICE.—The Administrator may provide the notice described in clause (i) by—

“(I) press release; or

“(II) other form of communication, including local media.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1414 (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “paragraph (2)(E)” and inserting “paragraph (2)(F)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking “subparagraph (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (E)”;

(3) in paragraph (3)(B), in the first sentence, by striking “(D)” and inserting “(E)”.

SEC. 4804. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CENTER.—The term “Center” means the Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure established under subsection (b).

(2) CITY.—The term “City” means a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(3) COMMUNITY.—The term “community” means the community of the City.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(5) STATE.—The term “State” means a State containing a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary may, by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, establish a center to be known as the “Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure”.

(c) **COLLABORATION.**—The Center shall collaborate with relevant Federal agencies, research institutions, hospitals, Federally qualified health centers, school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and State and local public health agencies in the development and operation of the Center.

(d) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Center shall establish an advisory committee to provide scientific and technical support for the Center and to advise the Secretary, consisting of, at a minimum—

- (A) an epidemiologist;
- (B) a toxicologist;
- (C) a mental health professional;
- (D) a pediatrician;
- (E) an early childhood education expert;
- (F) a special education expert;
- (G) a dietician;
- (H) an environmental health expert; and
- (I) 2 community representatives.

(2) **APPLICATION OF FACCA.**—The advisory committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Center shall, at minimum, develop and carry out the following components and responsibilities:

(1) Establish a health registry with the following responsibilities:

(A) Survey City residents on a voluntary basis about exposure to lead, and inform City residents of the health and developmental impacts that may have resulted from that exposure.

(B) Identify and provide ongoing monitoring for City residents on a voluntary basis who have been exposed to lead.

(C) Collect and analyze clinical data related to the monitoring and treatment of City residents.

(D) Provide culturally and linguistically relevant personnel and materials necessary for City residents.

(2) Without duplicating other Federal research efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, research on physical, behavioral, and developmental impacts, as well as other health or educational impacts associated with lead exposure, including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, neurological impacts, developmental delays, reproductive health impacts, and maternal and fetal health impacts.

(3) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, develop or recommend that the Secretary develop or support the development of, through a grant or contract, lead mitigation recommendations and allocate resources, as appropriate, for health-, education-, and nutrition-related interventions, as well as other interventions, to mitigate lead exposure in children and adults.

(4) Establish a partnership with the Regional Center of Excellence on Nutrition Education of the Department of Agriculture to provide any relevant nutrition information for lead mitigation, including—

(A) identifying and implementing best practices in nutrition education regarding lead-mitigating foods; and

(B) making recommendations and conducting outreach to improve access to lead-mitigating foods in the community.

(5) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, education and outreach efforts for the City and State, including the following:

(A) Create a publicly accessible website that provides, at minimum, details about the

health registry for City residents, available testing and other services through the Center for City residents and other communities impacted by lead exposure, any relevant information regarding health and educational impacts of lead exposure, any relevant information on mitigation services, and any research conducted through the Center.

(B) Conduct at least 2 meetings annually in the City to discuss the ongoing impact of lead exposure on residents and solicit community input regarding ongoing mitigation needs.

(C) Establish a navigation program to connect City residents to available Federal, State, and local resources and programs that assist with cognitive, developmental, and health problems associated with lead exposure.

(F) **REPORT.**—Annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) assessing the impacts of the Center on City health and education systems and outcomes;

(2) describing any research conducted by or in connection with the Center;

(3) describing any mitigation tools used or developed by the Center including outcomes; and

(4) making any recommendations for the City, State, or other communities impacted by lead exposure, as appropriate.

(g) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4805. GAO REVIEW AND REPORT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the status of any ongoing investigations into the Federal and State response to the contamination of the drinking water supply of the City of Flint, Michigan.

(b) **REVIEW.**—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the investigations described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of issues that are not addressed by the investigations and relating to—

(1) the adequacy of the response by the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response, as well as the capacity of the State and City to manage the drinking water system; and

(2) the adequacy of the response by Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response.

(c) **CONTENTS OF REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after commencing each review under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a statement of the principal findings of the review; and

(2) recommendations for Congress and the President to take any actions to prevent a

similar situation in the future and to protect public health.

SA 3284. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3248 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Prevention and Protection From Lead Exposure

SEC. 4801. DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) **ELIGIBLE STATE.**—The term “eligible State” means a State for which the President has declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) relating to the public health threats associated with the presence of lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system.

(3) **ELIGIBLE SYSTEM.**—The term “eligible system” means a public drinking water supply system that is the subject of an emergency declaration referred to in paragraph (2).

(b) **STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ASSISTANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An eligible system shall be—

(A) considered to be a disadvantaged community under section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(d)); and

(B) eligible to receive loans with additional subsidization under that Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), including forgiveness of principal under section 1452(d)(1) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(d)(1)).

(2) **AUTHORIZATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Using funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A), an eligible State may provide assistance to an eligible system within the eligible State, for the purpose of addressing lead or other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(B) **INCLUSION.**—Assistance under subparagraph (A) may include additional subsidization under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), as described in paragraph (1)(B).

(3) **LIMITATION.**—Section 1452(d)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(d)(2)) shall not apply to—

(A) any funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A); or

(B) any other loan provided to an eligible system.

(c) **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING.**—

(1) **SECURED LOANS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may make a secured loan to an eligible State to carry out a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system.

(B) **AMOUNT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(2) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(2)), the amount of a secured loan provided under subparagraph (A) may be equal to not more than 80 percent of the reasonably anticipated costs of the projects.

(2) **FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014

(33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)), any costs for a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system that are not covered by a secured loan under paragraph (1) may be covered using amounts in the State revolving loan fund under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

(d) **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—Any individual or entity that carries out construction of infrastructure using assistance provided under this section shall develop and implement, in consultation with the Administrator and appropriate officials of the applicable eligible State, a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving affected physical assets, with a focus on engineering and economic analysis based on quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair during the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost.

(e) **NONDUPLICATION OF WORK.**—An activity carried out pursuant to this section shall not duplicate the work or activity of any other Federal or State department or agency.

(f) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **ADDITIONAL SRF CAPITALIZATION GRANTS.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available for obligation for 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available, to provide additional grants to eligible States pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) **SUPPLEMENTED INTENDED USE PLANS.**—The Administrator shall disburse to an eligible State amounts made available under subparagraph (A) by not later than 30 days after the date on which the eligible State submits to the Administrator a supplemented intended use plan under section 1452(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)) that includes preapplication information regarding projects to be funded using the additional assistance, including, with respect to each such project—

(i) a description of the project;

(ii) an explanation of the means by which the project will address a situation causing a declared emergency in the eligible State;

(iii) the estimated cost of the project; and

(iv) the projected start date for construction of the project.

(C) **UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.**—Any amounts made available to the Administrator under subparagraph (A) that are unobligated on the date that is 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available shall be available to carry out the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.), to remain available until expended.

(D) **APPLICABILITY.**—Section 1452(b)(1) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)(1)) shall not apply to a supplement to an intended use plan under subparagraph (B).

(2) **WIFIA FUNDING.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide credit subsidies and administrative costs, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, for secured loans under subsection (c)(1)(A) in an amount equal to not more than \$600,000,000 to eligible States under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.).

(B) **DEADLINE.**—The Administrator and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to an eligible State a credit subsidy under subparagraph (A) by not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a loan application from the eligible State.

(C) **USE.**—Secured loans provided pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be available for activities to address lead and other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(3) **APPLICABILITY.**—Unless explicitly waived, all requirements under section 1450(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-9(e)) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) shall apply to funding provided under this subsection.

(g) **OFFSET.**—There is rescinded the unobligated balance of amounts made available to carry out section 1703 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16513).

(h) **HEALTH EFFECTS EVALUATION.**—Pursuant to section 104(i)(1)(E) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(1)(E)), and on receipt of a request of an appropriate State or local health official of an eligible State, the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the National Center for Environmental Health shall—

(1) in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, conduct voluntary surveillance activities to evaluate any adverse health effects on individuals exposed to lead from drinking water; and

(2) provide for those individuals consultations regarding health issues relating to that exposure.

SEC. 4802. LOAN FORGIVENESS.

The matter under the heading “STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS” under the heading “ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY” in title II of division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113), is amended in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: “or, if a Federal emergency declaration has been issued due to a threat to public health from heightened exposure to lead in a municipal drinking water supply, before the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That in a State in which such an emergency declaration has been issued, the State may use more than 20 percent of the funds made available under this title to the State for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grants to provide additional subsidy to eligible recipients.”.

SEC. 4803. DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Section 1414(c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

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

“(D) Notice of any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for an

exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

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

“(3) **NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATING TO LEAD.**—

“(A) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Not later than 15 days after the date of being notified by the primary agency of an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis, the Administrator shall notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in the monitoring activity conducted by the public water system if the public water system or the State does not notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity.

“(B) **RESULTS OF LEAD MONITORING.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may provide notice of any result of lead monitoring conducted by a public water system to—

“(I) any person that is served by the public water system; or

“(II) the local or State health department of a locality or State in which the public water system is located.

“(ii) **FORM OF NOTICE.**—The Administrator may provide the notice described in clause (i) by—

“(I) press release; or

“(II) other form of communication, including local media.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 1414 (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “paragraph (2)(E)” and inserting “paragraph (2)(F)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking “subparagraph (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (E)”;

(3) in paragraph (3)(B), in the first sentence, by striking “(D)” and inserting “(E)”.

SEC. 4804. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **CENTER.**—The term “Center” means the Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure established under subsection (b).

(2) **CITY.**—The term “City” means a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(3) **COMMUNITY.**—The term “community” means the community of the City.

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(5) **STATE.**—The term “State” means a State containing a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary may, by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, establish a center to be known as the “Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure”.

(c) **COLLABORATION.**—The Center shall collaborate with relevant Federal agencies, research institutions, hospitals, Federally qualified health centers, school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and State and local public health agencies in the development and operation of the Center.

(d) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Center shall establish an advisory committee to provide scientific and technical support for the Center and to

advise the Secretary, consisting of, at a minimum—

- (A) an epidemiologist;
- (B) a toxicologist;
- (C) a mental health professional;
- (D) a pediatrician;
- (E) an early childhood education expert;
- (F) a special education expert;
- (G) a dietician;
- (H) an environmental health expert; and
- (I) 2 community representatives.

(2) APPLICATION OF FACAs.—The advisory committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Center shall, at minimum, develop and carry out the following components and responsibilities:

(1) Establish a health registry with the following responsibilities:

(A) Survey City residents on a voluntary basis about exposure to lead, and inform City residents of the health and developmental impacts that may have resulted from that exposure.

(B) Identify and provide ongoing monitoring for City residents on a voluntary basis who have been exposed to lead.

(C) Collect and analyze clinical data related to the monitoring and treatment of City residents.

(D) Provide culturally and linguistically relevant personnel and materials necessary for City residents.

(2) Without duplicating other Federal research efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, research on physical, behavioral, and developmental impacts, as well as other health or educational impacts associated with lead exposure, including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, neurological impacts, developmental delays, reproductive health impacts, and maternal and fetal health impacts.

(3) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, develop or recommend that the Secretary develop or support the development of, through a grant or contract, lead mitigation recommendations and allocate resources, as appropriate, for health-, education-, and nutrition-related interventions, as well as other interventions, to mitigate lead exposure in children and adults.

(4) Establish a partnership with the Regional Center of Excellence on Nutrition Education of the Department of Agriculture to provide any relevant nutrition information for lead mitigation, including—

(A) identifying and implementing best practices in nutrition education regarding lead-mitigating foods; and

(B) making recommendations and conducting outreach to improve access to lead-mitigating foods in the community.

(5) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, education and outreach efforts for the City and State, including the following:

(A) Create a publicly accessible website that provides, at minimum, details about the health registry for City residents, available testing and other services through the Center for City residents and other communities impacted by lead exposure, any relevant information regarding health and educational impacts of lead exposure, any relevant information on mitigation services, and any research conducted through the Center.

(B) Conduct at least 2 meetings annually in the City to discuss the ongoing impact of lead exposure on residents and solicit community input regarding ongoing mitigation needs.

(C) Establish a navigation program to connect City residents to available Federal, State, and local resources and programs that

assist with cognitive, developmental, and health problems associated with lead exposure.

(f) REPORT.—Annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) assessing the impacts of the Center on City health and education systems and outcomes;

(2) describing any research conducted by or in connection with the Center;

(3) describing any mitigation tools used or developed by the Center including outcomes; and

(4) making any recommendations for the City, State, or other communities impacted by lead exposure, as appropriate.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4805. GAO REVIEW AND REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the status of any ongoing investigations into the Federal and State response to the contamination of the drinking water supply of the City of Flint, Michigan.

(b) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the investigations described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of issues that are not addressed by the investigations and relating to—

(1) the adequacy of the response by the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response, as well as the capacity of the State and City to manage the drinking water system; and

(2) the adequacy of the response by Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response.

(c) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after commencing each review under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a statement of the principal findings of the review; and

(2) recommendations for Congress and the President to take any actions to prevent a similar situation in the future and to protect public health.

SA 3285. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3249 submitted by Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS) and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Prevention and Protection From Lead Exposure

SEC. 4801. DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) ELIGIBLE STATE.—The term “eligible State” means a State for which the President has declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) relating to the public health threats associated with the presence of lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system.

(3) ELIGIBLE SYSTEM.—The term “eligible system” means a public drinking water supply system that is the subject of an emergency declaration referred to in paragraph (2).

(b) STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible system shall be—

(A) considered to be a disadvantaged community under section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)); and

(B) eligible to receive loans with additional subsidization under that Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), including forgiveness of principal under section 1452(d)(1) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(1)).

(2) AUTHORIZATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Using funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A), an eligible State may provide assistance to an eligible system within the eligible State, for the purpose of addressing lead or other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(B) INCLUSION.—Assistance under subparagraph (A) may include additional subsidization under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), as described in paragraph (1)(B).

(3) LIMITATION.—Section 1452(d)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(2)) shall not apply to—

(A) any funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A); or

(B) any other loan provided to an eligible system.

(c) WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING.—

(1) SECURED LOANS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may make a secured loan to an eligible State to carry out a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system.

(B) AMOUNT.—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(2) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(2)), the amount of a secured loan provided under subparagraph (A) may be equal to not more than 80 percent of the reasonably anticipated costs of the projects.

(2) FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)), any costs for a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system that are not covered by a secured loan under paragraph (1) may be covered using amounts in the State revolving loan fund under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

(d) ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Any individual or entity that carries out construction of infrastructure using assistance provided under this section shall develop and implement, in consultation with the Administrator and appropriate officials of the applicable eligible State, a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining,

and improving affected physical assets, with a focus on engineering and economic analysis based on quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair during the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost.

(e) **NONDUPLICATION OF WORK.**—An activity carried out pursuant to this section shall not duplicate the work or activity of any other Federal or State department or agency.

(f) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **ADDITIONAL SRF CAPITALIZATION GRANTS.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available for obligation for 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available, to provide additional grants to eligible States pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) **SUPPLEMENTED INTENDED USE PLANS.**—The Administrator shall disburse to an eligible State amounts made available under subparagraph (A) by not later than 30 days after the date on which the eligible State submits to the Administrator a supplemented intended use plan under section 1452(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)) that includes preapplication information regarding projects to be funded using the additional assistance, including, with respect to each such project—

- (i) a description of the project;
- (ii) an explanation of the means by which the project will address a situation causing a declared emergency in the eligible State;
- (iii) the estimated cost of the project; and
- (iv) the projected start date for construction of the project.

(C) **UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.**—Any amounts made available to the Administrator under subparagraph (A) that are unobligated on the date that is 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available shall be available to carry out the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.), to remain available until expended.

(D) **APPLICABILITY.**—Section 1452(b)(1) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)(1)) shall not apply to a supplement to an intended use plan under subparagraph (B).

(2) **WIFIA FUNDING.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide credit subsidies and administrative costs, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, for secured loans under subsection (c)(1)(A) in an amount equal to not more than \$600,000,000 to eligible States under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.).

(B) **DEADLINE.**—The Administrator and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to an eligible State a credit subsidy under subparagraph (A) by not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a loan application from the eligible State.

(C) **USE.**—Secured loans provided pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be available for activities to address lead and other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(3) **APPLICABILITY.**—Unless explicitly waived, all requirements under section 1450(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-9(e)) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C.

3901 et seq.) shall apply to funding provided under this subsection.

(g) **OFFSET.**—There is rescinded the unobligated balance of amounts made available to carry out section 1703 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16513).

(h) **HEALTH EFFECTS EVALUATION.**—Pursuant to section 104(i)(1)(E) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(1)(E)), and on receipt of a request of an appropriate State or local health official of an eligible State, the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the National Center for Environmental Health shall—

(1) in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, conduct voluntary surveillance activities to evaluate any adverse health effects on individuals exposed to lead from drinking water; and

(2) provide for those individuals consultations regarding health issues relating to that exposure.

SEC. 4802. LOAN FORGIVENESS.

The matter under the heading “STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS” under the heading “ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY” in title II of division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113), is amended in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: “or, if a Federal emergency declaration has been issued due to a threat to public health from heightened exposure to lead in a municipal drinking water supply, before the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That in a State in which such an emergency declaration has been issued, the State may use more than 20 percent of the funds made available under this title to the State for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grants to provide additional subsidy to eligible recipients.”.

SEC. 4803. DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Section 1414(c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

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

“(D) Notice of any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

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

“(3) **NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATING TO LEAD.**—

“(A) **EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.**—Not later than 15 days after the date of being notified by the primary agency of an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the

Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis, the Administrator shall notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in the monitoring activity conducted by the public water system if the public water system or the State does not notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity.

“(B) **RESULTS OF LEAD MONITORING.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may provide notice of any result of lead monitoring conducted by a public water system to—

“(I) any person that is served by the public water system; or

“(II) the local or State health department of a locality or State in which the public water system is located.

“(ii) **FORM OF NOTICE.**—The Administrator may provide the notice described in clause (i) by—

“(I) press release; or

“(II) other form of communication, including local media.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 1414 (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “paragraph (2)(E)” and inserting “paragraph (2)(F)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking “subparagraph (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (E)”;

(3) in paragraph (3)(B), in the first sentence, by striking “(D)” and inserting “(E)”.

SEC. 4804. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **CENTER.**—The term “Center” means the Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure established under subsection (b).

(2) **CITY.**—The term “City” means a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(3) **COMMUNITY.**—The term “community” means the community of the City.

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(5) **STATE.**—The term “State” means a State containing a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary may, by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, establish a center to be known as the “Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure”.

(c) **COLLABORATION.**—The Center shall collaborate with relevant Federal agencies, research institutions, hospitals, Federally qualified health centers, school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and State and local public health agencies in the development and operation of the Center.

(d) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Center shall establish an advisory committee to provide scientific and technical support for the Center and to advise the Secretary, consisting of, at a minimum—

- (A) an epidemiologist;
- (B) a toxicologist;
- (C) a mental health professional;
- (D) a pediatrician;
- (E) an early childhood education expert;
- (F) a special education expert;
- (G) a dietitian;
- (H) an environmental health expert; and
- (I) 2 community representatives.

(2) **APPLICATION OF FACA.**—The advisory committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Center shall, at minimum, develop and carry out the following components and responsibilities:

(1) Establish a health registry with the following responsibilities:

(A) Survey City residents on a voluntary basis about exposure to lead, and inform City residents of the health and developmental impacts that may have resulted from that exposure.

(B) Identify and provide ongoing monitoring for City residents on a voluntary basis who have been exposed to lead.

(C) Collect and analyze clinical data related to the monitoring and treatment of City residents.

(D) Provide culturally and linguistically relevant personnel and materials necessary for City residents.

(2) Without duplicating other Federal research efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, research on physical, behavioral, and developmental impacts, as well as other health or educational impacts associated with lead exposure, including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, neurological impacts, developmental delays, reproductive health impacts, and maternal and fetal health impacts.

(3) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, develop or recommend that the Secretary develop or support the development of, through a grant or contract, lead mitigation recommendations and allocate resources, as appropriate, for health-, education-, and nutrition-related interventions, as well as other interventions, to mitigate lead exposure in children and adults.

(4) Establish a partnership with the Regional Center of Excellence on Nutrition Education of the Department of Agriculture to provide any relevant nutrition information for lead mitigation, including—

(A) identifying and implementing best practices in nutrition education regarding lead-mitigating foods; and

(B) making recommendations and conducting outreach to improve access to lead-mitigating foods in the community.

(5) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, education and outreach efforts for the City and State, including the following:

(A) Create a publicly accessible website that provides, at minimum, details about the health registry for City residents, available testing and other services through the Center for City residents and other communities impacted by lead exposure, any relevant information regarding health and educational impacts of lead exposure, any relevant information on mitigation services, and any research conducted through the Center.

(B) Conduct at least 2 meetings annually in the City to discuss the ongoing impact of lead exposure on residents and solicit community input regarding ongoing mitigation needs.

(C) Establish a navigation program to connect City residents to available Federal, State, and local resources and programs that assist with cognitive, developmental, and health problems associated with lead exposure.

(f) REPORT.—Annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) assessing the impacts of the Center on City health and education systems and outcomes;

(2) describing any research conducted by or in connection with the Center;

(3) describing any mitigation tools used or developed by the Center including outcomes; and

(4) making any recommendations for the City, State, or other communities impacted by lead exposure, as appropriate.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4805. GAO REVIEW AND REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the status of any ongoing investigations into the Federal and State response to the contamination of the drinking water supply of the City of Flint, Michigan.

(b) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the investigations described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of issues that are not addressed by the investigations and relating to—

(1) the adequacy of the response by the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response, as well as the capacity of the State and City to manage the drinking water system; and

(2) the adequacy of the response by Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response.

(c) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after commencing each review under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a statement of the principal findings of the review; and

(2) recommendations for Congress and the President to take any actions to prevent a similar situation in the future and to protect public health.

SA 3286. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 244, between lines 13 and 14, insert the following:

Subpart B—Development of Geothermal, Solar, and Wind Energy on Public Land

SEC. 3011A. DEFINITIONS.

In this subpart:

(1) COVERED LAND.—The term “covered land” means land that is—

(A) public land administered by the Secretary; and

(B) not excluded from the development of geothermal, solar, or wind energy under—

(i) a land use plan established under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); or

(ii) other Federal law.

(2) EXCLUSION AREA.—The term “exclusion area” means covered land that is identified by the Bureau of Land Management as not suitable for development of renewable energy projects.

(3) PRIORITY AREA.—The term “priority area” means covered land identified by the

land use planning process of the Bureau of Land Management as being a preferred location for a renewable energy project.

(4) PUBLIC LAND.—The term “public land” has the meaning given the term “public lands” in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702).

(5) RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT.—The term “renewable energy project” means a project carried out on covered land that uses wind, solar, or geothermal energy to generate energy.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(7) VARIANCE AREA.—The term “variance area” means covered land that is—

(A) not an exclusion area; and

(B) not a priority area.

SEC. 3011B. LAND USE PLANNING; SUPPLEMENTS TO PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS.

(a) PRIORITY AREAS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall establish priority areas on covered land for geothermal, solar, and wind energy projects.

(2) DEADLINE.—

(A) GEOTHERMAL ENERGY.—For geothermal energy, the Secretary shall establish priority areas as soon as practicable, but not later than 5 years, after the date of enactment of this Act.

(B) SOLAR ENERGY.—For solar energy, the solar energy zones established by the 2012 western solar plan of the Bureau of Land Management shall be considered to be priority areas for solar energy projects.

(C) WIND ENERGY.—For wind energy, the Secretary shall establish priority areas as soon as practicable, but not later than 3 years, after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) VARIANCE AREAS.—To the maximum extent practicable, variance areas shall be considered for renewable energy project development, consistent with the principles of multiple use as defined in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(c) REVIEW AND MODIFICATION.—Not less frequently than once every 10 years, the Secretary shall—

(1) review the adequacy of land allocations for geothermal, solar, and wind energy priority and variance areas for the purpose of encouraging new renewable energy development opportunities; and

(2) based on the review carried out under paragraph (1), add, modify, or eliminate priority, variance, and exclusion areas.

(d) COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT.—For purposes of this section, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) shall be accomplished—

(1) for geothermal energy, by supplementing the October 2008 final programmatic environmental impact statement for geothermal leasing in the western United States;

(2) for solar energy, by supplementing the July 2012 final programmatic environmental impact statement for solar energy projects; and

(3) for wind energy, by supplementing the July 2005 final programmatic environmental impact statement for wind energy projects.

(e) NO EFFECT ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS.—A requirement to prepare a supplement to a programmatic environmental impact statement under this section shall not result in any delay in processing an application for a renewable energy project.

(f) COORDINATION.—In developing a supplement required by this section, the Secretary shall coordinate, on an ongoing basis, with appropriate State, tribal, and local governments, transmission infrastructure owners

and operators, developers, and other appropriate entities to ensure that priority areas identified by the Secretary are—

(1) economically viable (including having access to transmission);

(2) likely to avoid or minimize conflict with habitat for animals and plants, recreation, and other uses of covered land; and

(3) consistent with section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712), including subsection (c)(9) of that section.

(g) **REMOVAL FROM CLASSIFICATION.**—In carrying out subsections (a), (c), and (d), if the Secretary determines an area previously suited for development should be removed from priority or variance classification, not later than 90 days after the date of the determination, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the determination.

SEC. 3011C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW ON COVERED LAND.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary determines that a proposed renewable energy project has been sufficiently analyzed by a programmatic environmental impact statement conducted under section 3011B(d), the Secretary shall not require any additional review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(b) **ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.**—If the Secretary determines that additional environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) is necessary for a proposed renewable energy project, the Secretary shall rely on the analysis in the programmatic environmental impact statement conducted under section 3011B(d), to the maximum extent practicable when analyzing the potential impacts of the project.

(c) **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAW.**—Nothing in this section modifies or supersedes any requirement under applicable law, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

SEC. 3011D. PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT PERMIT COORDINATION.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish a program to improve Federal permit coordination with respect to renewable energy projects on covered land.

(b) **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall enter into a memorandum of understanding for purposes of this section, including to specifically expedite the environmental analysis of applications for projects proposed in a variance area, with—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

(B) the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

(2) **STATE PARTICIPATION.**—The Secretary may request the Governor of any interested State to be a signatory to the memorandum of understanding under paragraph (1).

(c) **DESIGNATION OF QUALIFIED STAFF.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the memorandum of understanding under subsection (b) is executed, all Federal signatories, as appropriate, shall identify for each of the Bureau of Land Management Renewable Energy Coordination Offices an employee who has expertise in the regulatory issues relating to the office in which the employee is employed, including, as applicable, particular expertise in—

(A) consultation regarding, and preparation of, biological opinions under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536);

(B) permits under section 404 of Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1344);

(C) regulatory matters under the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.);

(D) planning under section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a);

(E) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.);

(F) the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.); and

(G) the preparation of analyses under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(2) **DUTIES.**—Each employee assigned under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) be responsible for addressing all issues relating to the jurisdiction of the home office or agency of the employee; and

(B) participate as part of the team of personnel working on proposed energy projects, planning, monitoring, inspection, enforcement, and environmental analyses.

(d) **ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL.**—The Secretary may assign additional personnel for the renewable energy coordination offices as are necessary to ensure the effective implementation of any programs administered by those offices, including inspection and enforcement relating to renewable energy project development on covered land, in accordance with the multiple use mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(e) **RENEWABLE ENERGY COORDINATION OFFICES.**—In implementing the program established under this section, the Secretary may establish additional renewable energy coordination offices or temporarily assign the qualified staff described in subsection (c) to a State, district, or field office of the Bureau of Land Management to expedite the permitting of renewable energy projects, as the Secretary determines to be necessary.

(f) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than February 1 of the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, and each February 1 thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing the progress made pursuant to the program under this subpart during the preceding year.

(2) **INCLUSIONS.**—Each report under this subsection shall include—

(A) projections for renewable energy production and capacity installations; and

(B) a description of any problems relating to leasing, permitting, siting, or production. On page 244, line 14, strike “Subpart B” and insert “Subpart C”.

SA 3287. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Prevention and Protection From Lead Exposure

SEC. 4801. DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) **ELIGIBLE STATE.**—The term “eligible State” means a State for which the President has declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) relating to the public health threats associated with the presence of lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system.

(3) **ELIGIBLE SYSTEM.**—The term “eligible system” means a public drinking water supply system that is the subject of an emergency declaration referred to in paragraph (2).

(b) **STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ASSISTANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An eligible system shall be—

(A) considered to be a disadvantaged community under section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)); and

(B) eligible to receive loans with additional subsidization under that Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), including forgiveness of principal under section 1452(d)(1) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(1)).

(2) **AUTHORIZATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Using funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A), an eligible State may provide assistance to an eligible system within the eligible State, for the purpose of addressing lead or other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(B) **INCLUSION.**—Assistance under subparagraph (A) may include additional subsidization under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.), as described in paragraph (1)(B).

(3) **LIMITATION.**—Section 1452(d)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(d)(2)) shall not apply to—

(A) any funds provided under subsection (f)(1)(A); or

(B) any other loan provided to an eligible system.

(c) **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING.**—

(1) **SECURED LOANS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may make a secured loan to an eligible State to carry out a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system.

(B) **AMOUNT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(2) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(2)), the amount of a secured loan provided under subparagraph (A) may be equal to not more than 80 percent of the reasonably anticipated costs of the projects.

(2) **FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.**—Notwithstanding section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)), any costs for a project to address lead or other contaminants in drinking water in an eligible system that are not covered by a secured loan under paragraph (1) may be covered using amounts in the State revolving loan fund under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

(d) **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—Any individual or entity that carries out construction of infrastructure using assistance provided under this section shall develop and implement, in consultation with the Administrator and appropriate officials of the applicable eligible State, a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving affected physical assets, with a focus on engineering and economic analysis based on quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair during the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost.

(e) **NONDUPLICATION OF WORK.**—An activity carried out pursuant to this section shall not duplicate the work or activity of any other Federal or State department or agency.

(f) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **ADDITIONAL SRF CAPITALIZATION GRANTS.**—

(A) **APPROPRIATION.**—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in

the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available for obligation for 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available, to provide additional grants to eligible States pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) SUPPLEMENTED INTENDED USE PLANS.—The Administrator shall disburse to an eligible State amounts made available under subparagraph (A) by not later than 30 days after the date on which the eligible State submits to the Administrator a supplemented intended use plan under section 1452(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)) that includes preapplication information regarding projects to be funded using the additional assistance, including, with respect to each such project—

(i) a description of the project;

(ii) an explanation of the means by which the project will address a situation causing a declared emergency in the eligible State;

(iii) the estimated cost of the project; and

(iv) the projected start date for construction of the project.

(C) UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.—Any amounts made available to the Administrator under subparagraph (A) that are unobligated on the date that is 1 year after the date on which the amounts are made available shall be available to carry out the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.), to remain available until expended.

(D) APPLICABILITY.—Section 1452(b)(1) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12(b)(1)) shall not apply to a supplement to an intended use plan under subparagraph (B).

(2) WIFIA FUNDING.—

(A) APPROPRIATION.—There is appropriated to the Administrator, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide credit subsidies and administrative costs, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, for secured loans under subsection (c)(1)(A) in an amount equal to not more than \$600,000,000 to eligible States under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.).

(B) DEADLINE.—The Administrator and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to an eligible State a credit subsidy under subparagraph (A) by not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a loan application from the eligible State.

(C) USE.—Secured loans provided pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be available for activities to address lead and other contaminants in drinking water, including repair and replacement of public and private drinking water infrastructure.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—Unless explicitly waived, all requirements under section 1450(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-9(e)) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) shall apply to funding provided under this subsection.

(g) OFFSET.—There is rescinded the unobligated balance of amounts made available to carry out section 1703 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16513).

(h) HEALTH EFFECTS EVALUATION.—Pursuant to section 104(i)(1)(E) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(1)(E)), and on receipt of a request of an appropriate State or local health official of an eligible State, the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the National Center for Environmental Health shall—

(1) in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, con-

duct voluntary surveillance activities to evaluate any adverse health effects on individuals exposed to lead from drinking water; and

(2) provide for those individuals consultations regarding health issues relating to that exposure.

SEC. 4802. LOAN FORGIVENESS.

The matter under the heading “STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS” under the heading “ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY” in title II of division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113), is amended in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: “or, if a Federal emergency declaration has been issued due to a threat to public health from heightened exposure to lead in a municipal drinking water supply, before the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That in a State in which such an emergency declaration has been issued, the State may use more than 20 percent of the funds made available under this title to the State for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grants to provide additional subsidy to eligible recipients;”.

SEC. 4803. DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.—Section 1414(c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

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

“(D) Notice of any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.—Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

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

“(3) NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATING TO LEAD.—

“(A) EXCEEDANCE OF LEAD ACTION LEVEL.—Not later than 15 days after the date of being notified by the primary agency of an exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead in a regulation issued under section 1412, including the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity or any other level of lead determined by the Administrator to warrant notice, either on a case-specific or more general basis, the Administrator shall notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in the monitoring activity conducted by the public water system if the public water system or the State does not notify the public of the concentrations of lead found in a monitoring activity.

“(B) RESULTS OF LEAD MONITORING.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may provide notice of any result of lead monitoring conducted by a public water system to—

“(I) any person that is served by the public water system; or

“(II) the local or State health department of a locality or State in which the public water system is located.

“(ii) FORM OF NOTICE.—The Administrator may provide the notice described in clause (i) by—

“(I) press release; or

“(II) other form of communication, including local media.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1414 (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-3(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “paragraph (2)(E)” and inserting “paragraph (2)(F)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking “subparagraph (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (E)”;

(3) in paragraph (3)(B), in the first sentence, by striking “(D)” and inserting “(E)”.

SEC. 4804. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON LEAD EXPOSURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CENTER.—The term “Center” means the Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure established under subsection (b).

(2) CITY.—The term “City” means a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(3) COMMUNITY.—The term “community” means the community of the City.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(5) STATE.—The term “State” means a State containing a City that has been exposed to lead through a water system or other source.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary may, by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, establish a center to be known as the “Center of Excellence on Lead Exposure”.

(c) COLLABORATION.—The Center shall collaborate with relevant Federal agencies, research institutions, hospitals, Federally qualified health centers, school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and State and local public health agencies in the development and operation of the Center.

(d) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Center shall establish an advisory committee to provide scientific and technical support for the Center and to advise the Secretary, consisting of, at a minimum—

- (A) an epidemiologist;
- (B) a toxicologist;
- (C) a mental health professional;
- (D) a pediatrician;
- (E) an early childhood education expert;
- (F) a special education expert;
- (G) a dietitian;
- (H) an environmental health expert; and
- (I) 2 community representatives.

(2) APPLICATION OF FACAs.—The advisory committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Center shall, at minimum, develop and carry out the following components and responsibilities:

(1) Establish a health registry with the following responsibilities:

(A) Survey City residents on a voluntary basis about exposure to lead, and inform City residents of the health and developmental impacts that may have resulted from that exposure.

(B) Identify and provide ongoing monitoring for City residents on a voluntary basis who have been exposed to lead.

(C) Collect and analyze clinical data related to the monitoring and treatment of City residents.

(D) Provide culturally and linguistically relevant personnel and materials necessary for City residents.

(2) Without duplicating other Federal research efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, research on physical, behavioral, and developmental impacts, as well

as other health or educational impacts associated with lead exposure, including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, neurological impacts, developmental delays, reproductive health impacts, and maternal and fetal health impacts.

(3) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, develop or recommend that the Secretary develop or support the development of, through a grant or contract, lead mitigation recommendations and allocate resources, as appropriate, for health-, education-, and nutrition-related interventions, as well as other interventions, to mitigate lead exposure in children and adults.

(4) Establish a partnership with the Regional Center of Excellence on Nutrition Education of the Department of Agriculture to provide any relevant nutrition information for lead mitigation, including—

(A) identifying and implementing best practices in nutrition education regarding lead-mitigating foods; and

(B) making recommendations and conducting outreach to improve access to lead-mitigating foods in the community.

(5) Without duplicating other Federal efforts, conduct or recommend that the Secretary conduct or support, through a grant or contract, education and outreach efforts for the City and State, including the following:

(A) Create a publicly accessible website that provides, at minimum, details about the health registry for City residents, available testing and other services through the Center for City residents and other communities impacted by lead exposure, any relevant information regarding health and educational impacts of lead exposure, any relevant information on mitigation services, and any research conducted through the Center.

(B) Conduct at least 2 meetings annually in the City to discuss the ongoing impact of lead exposure on residents and solicit community input regarding ongoing mitigation needs.

(C) Establish a navigation program to connect City residents to available Federal, State, and local resources and programs that assist with cognitive, developmental, and health problems associated with lead exposure.

(f) REPORT.—Annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) assessing the impacts of the Center on City health and education systems and outcomes;

(2) describing any research conducted by or in connection with the Center;

(3) describing any mitigation tools used or developed by the Center including outcomes; and

(4) making any recommendations for the City, State, or other communities impacted by lead exposure, as appropriate.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4805. GAO REVIEW AND REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Appropriations, Energy and Commerce,

Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the status of any ongoing investigations into the Federal and State response to the contamination of the drinking water supply of the City of Flint, Michigan.

(b) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the investigations described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a review of issues that are not addressed by the investigations and relating to—

(1) the adequacy of the response by the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response, as well as the capacity of the State and City to manage the drinking water system; and

(2) the adequacy of the response by Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, including the timeliness and transparency of the response.

(c) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after commencing each review under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a statement of the principal findings of the review; and

(2) recommendations for Congress and the President to take any actions to prevent a similar situation in the future and to protect public health.

SA 3288. Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle E of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 44 _____. KLAMATH PROJECT WATER AND POWER.

(a) ADDRESSING WATER MANAGEMENT AND POWER COSTS FOR IRRIGATION.—The Klamath Basin Water Supply Enhancement Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-498; 114 Stat. 2221) is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 4 through 6 as sections 5 through 7, respectively; and

(2) by inserting after section 3 the following:

“SEC. 4. POWER AND WATER MANAGEMENT.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) COVERED POWER USE.—The term ‘covered power use’ means a use of power to develop or manage water for irrigation, wildlife purposes, or drainage on land that is—

“(A) associated with the Klamath Project, including land within a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System that receives water due to the operation of Klamath Project facilities; or

“(B) irrigated by the class of users covered by the agreement dated April 30, 1956, between the California Oregon Power Company and Klamath Basin Water Users Protective Association and within the Off Project Area (as defined in the Upper Basin Comprehensive Agreement entered into on April 18, 2014), only if each applicable owner and holder of a possessory interest of the land is a party to that agreement (or a successor agreement that the Secretary determines provides a comparable benefit to the United States).

“(2) KLAMATH PROJECT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘Klamath Project’ means the Bureau of Reclamation

project in the States of California and Oregon.

“(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term ‘Klamath Project’ includes any dams, canals, and other works and interests for water diversion, storage, delivery, and drainage, flood control, and similar functions that are part of the project described in subparagraph (A).

“(3) POWER COST BENCHMARK.—The term ‘power cost benchmark’ means the average net delivered cost of power for irrigation and drainage at Reclamation projects in the area surrounding the Klamath Project that are similarly situated to the Klamath Project, including Reclamation projects that—

“(A) are located in the Pacific Northwest; and

“(B) receive project-use power.

“(b) WATER, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND POWER ACTIVITIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to the reclamation laws and subject to appropriations and required environmental reviews, the Secretary may carry out activities, including entering into an agreement or contract or otherwise making financial assistance available—

“(A) to plan, implement, and administer programs to align water supplies and demand for irrigation water users associated with the Klamath Project, with a primary emphasis on programs developed or endorsed by local entities comprised of representatives of those water users;

“(B) to plan and implement activities and projects that—

“(i) avoid or mitigate environmental effects of irrigation activities; or

“(ii) restore habitats in the Klamath Basin watershed, including restoring tribal fishery resources held in trust; and

“(C) to limit the net delivered cost of power for covered power uses.

“(2) EFFECT.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1) authorizes the Secretary—

“(A) to develop or construct new facilities for the Klamath Project without appropriate approval from Congress under section 9 of the Reclamation Projects Act of 1939 (43 U.S.C. 485h); or

“(B) to carry out activities that have not otherwise been authorized.

“(c) REDUCING POWER COSTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016, the Secretary, in consultation with interested irrigation interests that are eligible for covered power use and representative organizations of those interests, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that—

“(A) identifies the power cost benchmark; and

“(B) recommends actions that, in the judgment of the Secretary, are necessary and appropriate to ensure that the net delivered power cost for covered power use is equal to or less than the power cost benchmark, including a description of—

“(i) actions to immediately reduce power costs and to have the net delivered power cost for covered power use be equal to or less than the power cost benchmark in the near term, while longer-term actions are being implemented;

“(ii) actions that prioritize water and power conservation and efficiency measures and, to the extent actions involving the development or acquisition of power generation are included, renewable energy technologies (including hydropower);

“(iii) the potential costs and timeline for the actions recommended under this subparagraph;

“(iv) provisions for modifying the actions and timeline to adapt to new information or circumstances; and

“(v) a description of public input regarding the proposed actions, including input from water users that have covered power use and the degree to which those water users concur with the recommendations.

“(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of submission of the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall implement those recommendations described in the report that the Secretary determines will ensure that the net delivered power cost for covered power use is equal to or less than the power cost benchmark, subject to availability of appropriations, on the fastest practicable timeline.

“(3) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Secretary shall submit to each Committee described in paragraph (1) annual reports describing progress achieved in meeting the requirements of this subsection.

“(d) TREATMENT OF POWER PURCHASES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Any purchase of power by the Secretary under this section shall be considered to be an authorized sale for purposes of section 5(b)(3) of the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 839c(b)(3)).

“(2) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section authorizes the Bonneville Power Administration to make a sale of power from the Federal Columbia River Power System at rates, terms, or conditions better than those afforded preference customers of the Bonneville Power Administration.

“(e) GOALS.—The goals of activities under subsections (b) and (c) shall include, as applicable—

“(1) the short-term and long-term reduction and resolution of conflicts relating to water in the Klamath Basin watershed; and

“(2) compatibility and utility for protecting natural resources throughout the Klamath Basin watershed, including the protection, preservation, and restoration of Klamath River tribal fishery resources, particularly through collaboratively developed agreements.

“(f) PUMPING PLANT D.—The Secretary may enter into 1 or more agreements with the Tulalake Irrigation District to reimburse the Tulalake Irrigation District for not more than 69 percent of the cost incurred by the Tulalake Irrigation District for the operation and maintenance of Pumping Plant D, on the condition that the cost benefits the United States.”.

(b) CONVEYANCE OF NON-PROJECT WATER; REPLACEMENT OF C CANAL.—

(1) DEFINITION OF KLAMATH PROJECT.—In this subsection:

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “Klamath Project” means the Bureau of Reclamation project in the States of California and Oregon.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Klamath Project” includes any dams, canals, and other works and interests for water diversion, storage, delivery, and drainage, flood control, and similar functions that are part of the project described in subparagraph (A).

(2) CONVEYANCE OF NON-PROJECT WATER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An entity operating under a contract entered into with the United States for the operation and maintenance of Klamath Project works or facilities, and an entity operating any work or facility not owned by the United States that receives Klamath Project water, may use any of the Klamath Project works or facilities to convey non-Klamath Project water for any authorized purpose of the Klamath Project, subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C).

(B) PERMITS; MEASUREMENT.—An addition, conveyance, and use of water pursuant to

subparagraph (A) shall be subject to the requirements that—

(i) the applicable entity shall secure all permits required under State or local laws; and

(ii) all water delivered into, or taken out of, a Klamath Project facility pursuant to that subparagraph shall be measured.

(C) EFFECT.—A use of Klamath Project water under this paragraph shall not—

(i) adversely affect the delivery of water to any water user or land served by the Klamath Project; or

(ii) result in any additional cost to the United States.

(3) REPLACEMENT OF C CANAL FLUME.—The replacement of the C Canal flume within the Klamath Project shall be considered to be, and shall receive the treatment authorized for, emergency extraordinary operation and maintenance work in accordance with Federal reclamation law (the Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388, chapter 1093), and Acts supplemental to and amendatory of that Act (43 U.S.C. 371 et seq.)).

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) COMPLIANCE.—In implementing this section and the amendments made by this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall comply with—

(A) the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(B) the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

(C) all other applicable laws.

(2) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section—

(A) modifies the authorities or obligations of the United States with respect to the tribal trust and treaty obligations of the United States; or

(B) creates or determines water rights or affects water rights or water right claims in existence on the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3289. Mr. CARPER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . QUALIFYING OFFSHORE WIND FACILITY CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 46 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (5),

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (6) and inserting “, and”, and

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

“(7) the qualifying offshore wind facility credit.”.

(b) AMOUNT OF CREDIT.—Subpart E of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 48D the following new section:

“SEC. 48E. CREDIT FOR OFFSHORE WIND FACILITIES.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 46, the qualifying offshore wind facility credit for any taxable year is an amount equal to 30 percent of the qualified investment for such taxable year with respect to any qualifying offshore wind facility of the taxpayer.

“(b) QUALIFIED INVESTMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of subsection (a), the qualified investment for any taxable year is the basis of eligible property placed in service by the taxpayer during such taxable year which is part of a qualifying offshore wind facility.

“(2) CERTAIN QUALIFIED PROGRESS EXPENDITURES RULES MADE APPLICABLE.—Rules similar to the rules of subsections (c)(4) and (d) of section 46 (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1990) shall apply for purposes of this section.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

“(1) QUALIFYING OFFSHORE WIND FACILITY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘qualifying offshore wind facility’ means an offshore facility using wind to produce electricity.

“(B) OFFSHORE FACILITY.—The term ‘offshore facility’ means any facility located in the inland navigable waters of the United States, including the Great Lakes, or in the coastal waters of the United States, including the territorial seas of the United States, the exclusive economic zone of United States, and the outer Continental Shelf of the United States.

“(2) ELIGIBLE PROPERTY.—The term ‘eligible property’ means any property—

“(A) which is—

“(i) tangible personal property, or

“(ii) other tangible property (not including a building or its structural components), but only if such property is used as an integral part of the qualifying offshore wind facility, and

“(B) with respect to which depreciation (or amortization in lieu of depreciation) is allowable.

“(d) QUALIFYING CREDIT FOR OFFSHORE WIND FACILITIES PROGRAM.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of the Interior, shall establish a qualifying credit for offshore wind facilities program to consider and award certifications for qualified investments eligible for credits under this section to qualifying offshore wind facility sponsors.

“(B) LIMITATION.—The total amount of megawatt capacity for offshore facilities with respect to which credits may be allocated under the program shall not exceed 3,000 megawatts.

“(2) CERTIFICATION.—

“(A) APPLICATION PERIOD.—Each applicant for certification under this paragraph shall submit an application containing such information as the Secretary may require beginning on the date the Secretary establishes the program under paragraph (1).

“(B) PERIOD OF ISSUANCE.—An applicant which receives a certification shall have 5 years from the date of issuance of the certification in order to place the facility in service and if such facility is not placed in service by that time period, then the certification shall no longer be valid.

“(3) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In determining which qualifying offshore wind facilities to certify under this section, the Secretary shall—

“(A) take into consideration which facilities will be placed in service at the earliest date, and

“(B) take into account the technology of the facility that may lead to reduced industry and consumer costs or expand access to offshore wind.

“(4) REVIEW, ADDITIONAL ALLOCATIONS, AND REALLOCATIONS.—

“(A) REVIEW.—Periodically, but not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall review the credits allocated under this section as of the date of such review.

“(B) ADDITIONAL ALLOCATIONS AND REALLOCATIONS.—The Secretary may make additional allocations and reallocations of

credits under this section if the Secretary determines that—

“(i) the limitation under paragraph (1)(B) has not been attained at the time of the review, or

“(ii) scheduled placed-in-service dates of previously certified facilities have been significantly delayed and the Secretary determines the applicant will not meet the timeline pursuant to paragraph (2)(B).

“(C) ADDITIONAL PROGRAM FOR ALLOCATIONS AND REALLOCATIONS.—If the Secretary determines that credits under this section are available for further allocation or reallocation, but there is an insufficient quantity of qualifying applications for certification pending at the time of the review, the Secretary is authorized to conduct an additional program for applications for certification.

“(5) DISCLOSURE OF ALLOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall, upon making a certification under this subsection, publicly disclose the identity of the applicant and the amount of the credit with respect to such applicant.

“(e) DENIAL OF DOUBLE BENEFIT.—A credit shall not be allowed under this section with respect to any facility if—

“(1) a credit has been allowed to such facility under section 45 for such taxable year or any prior taxable year,

“(2) a credit has been allowed with respect to such facility under section 46 by reason of section 48(a) or 48C(a) for such taxable or any preceding taxable year, or

“(3) a grant has been made with respect to such facility under section 1603 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.”

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 49(a)(1)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking “and” at the end of clause (v),

(B) by striking the period at the end of clause (vi) and inserting “, and”, and

(C) by adding after clause (vi) the following new clause:

“(vii) the basis of any property which is part of a qualifying offshore wind facility under section 48E.”

(2) The table of sections for subpart E of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 48D the following new item:

“48E. Credit for offshore wind facilities.”

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to periods after the date of the enactment of this Act, under rules similar to the rules of section 48(m) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1990).

SA 3290. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2953 proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI to the bill S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of section 1306, add the following:

(h) SECONDARY USE APPLICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a research, development, and demonstration program that—

(A) builds on any work carried out under section 915 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16195);

(B) identifies possible uses of a vehicle battery after the useful life of the battery in a vehicle has been exhausted;

(C) conducts long-term testing to verify performance and degradation predictions and lifetime valuations for secondary uses;

(D) evaluates innovative approaches to recycling materials from plug-in electric drive vehicles and the batteries used in plug-in electric drive vehicles;

(E)(i) assesses the potential for markets for uses described in subparagraph (B) to develop; and

(ii) identifies any barriers to the development of those markets; and

(F) identifies the potential uses of a vehicle battery—

(i) with the most promise for market development; and

(ii) for which market development would be aided by a demonstration project.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an initial report on the findings of the program described in paragraph (1), including recommendations for stationary energy storage and other potential applications for batteries used in plug-in electric drive vehicles.

(3) SECONDARY USE DEMONSTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Based on the results of the program described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall develop guidelines for projects that demonstrate the secondary uses and innovative recycling of vehicle batteries.

(B) PUBLICATION OF GUIDELINES.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(i) publish the guidelines described in subparagraph (A); and

(ii) solicit applications for funding for demonstration projects.

(C) PILOT DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—Not later than 21 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall select proposals for grant funding under this section, based on an assessment of which proposals are mostly likely to contribute to the development of a secondary market for batteries.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 4, 2016, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 4, 2016, at 10:30 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a Subcommittee hearing entitled “Ensuring Intermodal USF Support for Rural America.”

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 4, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled

“Hearing to consider the nominations of Mary Katherine Wakefield, Andrew LaMont Eanes, Elizabeth Ann Copeland, and Vik Edwin Stoll.”

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 4, 2016, at 10 a.m.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 4, 2016, at 2:30 p.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Karen Dildei, effective today through March 1, 2016.

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

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following fellows in Senator DURBIN's office be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 114th Congress: Jeremy Ward, Elizabeth Lawrence, Karla Hagan, and Craig Crawford.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 465; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be general

Lt. Gen. John W. Nicholson, Jr.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

AUTHORIZING USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 109, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 109) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the foot soldiers who participated in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 109) was agreed to.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2015 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION III FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 363, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 363) congratulating the University of Mount Union football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Football Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, 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 resolution (S. Res. 363) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF MARLOW COOK

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 364, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 364) relative to the death of Marlow Cook, former United States Senator for the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, 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. 364) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the provisions of S. Con. Res. 28 (114th Congress), appoints the following Senators to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: the Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky, the Honorable ROY BLUNT of Missouri, and the Honorable CHARLES SCHUMER of New York.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2016

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m., Monday, February 8;

that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, that the Senate adjourn under the provisions of S. Res. 364 as a mark of respect for the late Marlow Cook, former Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2016, AT 2 P.M.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:47 p.m., adjourned until Monday, February 8, 2016, at 2 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

PATRICK A. BURKE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE EDWIN DONOVAN SLOANE, RETIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

STEPHANIE A. FINLEY, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA, VICE RICHARD T. HAIK, SR., RETIRED.

CLAUDE J. KELLY III, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA, VICE IVAN L. R. LEMELLE, RETIRED.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 4, 2016:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. JOHN W. NICHOLSON, JR.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTERNATIONAL MEGAN'S LAW TO PREVENT DEMAND FOR CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 1, 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, for years, the parents of the children who have been preyed upon by pedophiles—and advocacy groups like the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Megan Kanka Foundation—have been very supportive of legislation to better protect our children. Through their consistent, selfless work they have helped victims of abuse and have been an important part of the bipartisan, bicameral coalition supporting this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to read their statements submitted for the record, in support of passage of H.R. 515 The International Megan's Law to Prevent Demand for Child Sex Trafficking.

JANUARY 20, 2016.

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

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER AND MADAM LEADER: On behalf of ECPAT-USA, a policy and advocacy organization that has been at the forefront of the fight to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children for the past two decades, I would like to respectfully ask you consider supporting International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders (H.R. 515). When ECPAT-USA first began our work, we focused on fighting sex tourism and holding Americans who traveled abroad to buy sex with minors accountable in the US for sexually exploiting children overseas. H.R. 515 or International Megan's Law protects children from this exact form of exploitation by establishing a notification system to provide advance notice of travel by registered sex offenders to destination countries. We strongly support this legislation and urge not only its swift passage but also a commitment to supporting this effort financially.

The Department of Homeland Security has a proven track record of working cooperatively with foreign governments, having made 99 arrests of traveling child sexual offenders since 2003. International Megan's Law will establish the Angel Watch Center at the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that all destination countries receive a notification that a convicted child sex predator is traveling to their country. It also formalizes the process for the U.S. Marshal's Service Sex Offender Targeting Center to provide advanced notice of travel by all registered sex offenders to destination countries using Interpol notification system. International Megan's Law also coordinates communication between Angel Watch Center and U.S. Marshal's Service Sex Offender Targeting center and streamlines the inter-

national notification system. We believe that these provisions are necessary to strengthen and protect vulnerable children from potential predators.

ECPAT-USA is part of a global network of over 80 ECPAT's in 77 countries all dedicated to protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation. Headquartered in Thailand, we are acutely familiar with the harm caused by sex offenders who travel overseas and continuously exploit children. As a member of the ECPAT network, we are committed to eradicating the practice of child sex tourism. For this reason, we were so pleased to see the Senate pass this bill late last year, and we applaud the efforts and dedication of the bill's original sponsor in the House Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ). We strongly urge the House to swiftly pass International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders (H.R. 515).

Sincerely,

CAROL SMOLENSKI,
Executive Director, ECPAT-USA.

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL,
Washington, DC, January 8, 2016.

REPRESENTATIVE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of Family Research Council (FRC) and the families we represent, I urge you to vote for International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders ("Megan's Law," H.R. 515), to establish a system that prevents predators from traveling under the radar internationally.

Megan's Law would expand and codify Immigration and Customs Enforcement's ability to effectively alert countries about the travel of registered child-sex offenders, require convicted child-sex predators to have a unique passport identifier to ensure they can be identified at the border as they travel internationally, and ensure collaboration between the U.S. Marshal's Service and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, making government work more effectively. The bill would also provide an appeals process for persons who want their record and notification status reconsidered and make it a crime for registered sex offenders to fail to report intended international travel with less than twenty-one days of notice. Ultimately, the law would facilitate a network to reduce child-sex tourism and reduce recidivism of child-sex offenders.

Family Research Council recognizes that it is important to protect families from child-sex abusers, supports passage of International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders (H.R. 515), and encourages you to vote for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

DAVID CHRISTENSEN,
Vice President of Government Affairs.

MEGAN NICOLE KANKA FOUNDATION,
Trenton, NJ, September 2015.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS: This past August marked the twenty-first anniversary of the violent rape and murder of our seven year old daughter Megan at the hands of a twice-convicted pedophile. As a result of our pain, determination and the support of the public and representatives like you we have Megan's Law throughout the United States. However, children abroad are still unprotected from U.S. sex offenders.

We are grateful that the Congress is advancing the International Megan's Law (H.R. 515/S. 1867) to stop sex offenders from exploiting children internationally—we eagerly await a Senate vote on the bill so that it will become law before the end of the year.

When do we as a society truly stand behind our vows to protect the children of this world? Unfortunately for us, it took the murder of our seven year old daughter Megan for us to get involved.

This law has been eight years in the making. We urgently need your help and support now to prevent new tragedies.

Sincerely,

MAUREEN & RICHARD KANKA.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN,
Alexandria, VA, January 12, 2016.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: On behalf of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the families and children we serve, I am writing to express our support for your legislation, International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders (IML) (H.R. 515). NCMEC supports the goals of IML to help ensure the effective monitoring and compliance of sex offenders who have harmed children and pose a continuing risk to children in the United States and abroad.

NCMEC's Sex Offender Tracking Team (SOTT) assists federal, state, and local law enforcement in their efforts to locate and apprehend noncompliant, convicted sex offenders and determine if there is a possible link to unresolved cases of missing and sexually exploited children. Today, our SOTT analysts provide assistance to various law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Marshals Service in the National Sex Offender Targeting Center.

Through our SOTT work, we have learned the difficulties law enforcement can face when monitoring sex offenders as well as the potential danger to children when noncompliant, convicted sex offenders travel within the United States or abroad, including the possibility that they will commit additional crimes against children. We believe the legislation you have sponsored—International Megan's Law—will enhance law enforcement's ability to monitor sex offenders when traveling abroad.

As you know, NCMEC also supported the companion bill sponsored in the Senate by

• 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.

Senators Richard Shelby and Barbara Mikulski. Provisions of their legislation were incorporated into H.R. 515 and then passed unanimously by the Senate in December. We now look forward to the House of Representatives prompt consideration of H.R. 515.

NCMEC is proud to lend our support to this important legislation, and we are grateful for your dedication to the safety of our nation's children.

Sincerely,

JOHN F. CLARK,
President and CEO.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN,
Alexandria, VA, January 12, 2016.

Re H.R. 515.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Majority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTHY AND REPRESENTATIVE PELOSI: On behalf of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), I am writing in reference to H.R. 515, International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advance Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders.

For almost two decades, ICMEC has been working around the world to advance child protection and safeguard children from abduction, sexual abuse and exploitation. ICMEC responds to requests for assistance from all over the world through advocacy, training and collaboration. We strive to inform and work with policy makers, law enforcement and others in an effort to enhance and enrich frontline child protection practices.

We strongly believe that all children have the right to live without fear of abduction and free from sexual abuse and exploitation. We believe every child deserves a safe childhood, where they are able to grow into healthy and successful adults.

We thank you for your efforts to protect children from exploitation, to keep known sex offenders from harming children again, and to promote and facilitate enhanced cooperation and information sharing within the global law enforcement community.

Sincerely,

AMBASSADOR MAURA HARTY, RET.
President & CEO.

HONORING CAPTAIN BRIAN T.
KENNEDY

HON. RYAN A. COSTELLO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to pay tribute and express my deepest appreciation for the service and sacrifice of the 12 Marines missing off the coast of Hawaii, and especially Marine Captain Brian T. Kennedy of Malvern, PA.

Growing up in the Tredyffrin Township, Captain Kennedy attended school at the Tredyffrin/Eastown School District and graduated from Conestoga High School as a member of the National Honors Society and co-captain of the varsity football team.

Upon graduation, Captain Kennedy had the noble desire to serve his country and followed that aspiration to the U.S. Naval Academy where he continued his academic excellence and graduated with a major in Oceanography.

He was a leader by nature, holding many leadership positions at the Academy: a battalion weapons coach, a company platoon sergeant, a company executive officer, a company conduct officer, and a company squad leader.

After joining the Marine Corps as an officer, he was stationed in California where he met his loving and devoted wife, Captain Paige Kennedy.

Together, they both served to protect our country and our freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, as a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot, Captain Kennedy fought bravely for our freedoms in the Global War on Terror, which is proven by the numerous decorations awarded.

Unfortunately, after the helicopter crash in Hawaii and an exhaustive search over 40,000 nautical square miles by the Marines and Coast Guard, Captain Kennedy and his comrades have not been found.

We as a nation are truly indebted to those 12 Marines for the ultimate sacrifice they have made in service to this great nation.

And it is with great respect and appreciation that I extend my condolences to their friends and families.

RECOGNIZING WAWA EMPLOYEE
OWNERSHIP

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed H.R. 1675, the Encouraging Employee Ownership Act of 2015. This legislation will make it easier for companies to let hardworking employees have a stake in the company where they work every day. Companies who have significant employee ownership regularly realize a boost in the company's performance, because ownership gives the employees a vested interest in the success of the company.

I'd like to especially highlight one such organization in my district, Wawa, Inc. Wawa has had an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) since 1992 and has shared ownership with its associates for more than 40 years. Wawa associates own almost 41 percent of the company through the ESOP, and that pride in ownership is on display every single day. From customer services associates to general managers, Wawa employees share in the company's success and are able to accumulate significant retirement savings. It is important to these workers and those across the country who participate in ESOPs that these ownership and retirement programs remain strong.

HONORING OFFICER MATTHEW
MOORE AFTER HIS PASSING ON
JANUARY 23, 2016

HON. FRANK C. GUINTA

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Granite State hero and fallen police officer

Matthew Moore of Hampstead, New Hampshire.

On January 23, 2016, the State of New Hampshire lost a true Granite State hero. During this time of great sadness, we remember and celebrate the life of not only a tremendous police officer, but also a father, husband and friend.

Moore devoted his life to protecting our families and our communities through his military service as a Marine, and his time as a police officer in the towns of Pelham, Sandown and Hampstead.

As his family, friends, neighbors and fellow police officers knew, Moore was really one of a kind. The dedication and compassion he demonstrated during his years of service are not—and will not—be forgotten.

It takes a remarkable individual like Matthew Moore to risk their life daily to keep us safe and protect us from harm. So let us take a moment today and pause, reflect, and celebrate the life and valor of Officer Moore. He put his life on the line to protect the Granite State, and we are forever grateful.

TRIBUTE TO DEAN STONE

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, Dean Stone has served as Editor of The Daily Times in Maryville, Tennessee for more than six decades.

Recently, he retired from his full-time position.

As The Daily Times recounted in a tribute piece devoted to Dean, he oversaw and outlasted an industry that changed from "hot type, to computer-generated type, to the internet."

Dean is the standard of journalistic fairness and integrity in my District and a towering figure in East Tennessee.

Mr. Speaker, I call to the attention of my colleagues and other readers the tribute to Dean's career that ran in The Daily Times on December 27, 2015, and wish him well on his much-earned retirement.

STONE, FIXTURE IN TENNESSEE JOURNALISM
SINCE 1948, RETIRES FROM THE DAILY TIMES

(By Daryl Sullivan)

H. Dean Stone has outlasted four owners and six publishers, while seeing the news move from hot type, to computer-generated type, to the Internet, all the while recording Blount County history.

Stone will still be writing, but as 2015 comes to a close, he is retiring from the newsroom—but not without having made an indelible mark on Tennessee journalism and his community, a mark that has earned him the title of editor emeritus at The Daily Times.

"Dean Stone serves as an exemplar for all who are engaged in community journalism," said Gregg Jones, president and CEO of Jones Media Inc., owner of The Daily Times. "Dean never limited himself to merely leading the newsroom, but served as a leader in community affairs. He understood, and exemplified, that community journalism is best practiced when one is immersed in the community one serves, and he has done so—from Alcoa Kiwanis, to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I first met Dean Stone

decades ago when The Daily Times was owned and published by the late, great Tutt Bradford. It didn't take me long to see what a giant Dean was in terms of the passion he felt for his beloved community and for good journalism. Dean became, and will remain, one of Blount County's greatest treasures, and I will always be proud to claim him as a friend for whom I have great respect and affection."

"It's hard to express how humbled and appreciative I am to have had the opportunity to work with Dean, day in and day out, the past five years," Publisher Carl Esposito said. "As he's done his entire career, he's contributed greatly to our success during that period, and I'm grateful he'll continue to contribute as editor emeritus. He's become not only a valued and trusted colleague, but a great friend as well."

Stone arrived at what was then The Maryville-Alcoa Daily Times on June 19, 1948, but did not begin his full-time journalism career until 1949, when he was named editor of the paper's first Sunday edition. The Sunday edition was short-lived—published from February through June of that year—but Stone, who was then named managing editor, began laying the groundwork for a career that has spanned more than 66 years.

WORKING JOURNALIST

"I've been very well blessed with the people I've been associated with at The Times over the years," Stone said. "I've enjoyed my time here. This is my birthplace. It's my home county."

As for his own personal success, he attributes that to a trait many leaders with successful careers fields share.

"I feel blessed in that I've had a determination to work. Now that comes not from seeking recognition, but from achievement, knowing that I've done something worthwhile," Stone said. "I've received a lot of really nice recognitions, but I worked because I feel like there's a need for all humans to work and earn our keep. I'm thankful that I've been driven by that all these years, and still am."

NEWSPAPER OF RECORD

Under his direction in 1953, The Maryville-Alcoa Times won the University of Tennessee's State Press award for Public Service. Since then, it has captured literally hundreds of state and regional awards.

In 1955, Tutt S. Bradford became the fifth owner of Blount County's newspaper of record, and Stone was there to greet him.

In 1988, Stone was named editor.

In December 1989, the Bradford family sold The Daily Times to Persis Corp., a Honolulu-based newspaper group headed by Thurston Twigg-Smith, publisher of The Honolulu Advertiser. Persis Corp. was also owner of The Knoxville Journal, what was then a daily newspaper. Stone greeted them, and said goodbye to both: The Journal ceased publication on New Years Eve 1991, and Persis Corp. later sold The Daily Times to Horvitz Newspapers, headed by Peter Horvitz.

In 2010, Jones Media Inc., a Greeneville-based family newspaper group with deep roots in Tennessee journalism, purchased The Daily Times. Stone, with his deep appreciation of community and history, was here to greet them.

(In December 1989, when the company that owned The Knoxville Journal purchased The Daily Times from the Bradford family, the late Phyllis Cable greeted this journalist in the newsroom with the words, "I hope they know they bought a tremendous amount of goodwill when they bought this newspaper." I learned over the following years that a huge amount of that goodwill came through the work of Dean Stone.)

YEARS OF SERVICE

Over the years, Stone has served in numerous nonprofit organizations, even outlasting

some of them: president and campaign chair of United Way of Blount County; president of Maryville-Alcoa Jaycees and Alcoa Kiwanis; board member of Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center, Little River Railroad Museum, Sam Houston Schoolhouse, Hillbilly Homecoming, Passion Play, Friendsville Academy, Townsend Chamber of Commerce; deacon in Maryville First Baptist Church, and chaired publication of a history of Chihowee Baptist Association churches.

He founded and co-founded numerous community organizations, including the Empty Pantry Fund, in 1952, and Leadership Blount, which in 2002 awarded him the Community Leadership Award.

Stone has received countless other awards, including Blount County's Pride of Tennessee Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Oklahoma, special recognition from the director of the National Park Service, and the Tennessee Air National Guard's highest award, the Minuteman Award.

He was longtime chairman of the Tennessee Great Smoky Mountains Park Commission, member of the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Southeastern Regional Council of the National Parks Conservation Association. In 2003, Stone was presented the Tennessee Outstanding Achievement Award for service on state commissions, and in 2006 he was recognized for his community service with a joint state Senate and House resolution.

PRESERVING HISTORY

In 2007, he was awarded the East Tennessee Historical Society's first Professional Achievement Award for his ongoing preservation of local history, most recently through a series of books entitled, "Snapshots of Blount County History."

During his journalism career, he has twice served as president of Tennessee Associated Press Managing Editors, is a lifelong member of the Society of Professional Journalists, a 50-year member of the Professional Photographers of America, and author of a newspaper handbook, "Newspapers: Making the Most of the News Department."

And perhaps the award that says it all is this: In 2013, Stone was in the inaugural group of those inducted into the Tennessee Journalism Hall of Fame.

Stone once told an interviewer, "To be perfectly honest with you, probably the last thing I ever thought I'd do would be to end up writing."

Quite an accomplishment for something that was the "last thing" on his mind.

GRATITUDE FOR THE SERVICE OF NORBERTO SALINAS

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I, along with House Judiciary Committee Chairman BOB GOODLATTE of Virginia, would like to honor Norberto Salinas for his nearly nine years of dedicated service to the Committee on the Judiciary. Norberto's work in advising and crafting policy on intellectual property, state taxation, arbitration, sports law, and many other issues were invaluable to the Committee.

A proud native of Arlington, Texas, Norberto came to the Committee after practicing law in the District of Columbia. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Wabash College and grad-

uated from the University of Michigan Law School. During law school, he interned at the Michigan Poverty Law Program, which provides support services to legal aid programs throughout Michigan, and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. He continued his passionate work for legal services on the Committee, where he served as the lead counsel and liaison to the Legal Services Corporation, a critical federally-funded program that provides grants for civil legal assistance to the indigent.

He played an important role on budget and appropriations issues for the Committee. He also organized forums for the Committee on the impact certain budget proposals and the Federal shutdown and sequestration would have on the provision of justice in the United States.

Throughout his tenure with the Committee, Norberto worked with his colleagues across the aisle on a wide variety of bills. He was responsible for helping guide several legislative measures including remote sales tax, the Fairness in Nursing Home Arbitration Act, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act, the Innovation Protection Act, the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act, and updates to the Internet Tax Freedom Act. He also worked on regulatory and arbitration provisions in several comprehensive legislative proposals, including the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and the 2008 Farm bill.

Norberto's friendly nature, work ethic, and expertise earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. He has been a valued member of the Committee's staff.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Norberto. Norberto and his talents will be sorely missed by the Committee. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

IN HONOR OF ASSISTANT CHIEF MARK DANT'S RETIREMENT FROM THE CARROLLTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mark Dant for his thirty-eight years of public service, ending this month as an Assistant Chief for the Carrollton, Texas Police Department. Prior to his service with the Carrollton Police Department, Mark served four years in the United States Air Force and two and a half years as a firefighter with the Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport Department of Public Safety. For the last thirty-two years, Mark has been serving and protecting the people of Carrollton as a Patrol Officer, Detective, Patrol Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Assistant Chief of Police.

Mark's service to the community isn't limited to his direct roles for the Carrollton Police Department, far from it—he and his family have become national leading advocates for patients of rare diseases. It is through this work that I have had the distinct pleasure of working with Mark for almost ten years. Mark and his wife Jeanne are parents of one child, Ryan, who currently attends the University of

Louisville. In 1992, their son Ryan was diagnosed with the then terminal genetic disease Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS Type 1). Shortly after learning of this diagnosis, Mark founded The Ryan Foundation to raise funds for developing treatments for the disease. The Dant family's first fundraising effort, a bake sale, netted \$342. The foundation has come a very long way since that first bake sale, much to the tenacious determination of Mark Dant. Millions of research dollars over the years have been donated to scientists searching for treatments to help those afflicted with the various forms of MPS. The Ryan Foundation's efforts spearheaded the funding for the first MPS Enzyme Replacement Therapy—Aldurazyme. Ryan Dant is the longest treated person in the world on Aldurazyme, which to date is approved to treat children with MPS in more than 75 countries. What all started as a bake sale in Carrollton has blossomed into helping children with a previously untreatable disease all around the world.

To help support the tireless efforts of the Dant family and the countless individuals, I introduced the Ryan Dant Health Care Opportunity Act, H.R. 1441 in the 111th Congress. Much to the hard work of Mark Dant and his family, this legislation achieved over fifty bipartisan cosponsors. Mark's advocacy for individuals afflicted by rare diseases will not cease anytime soon—he is expanding upon the initial volunteer efforts of a heartfelt concerned father many years ago, and will now serve as the Executive Director of the National MPS Society in Durham, North Carolina. I can think of no one better suited or well qualified for this position than Mark. Though the people of Carrollton are losing one of their finest public servants, countless affected individuals will now have the best person they could ever ask for leading the efforts in developing treatments and awareness for MPS.

I ask for all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mark Dant on his well-earned retirement from the Carrollton Police Department. I wish Mark, and the Dant family much new success with the National MPS Society.

HONORING POLICE SERGEANT STEVEN HENDERSON ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE HAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT AFTER 30 YEARS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. FRANK C. GUINTA

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my congratulations to Sgt. Steven Henderson on his retirement after 30 years of service with the Hampton Police Department, and thank him for the outstanding work he did during his career.

Sgt. Henderson's continuous progression within the law enforcement ranks during his time exemplifies his intelligence, positive attitude, and commitment to protecting and serving his community with the utmost professionalism. It's clear that Sgt. Henderson leaves an example of strong leadership and compassion for others to emulate in his wake.

It is with great admiration that I congratulate Sgt. Henderson on his retirement, and wish him the best on all future endeavors.

H.R. 1675, THE CAPITAL MARKETS IMPROVEMENTS ACT AND H.R. 766, THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION CUSTOMER PROTECTIONS ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this week, I voted against H.R. 1675, the Capital Markets Improvements Act and H.R. 766, the Financial Institution Customer Protections Act—both missed opportunities to garner the strong bipartisan consensus needed to appropriately refine our nation's financial oversight rules.

While I am sympathetic to concerns of small businesses, and remain ready to work with my Republican colleagues to address those concerns, I continue to support strong, targeted oversight of our financial markets. Strong consumer and market protection regulations, administered by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), are needed to prevent the risky practices that badly damaged our economy during the Great Recession. These rules are also necessary to put a stop to the predatory lending practices and financial gimmickry that wreaked havoc on the economic security of Oregon's working families.

These two bills exemplify the Republican leadership's unwillingness to work with Democrats to strengthen our nation's financial oversight. It is clear that these bills were unnecessarily partisan, making them unpalatable in the Senate and veto targets for President Obama. While there are elements of H.R. 1675 that I have voted for in the past and continue to support, the bill that was brought to the floor yesterday included poison pills, like requiring a review and full commission vote on every major rule every 10 years under full Administrative Procedure Act-style requirements would severely hinder the SEC's ability to monitor markets and protect investors. The vast majority of Democrats rejected a similar proposal in the previous Congress. Today, the Financial Services Committee leadership forced a partisan vote on H.R. 766 by including provisions that would restrict the ability of government watchdogs to investigate and hold accountable those who perpetrate financial wrongdoing.

Appropriate financial rules should protect American families and the broader economy without being unduly burdensome to small businesses and innovative entrepreneurs. When the Administration misses this mark, it is my hope that Congress can work in a constructive, bipartisan manner to refine regulations, tailoring them to strike an appropriate balance between business and consumer needs. Unfortunately, this week's efforts fail to meet that standard.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, on February 3, 2016, I was unable to be present to cast my vote on the Carolyn B. Maloney of New York amendment to H.R. 1675. Had I been present for rollcall No. 59, I would have voted "AYE."

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF COMMANDER AXEL W. SPENS

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Commander Axel W. Spens's retirement and twenty-two years of service in the United States Navy.

Commander Spens is a native of Morgantown, West Virginia, and most recently served as the commanding officer of Naval Recruiting District (NRD) Atlanta. He graduated in 1994 from David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, with a degree in American Studies and he received his commission in the U.S. Navy from Vanderbilt University NROTC. In 1993, he was recognized as a NAIA Academic All-American athlete in cross country. In 2000, he received a Master of Public Administration degree from Valdosta State University.

Commander Spens completed submarine training at Naval Nuclear Power School in Orlando, Florida, Nuclear Power Training Unit in Charleston, South Carolina, and the officer basic course in Groton, Connecticut. He served as a division officer in USS *West Virginia* in Kings Bay, Georgia, as the Navigator in USS *Florida* in Bangor, Washington, and the Combat Systems Officer in both USS *Newport News* in Norfolk, Virginia, as well as in USS *La Jolla* in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. His most recent sea assignment was as the executive officer on USS *Cheyenne* in Hawaii. He has completed two Mediterranean deployments, two Western Pacific deployments and seven strategic patrols.

Commander Spens has also served as an instructor and class director at the Naval Nuclear Power School in Charleston, South Carolina, at the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Millington, Tennessee, the operations officer at Submarine Squadron One at Pearl Harbor, and as a Navy Legislative Fellow on the personal staff of Congressman Jack Kingston. His most recent assignment was on the Navy Staff as the Executive Assistant for the Director of Undersea Warfare.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Commander Axel Spens and to celebrate his many years of hard work and dedication to the United States Navy.

HONORING MR. AND MRS. BUCHENAUER OF MANCHESTER, NH ON CELEBRATING THEIR 65TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. FRANK C. GUINTA

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Buchenauer of Manchester, New Hampshire for recently celebrating their 65th anniversary. After 65 years of marriage, I applaud their dedication and commitment to one another. It's clear they have both been exemplary members of our community, and I wish them the best in all future endeavors.

CELEBRATING 2016 NATIONAL
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

HON. DAN BENISHEK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 2016 National Catholic Schools Week. Across the First District of Michigan, there are 22 Catholic schools providing a first rate education to over 4,100 students that combines faith with academic excellence. Since coming to Congress, it has been an honor to meet with students in Catholic schools across my district at St. Francis de Sales in Manistique, Manistee Catholic Central School in Manistee, and Menominee Catholic Central School in Menominee, among others.

This year, the theme of National Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service." As a lifelong Catholic, former student, and frequent guest of schools across Northern Michigan, I know that the Catholic schools in our region are certainly living up to these goals.

This year, Congress was blessed to hear from Pope Francis. Pope Francis has called on all Catholic schools to "provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values."

In light of this, I have signed onto House Resolution 35, a resolution that honors the contributions that Catholic schools have made to the United States and its people. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 35, and urge my colleagues to support this resolution as well. Together, we must all recognize the significant contributions that Catholic schools have made to our country.

HONORING BOONE EVANS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Boone Evans. Boone is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Boone has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Boone has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Boone has led his troop as the Senior Patrol Leader, earned the rank of Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, and has become a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow. Boone has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Boone Evans for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF NICOLINA
(NICKI) R. CARDWELL FOR HER
DEDICATED CAREER OF PUBLIC
SERVICE

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of our own. On Friday, January 22, 2016, Ms. Nicolina (Nicki) Cardwell retired from my office after serving a combined seventeen years for the people of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District as a Community Affairs Liaison for eleven years in my Independence District Office and six years with my predecessor. Overall, Nicki dedicated four decades of public service to our community, as a teacher, county employee, and ultimately retiring from Congressional service, spending much of her career based in Eastern Jackson County, Missouri.

Born May 7, 1947, to an Italian mother, Silva Piva, and a Kansan father, George Morris, Nicolina Rowena Maria Cardwell often reminds folks of her proud Italian heritage. After studying at Central Missouri State University and taking time to raise a beautiful family, Nicki returned to school. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Health, going on to teach in public and private schools in Independence, helping to shape future generations.

Nicki has spent much of her adult life as a resident of Independence, Missouri, home to Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States. She is well known throughout the area, as she has been an active volunteer in the community and politically active for causes and individuals she supports. In 1988, Nicki joined the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department, holding a variety of positions over the next ten years, including in the Speaker's Bureau, where she helped introduce thousands of individuals to Jackson County's programs, facilities, and parks. Among many other responsibilities, Nicki assisted with marketing, group events, and public relations while working for the County.

In 1999, Nicki joined the staff of my predecessor, Congresswoman Karen McCarthy. While being considered for the position, some of her prior employers called her, "the best we've ever had dealing with the public," and "a hard worker—very good." As she assumed her new role as a caseworker, Nicki handled passports, immigration, and veterans issues among others impacting residents of Missouri's Fifth District. She was often the recipient of great praise from constituents she helped, including in one letter to the editor in which the constituent had faced repeated roadblocks before making his first call to a Congressional office. He wrote:

"... I called [the Congressional] office expecting another difficult process. Nicki Cardwell called me back within five minutes. She proceeded to treat me as if I were 'family.' I know that she is very busy, but I felt like I was the only one on her agenda. She went beyond the call of duty and even met with me on a Saturday afternoon to complete the paperwork I needed. . . . She made me feel very comfortable throughout the entire process. She took a lot of stress off my shoulders, and

I would just like others to know how considerate and kind a government employee can be."

This type of praise was not uncommon for Nicki. Her personnel folder is full of thank you notes and emails referring to her as "jumping right into the action", "could not have been more helpful", and "beyond the call of duty." Her dedication to constituents led one individual to even refer to her positively as a "bulldog" and went on to say "You're lucky to have such a person on your staff."

So it should come as no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that when I was first elected to Congress in November, 2004, I knew immediately who my first staff hire would be. The list of civic leaders and elected officials advocating that I hire Nicki was lengthy, but they did not need to convince me. I knew after our conversation that a more passionate and caring caseworker did not exist.

Over the past eleven years, Nicki has helped thousands of constituents. She has worked primarily with our veterans and active military personnel, but does not hesitate to jump in to help whenever needed. She often would spend hours listening to constituents in person or on the telephone as they shared their struggles with her, pleased to find an empathetic listener. Her compassion for the men and women in uniform who have served and continue to serve our nation is unparalleled. She regularly attended Stand Downs, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day events with me, or on my behalf. She worked to honor veterans through helping to arrange special events for Vietnam veterans, Korean veterans, World War I veterans, World War II veterans, and Tuskegee Airmen, just to name a few. She created a Veterans Advisory Committee to help serve as a sounding board when important issues arose within the VA system or in proposed legislation. In addition, Nicki spent countless hours every year helping our young people going through the Academy nomination process, giving counsel and advice to those eager to join our prestigious military institutions.

Given Nicki's background, she often assisted with many of our special projects as well. There have been too many projects to name them all, but the one that stands out is our annual Congressional Art Contest. Nicki's leadership helped shepherd record participation with nearly 200 pieces of artwork from high school students around the Fifth District being submitted for consideration. She worked personally with principals and art teachers to encourage submissions to guarantee all parts of the District were well represented. She carefully handled and displayed each piece as if it were her own. She helped secure some of our community's strongest advocates for the arts to judge the students' submissions to ensure the winning artwork hanging in the Cannon Tunnel represented the best of our District. Students and teachers alike have come to rely on Nicki's friendship and expertise and they will surely miss her guidance, as will I.

In addition to Nicki's primary role as a caseworker, she also regularly represented the office at meetings and events throughout the District. She was a regular at the Independence Chamber of Commerce, the Eastern Jackson County Betterment Council, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the Truman Presidential Library and Museum, and 40 Club to name but a few. She is as well

known in our community as anyone and oftentimes when I would join her for an appearance at one of these events, individuals would approach me to share how much they appreciated Nicki's active participation and unequalled dedication to the people of our District.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues in this Chamber know, we are regularly pulled in many directions as we try to represent the nearly 800,000 constituents in our Districts. Oftentimes, it is our staff, serving behind the scenes, helping to ensure those constituents get prompt attention as they maneuver through the bureaucratic hurdles that regrettably get in the way. There is not a member of this esteemed body who wouldn't be proud to have Nicki Cardwell on their team, and her service has certainly been a blessing for me. She is a loyal, caring, and compassionate individual whose commitment to Missouri's Fifth District will be sorely missed. As she retires to spend more time with her family and loved ones, I encourage my colleagues to join me in recognizing her lifetime of dedication to our community and country and wishing her continued success. The people of Missouri's Fifth District, including me, are better off because of Ms. Nicolina R. Cardwell.

IN RECOGNITION OF CHIEF
RODNEY JONES

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Rodney Jones of the Fontana Police Department for his 35 years of service to the Inland Empire.

Chief Jones began his career as a public safety official in 1981 and has since served in various capacities to lead police activity in the City of Fontana where his work throughout the years has earned him praise from both his peers and residents of the community. Chief Jones' leadership has also garnered him numerous commendations from national, state, and local police organizations for his outstanding service. All of these accolades highlight his extraordinary commitment to public safety, which has greatly benefited the people of our region.

Chief Jones' distinguished career in law enforcement is further bolstered by his role as head of the Fontana Police Department. Throughout his tenure as Chief of Police, he administered many reforms that have enhanced public safety in the region. His accomplishments include overseeing a \$12 million expansion of Fontana's police headquarters and implementing modern police procedures to improve operations in the area.

On Friday, February 5th, Chief Jones will retire from the Fontana Police Department. He will be missed by the community. I thank him for his contributions to our region and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

For his many contributions to the Fontana Police Department and other achievements, I would like to recognize Chief Rodney Jones.

CONGRATULATING RONNIE
METSKER

HON. KEVIN YODER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend Ronnie Metsker for his appointment to serve the State of Kansas as Johnson County Election Commissioner.

Ronnie is honest, trustworthy, sincere, and a true gentleman.

He served with me as a member of the Kansas State House of Representatives from 2006 to 2009.

He's been a long-time member of both the Overland Park and Northeast Johnson County Chambers of Commerce, as well as on the Shawnee Mission Rotary Board of Directors, working to bring more jobs and better paychecks to the community.

He's fought for the best education for our children and future generations on the Shawnee Mission School District Committee for Excellence.

But most of all, he is my friend.

I want to thank Ronnie for making Johnson County a better place over the course of decades of hard work on behalf of the community.

I should also mention Ronnie's wife, Susan, is a member of my district staff. Together these two make a great team and much have dedicated their lives to public service.

There is no better person to ensure the integrity of the elections in our county.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this great body, I send heartfelt congratulations to Commissioner Metsker.

HONORING GRANT CORKILL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Grant Corkill. Grant is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1412, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Grant has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Grant has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Grant has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Grant planned and led the construction of a perch pole at Smithville Lake for eagles and other birds to rest on within easy sight for bird-watchers.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Grant Corkill for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE USO

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 75th anniversary of the United Service Organizations Inc. (USO). The USO is a shining example of what can be achieved by an organization committed to serving those who wear the uniform. Throughout its proud history, the USO has served millions of servicemembers and their families, ensuring that our Nation's heroes remain connected to their communities and families wherever their service to our country may take them.

As Thomas Jefferson wrote during his time as the United States Ambassador to France, "No society is so precious as that of one's own family." The brave men and women who choose to serve our Nation, to protect and uphold our Constitution, understand that their decision may lead to extended absences from their loved ones. While they take on this sacrifice without asking for anything in return, the USO was founded on the belief that, when the military mission takes our servicemembers away from their loved ones, we have a duty to support them by keeping them connected to their family, their home, and our country.

The USO was formed during one of the most challenging periods in our history. With the United States on the brink of entry into World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt brought together six private organizations—the YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, the National Jewish Welfare Board, the Traveler's Aid Association and the Salvation Army—to create a new organization wholly dedicated to maintaining the bonds of family and comforts of home. In response, these organizations pooled their resources, and, on February 4, 1941, the USO was born.

As American servicemembers began fighting in World War II, the USO teamed up with Coca-Cola to provide every servicemember with the taste of home, and they also established the world famous USO show concept. From 1941 to 1947, an incredible 428,521 USO shows were performed, and by the end of World War II more than 1.5 million Americans had volunteered on the USO's behalf.

Building on their incredibly successful efforts during World War II, the USO has accompanied our troops during wartime in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In Korea, not a single day passed without a USO show for the troops, while in Vietnam the USO's 17 centers in Vietnam and six in Thailand served more than a million servicemembers a month, including with the famous Bob Hope USO Christmas shows. In recognition of their work, the USO entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Defense in 1987, which recognized the USO as the principal channel representing civilian concerns for servicemembers worldwide.

Today, the USO, with the support of 30,000 volunteers and 600 employees, provides services, entertainment, and programs at more than 180 locations worldwide. From Afghanistan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Djibouti, to Germany Italy, Japan, South

Korea, and Guam, and of course right here at home, USO centers are visited more than 7 million times a year by servicemembers and their families. These USO centers allow traveling servicemembers and their families to have a place to enjoy some of the comforts of home, and they are an integral part of the USO's success.

Mr. Speaker, assisting our servicemembers and fighting for our veterans as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and as Founding Co-Chair of the USO Congressional Caucus is my greatest honor serving in Congress. The men and women who put on the uniform choose a life of selflessness, putting their service to our Nation above all else. As a grateful Nation, we have a duty and responsibility to support them in any way possible, and there is no greater example of civilians coming together to show our recognition and support for our servicemembers than the USO. The USO keeps our brave men and women in uniform driving on, while adhering to that simple promise made by President Lincoln so many years ago: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle." My wife Vicki and I congratulate the USO on their 75th anniversary, and thank the dedicated volunteers and all those who work with the USO to help show our Nation's eternal gratitude to our servicemembers and their families "until everyone comes home."

IN HONOR OF PASTOR WILLIE E.
MANLEY

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Pastor Willie E. Manley, a true leader and servant of the community of San Diego. Pastor Manley passed away on Friday, February 2, 2016, in his beloved city of San Diego.

Pastor Manley was born in 1933 in Stephens, Arkansas. In 1966, he left his congregation in chilly Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to conduct a revival in San Diego. On May 4, 1973, he started his pastoral duties at the Greater Life Baptist Church of San Diego, which he founded and served as pastor emeritus.

Pastor Manley was well known throughout the church and civic community for his honesty and integrity. Many residents in the San Diego community would call on him for answers and solutions. He was a man of great strength and courage. One who did not boast of himself, but rather, humbly gave his all to the people. Under his leadership, the Greater Life Baptist Church congregation has grown from forty-five to over three hundred members, giving many a safe place to come together and worship.

Pastor Manley was also a dedicated public servant and an incredibly active member of our community. He spent several years as a member of my staff when I was a Councilmember in the City of San Diego and as district staff to former Member of Congress, Randall Duke Cunningham.

Pastor Manley was a relentless champion for civil rights. He was the president and first

ever vice president of the San Diego branch of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). His commitment was recognized globally and he was honored, in 2003, with the very prestigious Ambassador of Peace Award. The award is given to an individual who has promoted goodwill among all peoples without respect to one's race, creed, color, religion, or national origin. Pastor Manley did not only promote these values at home but also traveled extensively across the country and around the world promoting spiritual and religious harmony.

Pastor Manley was an outstanding individual, husband, father, preacher and friend to many. He was considerate, genuine and devoted to making this world a better, more just place. His leadership is sure to leave a lasting legacy. He will be missed by his family—his wife and seven children, and his San Diego community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained during four votes of the second series on February 3, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted "No" on the amendment offered by Mr. ISSA to H.R. 1675, "No" on the amendment offered by Mrs. MALONEY to H.R. 1675, "No" on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions, and "Yes" on final passage of H.R. 1675, the Encouraging Employee Ownership Act of 2015.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was detained and unable to cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call Vote 61.

HONORING GREEK AMERICAN EDUCATORS

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor three remarkable and distinguished members of the Greek Orthodox community in the Tampa Bay area. These three Greek American educators continually demonstrate excellence in transmitting the value of Hellenic education to the next generation of scholars, tying historic Hellenic values and culture to today's contemporary policy and cultural discussions in the United States. Together, these scholars promote and enhance the teaching of our incredible culture and affect a change that enhances Hellenism throughout the world.

The V. Rev. Fr. James Rousakis, Vicar for Western Florida, is a dear friend from Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Tarpon Springs, Florida, who demonstrates a tireless effort to preserve the Greek-American Orthodox values and instill the Hellenic culture to the next generation of Greek-Americans. He has served the Orthodox faithful in Rochester, New York; Atlanta, Georgia; Portland, Maine; Indianapolis, Indiana; Clearwater and now Tarpon Springs, Florida. With his boundless energy, Father James has helped to foster incredible growth in the membership and ministries at Holy Trinity.

The Honorable Steve Christopoulos is a remarkable educator and coordinator who continually puts forth a dynamic effort to organize almost a dozen charter schools in the Florida community. Born in Akovos, Greece, Christopoulos moved to the United States at the age of twelve and his family settled in Lynn, Massachusetts. After a rewarding career in commercial real estate, Christopoulos began his current leadership of Superior Schools, which operates numerous schools of choice throughout the Tampa area. His unwavering commitment to excellence sets him apart in the world of challenging and supportive educational environments. His dedication to Hellenic values and the superior learning environments he has created consistently produces outstanding citizens and Philhellenes.

Mrs. Catherine Diacogianni is a heralded educator who has contributed to our local Tampa Greek communities by teaching the Greek language and cultural history for over thirty years. After studying and working for the Red Cross in Athens early in her life, Diacogianni moved to Florida in 1977 and dedicated her life to teaching the Greek language to future generations as well as her peers. Despite a consistent tenure at Holy Trinity Greek School, Diacogianni also established the St. Stephanos Greek School in St. Petersburg where she worked tirelessly as teacher and director for 14 years. I am constantly in awe of Diacogianni's untiring efforts and passion to educate everyone she comes in contact with about the significance of Hellenic history and language so that it may live on in our community.

I commend the Federation of Hellenic American Educators and the Greek Teacher Association of Florida for highlighting these three pillars of our community, and I hope every American can learn from and emulate the determined efforts of these extraordinary educators.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call vote number 50 on Feb. 2, 2016, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted NO.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on 2/3/2016. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

NO on Roll Call Number 58;
NO on Roll Call Number 59.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
KATHLEEN P. DEVINE**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise to honor the life of a great journalist and public servant from the state of Connecticut, and life-long friend, Kathleen P. Devine, who passed away in Groton, Connecticut after a brief illness last week. Kathleen was known to all who had the privilege of meeting her as a deeply principled, hardworking, and positive public servant with a distinguished career in both finance and journalism.

Kathleen served as the Treasurer of the City of Hartford, Connecticut from 1998 to 2011, during which time she advocated fiercely for the city's employees and pensioners. Her tireless work ethic and grasp of financial markets translated into positive results for the City and its workforce. When she left office she left behind a distinguished career in public service which began with her role as Deputy Treasurer to Denise Nappier and staff member for State Treasurer Frank Borges.

Before her many years in office, Kathleen was a well-respected journalist and member of the Editorial Board of the Hartford Courant. There, she spoke up for underrepresented voices, particularly women and minorities, to ensure that their stories were told. She was a trailblazing woman in a field that at the time was mostly dominated by men. Her poise, determination, and grit left a decades-long impact on her colleagues. One Courant colleague, Susan Campbell, recently recalled Kathleen's role as a mentor during her first months as a journalist, noting her humor and down-to-earth personality. Kathleen always made a point to recognize people for the good work that they did, even when most in the newsroom would keep their head down in self-interest.

Kathleen was an incredible mentor, public servant, writer, advocate and friend. Her tenacity and sense of justice will certainly be missed in Connecticut and in the lives of her many friends and family. As I said, Kathleen was a lifelong friend as a result of the closeness of my family and the Palm family that went back to the 1950s. She never failed to remind me, and anyone else I was with at social and political gatherings, that she babysat for me, and as a result I better shape up as a state legislator and Congressman or she would embarrass me with stories of early years. I never doubted for a moment that she would and did my best to live up to her high standards.

Kathleen's passing is a real loss to the world—she was a bright spirit who could light up a room and make you laugh and think at the same time. What a rare gift it was to have known her. I ask all my colleagues to please join me in sending my sincere condolences to those who will feel this loss most deeply: her daughter, step-son, sister, brother, sister-in-law, nieces and nephews, and grandchildren.

HONORING RAUL R. RENDON

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Raul R. Rendon, a San Antonio resident who passed away on January 28 and whose life was marked by service to his nation. Born on September 14, 1928, Mr. Rendon served in the United States Marine Corps in the Korean War. On September 27, 1950, he was injured at Yudam-ni during the Chosin Reservoir Campaign. Mr. Rendon and his comrades in that battle were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, a decoration given to a unit that displays gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart from other units participating in the same campaign. He was also a Purple Heart recipient.

Mr. Rendon was preceded in death by his beloved wife Elvia, parents Romana and Trinidad, and sisters Alma Vergara and Freya Mirta Rendon Garcia. He is survived by his brother Trinidad, and his legacy lives on through his children—Raul Jr., Robert, and Rosanna—and his grandchildren—Mark, Elyse, Justin, and Gianna.

It is brave Americans like Mr. Rendon whose patriotism and selflessness make our nation great and keep us safe. While the San Antonio community mourns this loss, we draw strength from our memories of Mr. Rendon's courage and kind spirit.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE TRUST FUND ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, water infrastructure is a local issue—from a giant sinkhole in Gresham, OR, to poisoned water in Flint, MI. For too long, we've let critical water systems simply fall apart. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave our nation's wastewater and drinking water infrastructure a grade of "D" in their most recent report card. While our clean water needs are estimated to be nearly \$15 billion a year, appropriations for clean water infrastructure have averaged less than over \$2 billion a year since 2000. Drinking water infrastructure is in no better shape. The EPA estimates that we need to invest over \$19 billion annually to ensure the provision of safe tap water, while Congress appropriates less than \$1 billion.

As seen by the recent lead water crisis in Flint, MI, the costs of inaction are not just

numbers in a needs assessment. Our failure to adequately invest in aging infrastructure is having detrimental effects on our health and economy. Last year alone, Americans across the country suffered from more than 240,000 water main breaks and saw overflowing combined sewer systems—causing contamination, property damage, disruptions in the water supply, and massive traffic jams.

In order to address this, the Water Infrastructure Trust Fund Act will provide needed revenue for states and local governments to make overdue investments in wastewater and drinking water infrastructure and will also take a hard look at the systemic challenges affecting access to safe water in low-income populations.

The Water Infrastructure Trust Fund Act allows businesses to choose to place a small label on their products indicating their commitment to protecting America's clean water, contributing \$0.03 to the Water Infrastructure Trust Fund for each unit bearing the label. The Trust Fund revenue will be distributed to the states as grants and loans through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to help public water systems finance wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects. The legislation also commissions an EPA study of the water affordability gap facing low-income populations and an analysis of solutions to systemic barriers affecting access to safe water systems.

Congress must do more, not only to meet the huge need for water infrastructure investments, but also to understand why failing infrastructure hits the most vulnerable communities the hardest.

RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING GARY FAULKNER, JR. FOR WINNING THE 2015 ROLLTECH PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS ASSOCIATION WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Gary Faulkner, Jr. of Memphis, Tennessee for winning the 2015 Rolltech Professional Bowlers Association World Championship at the National Bowling Stadium in Reno, Nevada. In his first professional television appearance, Gary Faulkner beat top qualifier EJ Tackett to become the second African American ever to win a PBA Tour title in the PBA's 57-year history after George Branham III won the Brunswick Memorial World Open in 1986.

Gary learned the game of bowling at the early age of two when he bowled with his father, Pastor Gary Faulkner, Sr. of Cummings Street Baptist Church. As a sophomore at Germantown High School, Gary won the Division I Bowling Championship title in the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association individual bowling tournament. At that time, his best series bowling score was 833. While enrolled at Webber International University, Gary helped lead his team to the 2012 Intercollegiate Team Championship.

Gary Faulkner maintained his focus and determination to win the Rolltech Championship.

On his way to victory, Gary threw 10 strikes on his first 11 shots to ultimately defeat Scott Norton of Mission Viejo, California 262–218. He also defeated Ryan Ciminelli of Cheektowaga, New York, 247–237, who was seeking to win his third title, back-to-back, to become the first player to win three consecutive PBA titles on American soil since 1971. Gary opened this match with a spare and four strikes. In his final three-game match, Gary impressively rolled six strikes on his first eight attempts and threw only two bad shots. Gary's opponent, EJ Tackett of Huntington, Indiana, on the other hand, left three splits in his first five frames, setting up a 49 pin deficit from which he could not rebound against Faulkner. Gary Faulkner won the title 216–178.

After winning, Gary said, "The first shot I was nervous, but after that I didn't think about anything. My mind was free. I didn't watch the other guys. I don't show a lot of emotions. My goal is always to win; I didn't come here to lose." With a goal set in mind to win, Gary Faulkner has represented his family and the city of Memphis well, and I look forward to reading about his future accomplishments. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Gary Faulkner, Jr. on winning the 2015 Rolltech Professional Bowlers Association World Championship.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF DR. CARTER G. WOODSON

HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson. I am proud to celebrate his achievements with my friends at Marshall University and the city of Huntington as they commemorate Dr. Carter G. Woodson Day.

Dr. Woodson, a former Huntington, West Virginia, resident, is known as the "Father of African-American History." He believed in the importance of education, and early in his career served as principal of Douglass High School, his alma mater. Dr. Woodson then became one of the first African Americans to earn a doctorate in history from Harvard University. Dr. Woodson also pioneered the observation of Black History Month each February and devoted his life to documenting the important contributions African Americans have made to our nation's history.

I would also like to congratulate Marshall University's Carter G. Woodson Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications, Burnis Morris. He was recently honored as a 2016 History Hero at West Virginia History Day in Charleston, West Virginia. Mr. Morris' extensive research on Dr. Woodson has helped preserve Dr. Woodson's legacy and ensures that future generations have the opportunity to learn about the legacy of this remarkable historical icon.

I extended my wishes for a successful event celebrating the life of Dr. Woodson and all that he has achieved—he is one of Huntington's greatest icons and contributed greatly to ensuring that the stories of African Americans continue to be honored by all Americans.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN, INC. (NLAPW)

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing a treasured historical landmark in our midst, The National League of American Pen Women, Inc. (NLAPW). The League's headquarters is located in the heart of the nation's capital between Dupont Circle and Scott Circle, just blocks away from the White House. With affiliates all across the United States, the League is a key nonprofit neighbor, whose headquarters building is a magnificent architectural gem.

The League is dedicated to the recognition and advancement of women in the arts and letters in the District of Columbia and nationwide. Its mission is to represent and foster women's outstanding cultural and educational contributions to the nation. The League's membership, comprising some 82 branches throughout the country, encompasses a cross section of American women—all ages, races, religions, and cultures. For generations, the League has highlighted the great contributions and careers of creative American Women. Since its founding in 1897, luminaries such as Nobel Laureate Pearl Buck, Margaret Mitchell and Eudora Welty were illustrious members, among many others. Eleanor Roosevelt was a very active Pen Woman, as was Vinnie Ream, who sculpted the Lincoln statue that stands in the Capitol's Rotunda, as well as the statue of Admiral Farragut at Farragut Square.

It should also be noted that the League's beautiful, mansion-class headquarters at 1300 17th Street NW is steeped in history. Its interior has been lovingly maintained. To walk through it, as so many did during the recent Dupont Circle House Tour sponsored by the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, is to experience the elegance and inspiration of a bygone era. It is also to realize that the Pen Arts Building was once the home of Robert Todd Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's oldest son. That is an especially noteworthy historical perspective in this 150th anniversary year of the death of Abraham Lincoln.

Regrettably, the League has become financially stressed, a situation hindering the preservation efforts of many nonprofits today. Losing the League, which has been in the District for 64 years, would be a terrible blow to the city, to the Dupont Circle neighborhood, to preservation, and to history itself. I also ask the House to recognize the League's unfortunate current financial plight, and the efforts of TENAC, the D.C. Tenants' Advocacy Coalition, to help preserve this beautiful landmark. Under the leadership of its chairman, Jim McGrath, TENAC has long been the District's unrivaled champion of tenants' rights, helping the homeless, and historic preservation.

Helping the League remain in the District and maintain its magnificent headquarters building here is a very worthy cause, enthusiastically supported by a broad variety of others in the city, including D.C. Councilmember Jack Evans, the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, and the historic Tabard Inn, among many others. I ask the House to recognize

these efforts, and join in supporting this cause. At a time when women seem to be under attack in this country and all over the globe, assisting the National League of American Pen Women would be a worthy step in trying to redress that balance.

For all of these reasons, I ask the House to join me in expressing support for the League and its successful mission, and to recognize the importance of saving it. I know the League would be profoundly grateful for that support.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was detained and unable to cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted No on Roll Call Vote 55.

TRIBUTE TO DR. HAROLD MCFARLANE

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my thanks to a dedicated public servant. After forty-three years of service, achievement and recognition, Dr. Harold McFarlane is retiring from the Idaho National Laboratory. Speaking at a colleague's retirement ceremony years ago, Harold noted that his colleague "came to work every day and made a difference." The same can be said of Dr. McFarlane, he came to work every day and he made a difference.

If you are going to try to pay tribute to Harold McFarlane, you are going to need lots of time and lots of paper. Harold's accomplishments and contributions as a scientist, an administrator, and a leader are as impactful as they are extensive.

After graduating from high school in Texas, Harold earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Texas. Harold then went to the California Institute of Technology to earn his PhD in engineering science. After a short stint teaching nuclear engineering at New York University, in 1973 Harold moved his young family to Idaho to join Argonne-West National Laboratory to start up the Zero Power Plutonium Reactor, or ZPPR as it is known in Idaho. Thus began Harold's forty-three year career at Argonne-West and the Idaho National Laboratory. At the labs, Harold became involved in almost every major Department of Energy advanced reactor, nuclear fuel cycle, international collaboration, and space power project.

While working at Argonne-West, Harold took up another challenge and earned his Master's in Business Administration from the University of Chicago. As recognition of his skills and leadership became better known, in 2006 Harold was elected President of the American Nuclear Society.

In 2011, Harold served special assignment in Washington, DC supporting the Office of Nuclear Energy, and in the wake of the

Fukushima earthquake and tsunami, Harold became a key technical source for Secretary Chu and others at the Department of Energy (DOE) explaining what was happening on the ground. Harold later received a special commendation from DOE for his contribution during this time.

Harold continued his contribution to international nuclear collaboration when he served as the Technical Director of the Generation IV International Forum (GIF) and later Chief of Staff to the GIF chairman.

Throughout his career, Harold has been put in charge of difficult technical projects, and he led, mentored, and executed all with professionalism and distinction. Along the way, Harold accumulated a cadre of colleagues, friends and young scientists who wanted to work with him.

Since his days at the University of Texas, Harold has had one partner in this wonderful career and life, his wife Mary Ellen. Harold would be the first to acknowledge that although his work and reputation made him one of the most recognizable nuclear professionals in the world, in Idaho Falls he is best known as Mary Ellen's husband.

Harold and Mary Ellen are avid golfers and the two have played courses around the world in another pursuit of excellence. Along with their son Matt, Mary Ellen and Harold deserve our thanks and well wishes as his career at the lab ends.

Harold, thank you for coming to work every day and for making a difference.

HONORING SENATOR JAMES
METZEN FOR HIS 42 YEARS OF
PUBLIC SERVICE ON THE OCCA-
SION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM
THE MINNESOTA SENATE

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today to pay tribute to Minnesota State Senator James "Jim" Metzen. Senator Metzen has been a leader in the Minnesota legislature for more than 40 years, representing my hometown of South Saint Paul and surrounding communities. He recently announced that he plans to retire later this year at the end of his current term. His legislative work is not yet complete, however, it is well worth reflecting on his more than four decades of public service that have shaped a remarkable legacy for the community and the state.

First elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1974, Metzen quickly established a reputation as an approachable, evenhanded and effective advocate for his constituents. In 1986 he was elected to the Minnesota Senate, bringing his "can-do" outlook with him to forge important alliances and build consensus throughout the state and the community—among constituents, Democrats and Republicans, business and labor leaders.

During his time in the Senate, leaders have recognized Senator Metzen's extensive knowledge about the legislative process and the respect he has earned among his colleagues. It was no surprise in 2003 when he was elected by his peers to be Senate President, a role he served for seven years. Additionally, he has

been appointed chair of several influential committees. Currently, he chairs the Senate Commerce Committee.

Senator Metzen's ability to build bridges between Democrats and the business community and get important things done has come naturally through the executive roles he has served in local community banks. Throughout his public and private sector service, improving his community has been his priority. He has always delivered—both large and small, from supporting the Mighty Ducks youth hockey program, to the transformation of industrial landfill into the Kaposia Landing park, to the replacement of the Wakota Bridge over the Mississippi River. His influential advocacy continues on projects like developing the Robert Street transit corridor. Residents of South Saint Paul, West Saint Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Mendota and Mendota Heights have been fortunate to have Jim working for them.

To call Jim a friend is a privilege for my family and me. I have fond memories of joining my father to put up yard signs for Jim during his early campaigns, and it is probably no coincidence that our mutual strong support of public education comes from us both attending Central Grade School in South Saint Paul. Throughout my own public service, he was always among the first to offer encouragement and help. It was wonderful to join the hundreds of "friends of Jim" last fall at the Croatian Hall in South Saint Paul to recognize his many contributions on behalf of the community. I wish Jim and his wife Sandie all the best.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to Senator James "Jim" Metzen as he prepares to retire after more than 40 years of distinguished public service.

INTRODUCTION OF MARIJUANA
ADVERTISING IN LEGAL STATES
ACT OF 2016 OR THE "MAILS"
ACT OF 2016

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Marijuana Advertising in Legal States Act of 2016 or the "MAILS" Act, which creates an exception to the Controlled Substances Act to allow for the written advertisement of an activity, involving marijuana, if it is in compliance with state law.

In the last few years, voters in Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Alaska overwhelmingly approved initiatives to legalize the adult use and sale of marijuana. Additionally, 23 states, the District of Columbia and Guam have legalized full medical marijuana programs, and 17 more states have approved more limited medical marijuana programs. In many of these states, state-approved dispensaries are up and running, bringing the industry out of the shadows of the black market and creating a safe, regulated system in much of America.

Despite this progress, marijuana remains stuck in the past as a Schedule I substance at the federal level. Recognizing this discrepancy, the Obama Administration issued a memorandum in 2013 which explained that so long as certain enforcement criteria were met, federal law enforcement would not interfere

with state legal marijuana activity. Congress then followed suit and barred the Department of Justice from expending resources in contravention of state medical marijuana laws.

According to the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), it is unlawful for anyone to place an advertisement for a Schedule I substance, including a medical marijuana product, in any newspaper, magazine, handbill or other publication even if that activity is legal under state law. This creates a confusing reality in states where marijuana is legal for marijuana businesses that seek to advertise in local newspapers, as well as for the many newspapers around the country that rely on advertising revenue.

In December 2015, the United States Postal Service (USPS) declared that it is illegal to mail any items, including newspapers, which contain advertisements offering to buy or sell marijuana, even if in compliance with a state law.

Small businesses and community newspapers rely on USPS to reach their customers and the USPS policy could have the effect of stopping all written marijuana advertisements in states that have already made the decision to legalize marijuana. This contradicts the will of the voters in these states as well as recent directives from the Obama Administration and Congress.

There are certainly important questions that need to be answered about how to best regulate marijuana and advertisements, to ensure it does not get in the hands of children and that it is delivered in a safe, regulated system. It is not the job of USPS to answer these questions. Until we can change the way that marijuana is treated at the federal level to allow the federal government to be a constructive partner in answering these questions, this legislation will help to ensure that they stay out of the way.

IN RECOGNITION OF MARION CAIN,
ERNEST FANN, LEMUEL HAWKINS,
AND ROBERT SCOTT

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize four Macon, Georgia natives who played Negro League baseball: Marion Cain, Ernest Fann, Lemuel Hawkins, and Robert Scott. A ceremony to honor these men has been coordinated by Gordon Smith, an Eagle Scout candidate with Boy Scouts of America, Central Georgia Council, Troop 170, and will be held on Saturday, February 6, 2016 at Luther Williams Baseball Field in Macon, Georgia.

Negro League baseball officially organized in 1920 and existed until the early 1960s. While segregation between professional teams hindered some competition for the leagues, the teams maintained a high level of professionalism and became centerpieces for economic growth in many black communities. The individuals who pursued careers in Negro League baseball contributed to a sense of pride and community during a time of oppression and segregation. As such, I would like to honor four Macon natives who continue to inspire those in their communities: Marion "Sugar" Cain, Ernest Fann, Lemuel Hawkins, and Robert Scott.

Marion "Sugar" Cain was born on February 4, 1914 in Macon, Georgia. Cain was an esteemed pitcher but doubled in the outfield. He started his career with the Pittsburgh Crawfords, and went on to the Brooklyn Royal Giants, and then the Oakland Larks.

Ernest Fann was born on July 24, 1943 and attended Ballard-Hudson High School in Macon. He led his baseball team to state championships in 1961 and 1962. He was a pitcher and catcher playing for the Atlanta Black Crackers, as well as teams in Brunswick, Georgia and Daytona, Florida.

Lemuel Hawkins was born on October 2, 1895, and was a pitcher and first baseman for the Kansas City Monarchs, Chicago Giants, and Chicago American Giants. Hawkins was

the first baseman for the Monarchs during the 1924 Negro League World Series.

Robert Scott was born on June 22, 1931 and was a pitcher for the Macon Braves and Macon Cardinals. He also played with the New York Black Yankees, Boston Blues, and the Jackie Robinson Barnstorming Team.

To commemorate these exceptional athletes, a ceremony will be held at Luther Williams Baseball Field where bronze plaques for each player will be placed. I would like to thank Gordon Smith for organizing this outstanding tribute as part of his leadership and service project as he works toward the rank of Eagle Scout. As a proud Eagle Scout myself, I am reminded of the great responsibility this signal honor carries: the responsibility to al-

ways exemplify the high principles embodied in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Gordon's commitment to pay homage to and learn from the hard work and courage of those who came before him reflects the sincerity of his purpose, the strength of his determination, and the timbre of his character.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in recognizing the courage, determination, and legacy of these four Negro League baseball players from Macon, Georgia. Let us be grateful for the pride these men helped bring to disenfranchised communities and thankful for the changes that have since come, not only in the realm of baseball, but throughout our nation.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S635–691.

Measures Introduced: Thirteen bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2497–2509, and S. Res. 362–364. **Pages S669–70**

Measures Passed:

Authorizing the Use of Emancipation Hall: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 109, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the foot soldiers who participated in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches. **Page S691**

Congratulating the University of Mount Union Football Team: Senate agreed to S. Res. 363, congratulating the University of Mount Union football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Football Championship. **Page S691**

Honoring Former Senator Marlow Cook: Senate agreed to S. Res. 364, relative to the death of Marlow Cook, former United States Senator for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. **Page S691**

Measures Considered:

Energy Policy Modernization Act: Senate continued consideration of S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S637–46, S649**

Pending:

Murkowski Amendment No. 2953, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S637**

Murkowski (for Cassidy/Markey) Amendment No. 2954 (to Amendment No. 2953), to provide for certain increases in, and limitations on, the drawdown and sales of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. **Page S637**

Murkowski Amendment No. 2963 (to Amendment No. 2953), to modify a provision relating to bulk-power system reliability impact statements. **Page S637**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 50 nays, 1 responding present (Vote No. 16), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on Murkowski Amendment No. 2953 (listed above). **Pages S645–46**

Senator McConnell entered a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on Murkowski Amendment No. 2953. **Pages S645–46**

By 43 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 17), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the bill. **Page S646**

Senator McConnell entered a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the bill. **Page S646**

Appointments:

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the provisions of S. Con. Res. 28 (114th Congress), appointed the following Senators to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: Senators McConnell, Blunt, and Schumer. **Page S691**

Ebinger Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., on Monday, February 8, 2016, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S650**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

1 Army nomination in the rank of general. **Page S691**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Patrick A. Burke, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Marshal for the District of Columbia for the term of four years.

Stephanie A. Finley, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

Claude J. Kelly III, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Page S691

Messages from the House: Page S669

Measures Referred: Page S669

Executive Reports of Committees: Page S669

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S670–71

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S671–75

Additional Statements: Pages S667–69

Amendments Submitted: Pages S675–90

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S690

Privileges of the Floor: Page S690

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—17) Page S646

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Senator Marlow Cook, in accordance with S. Res. 364, at 5:47 p.m., until 2 p.m. on Monday, February 8, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S691.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported one nomination in the Army.

AFGHANISTAN

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the situation in Afghanistan, after receiving testimony from General John F. Campbell, USA, Commander, Resolute Support, and Commander, United States Forces—Afghanistan, Department of Defense.

INTERMODAL USF SUPPORT FOR RURAL AMERICA

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine ensuring intermodal Universal Service Fund support for rural America, after receiving testimony from Darrington Seward, Seward and Son Planting Company, Louise, Mississippi; Steven K. Berry, Competitive Carriers Association, Washington, D.C.; James G. Carr, All Points Broadband, Ashburn, Virginia, on behalf of the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association; Michael Rapelyea, ViaSat, Inc., Arlington, Virginia; and LeRoy T. Carlson, Jr., United States Cellular Corporation, Chicago, Illinois.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Mary Katherine Wakefield, of North Dakota, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, who was introduced by Senators Hoeven, Heitkamp, and former Senator Kent Conrad, Andrew LaMont Eanes, of Kansas, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security, who was introduced by Senator Roberts, and Elizabeth Ann Copeland, of Texas, who was introduced by Senator Cornyn, and Vik Edwin Stoll, of Missouri, both to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

NOMINATION

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Beth F. Cobert, of California, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years, after the nominee testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

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: 27 public bills, H.R. 4460–4486; 6 resolutions, H. Res. 602–607, were introduced. **Pages H589–91**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H592**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows: H.R. 901, to prohibit accessing pornographic web sites from Federal computers, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–415). **Page H589**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Mooney (WV) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H569**

Financial Institution Customer Protection Act: The House passed H.R. 766, to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, and to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, by a yeas-and vote of 250 yeas to 169 nays, Roll No. 63. **Pages H570–83**

Rejected the Castor (FL) motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yeas-and-nay vote of 177 yeas to 240 nays, Roll No. 62. **Pages H581–82**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–41 shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule. **Page H578**

Agreed to:

Sherman amendment (No. 1 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–414) that clarifies that H.R. 766 does not prevent federal banking regulators from requesting or requiring a financial institution to terminate a relationship with a customer because (1) the customer poses a threat to national security, (2) is engaged in terrorist financing, (3) is doing business with Iran, North Korea, Syria, or another State Sponsor of Terrorism, or (4) is doing business with an entity in any of those countries; and **Pages H578–79**

Gosar amendment (No. 2 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–414) that requires notice to banking customers if a customer account is terminated at the direction of federal banking regulators. **Pages H579–80**

H. Res. 595, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1675) and (H.R. 766) was agreed to yesterday, February 3rd.

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Johnson (OH) wherein he resigned from the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. **Page H583**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Bost wherein he resigned from the Committee on Small Business. **Pages H583–84**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Blackburn wherein she resigned from the Committee on the Budget. **Page H584**

Committee Elections: The House agreed to H. Res. 602, electing certain Members to standing committees of the House of Representatives. **Page H584**

Ranking Members of a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives: The House agreed to H. Res. 603, ranking Members of a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives. **Page H584**

READ Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 3033, to require the President's annual budget request to Congress each year to include a line item for the Research in Disabilities Education program of the National Science Foundation and to require the National Science Foundation to conduct research on dyslexia. **Page H584**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, February 8th and that the order of the House of January 5, 2016, regarding morning-hour debate not apply on that day. **Page H587**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on page 570.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yeas-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H582 and H583. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Committee Meetings

NAVAL STRIKE FIGHTERS: ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing entitled "Naval Strike Fighters: Issues and Concerns". Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Jon M.

Davis, USMC, Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Aviation (DC(A)), U.S. Marine Corps; Rear Admiral Michael C. Manazir, USN, Director, Air Warfare Division (N98), U.S. Navy; and Rear Admiral Michael T. Moran, USN, Program Executive Officer Tactical Aircraft, U.S. Navy.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE'S BUDGET AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Congressional Budget Office's Budget and Economic Outlook". Testimony was heard from Keith Hall, Director, Congressional Budget Office.

EXAMINING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIOLOGICS PRICE COMPETITION AND INNOVATION ACT

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled "Examining Implementation of the Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act". Testimony was heard from Sean Cavanaugh, Deputy Administrator and Director of the Center of Medicare, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and Janet Woodcock, Director, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration.

ANOTHER SURGE OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ALONG THE SOUTHWEST BORDER: IS THIS THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S NEW NORMAL?

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security held a hearing entitled "Another Surge of Illegal Immigrants Along the Southwest Border: Is this the Obama Administration's New Normal?". Testimony was heard from Steven McCraw, Director, Texas Department of Public Safety; and public witnesses.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG MARKET: OVERSIGHT

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Developments in the Prescription Drug Market: Oversight". Testi-

mony was heard from Janet Woodcock, Director, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration; Keith Flanagan, Director, Office of Generic Drug Policy, Food and Drug Administration; and public witnesses.

A REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NSF PROJECT MANAGEMENT REFORM

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Technology; and Subcommittee on Oversight, held a joint hearing entitled "A Review of Recommendations for NSF Project Management Reform". Testimony was heard from Richard Buckius, Chief Operating Officer, National Science Foundation; Allison Lerner, Inspector General, National Science Foundation; and a public witness.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a markup on Views and Estimates on the President's FY 2017 Budget for the Small Business Administration. The Views and Estimates were adopted.

BUSINESS MEETING

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a business meeting on consideration of a Committee Report. The Committee Report was adopted. A portion of the meeting was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

2 p.m., Monday, February 8

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 p.m., Monday, February 8

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 5 p.m.), Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 5:30 p.m.

House Chamber

Program for Monday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 2 p.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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Congressional Record

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